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"I Feel Like a Literacy Coach Today." Professional Identities of Literacy Coaches

Antoinette Czekanski
tczekans@lesley.edu

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Antoinette Czekanski

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In the judgment of the following signatories, this Dissertation meets the academic standards that have been established for the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

Dr. Caroline Heller: Signature: _____ _____
Print Name Date

Dr. Eva Konstantellou: Signature: _____ _____
Print Name Date

Dr. Jo Ann Gammel: Signature: _____ _____
Print Name Date

Dr. Caroline Heller Signature: _____ _____
Director, Ph.D. in Individually Designed Specialization Date

Dr. Brenda Matthis Signature: _____ _____
Director, Ph.D. in Educational Studies Department Date

Dr. Amy Rutstein-Riley Signature: _____ _____
Interim Dean, Graduate School of Education Date

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Abstract

Educators transitioning from classroom teaching positions to roles as literacy coaches take on new identities as leaders within their schools in both content and pedagogy. Literacy coaches negotiate relationships with teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders on a daily basis and construct their new professional identities through these social interactions. Research has shown that this multi-faceted role can be challenging if not supported within the culture of the school and preparation through coursework and training.

This qualitative study investigated the developing identities of four novice literacy coaches who participated in training to prepare them for this role. They shared their experiences through semi-structured interviews focused on descriptions of responsibilities, development of support systems, and stories of times they felt successful or challenged while engaged in the role of novice literacy coach. Using narrative methods, I analyzed the coaches' stories for evidence of their developing identities, and through phenomenological reduction I identified themes across the interviews that described how the coaches felt challenged or supported as they built their professional identities. These themes indicated that identity development, interpersonal communication, and school culture are areas that training programs might focus on more specifically to fully and successfully prepare educators to build their professional identities as literacy coaches.

Keywords: professional identity, literacy coaching, school culture, narrative, adult learning and development, socio-cultural interactions

"I Feel Like a Literacy Coach Today." Professional Identities of Literacy Coaches

In this qualitative study I examine how four educators perceived their professional identities as they transitioned from being classroom teachers to working as literacy coaches with teachers and other personnel in their schools. Its purpose is threefold: to inquire into the perceptions of professional identity of novice literacy coaches as they first engaged in the role; to determine from anecdotal evidence the factors that were supportive and those that possibly hindered the development of the coaches' professional identities and effective transition into their new roles; and, more practically, to consider ways to support novice coaches as they make this transition. Understanding how novice coaches negotiate the complexities of their new role may provide insights into the kind of training, coaching, or coursework that would be beneficial to their emerging identities as coaches in light of the new challenges they face each day.

The coaches involved in this study participated in a two-year Literacy Collaborative (LC) preparatory program at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Literacy Collaborative, with training sites at Lesley and at The Ohio State University, has prepared literacy coaches as part of its whole-school literacy model for over twenty-five years. In this chapter I situate the study within the context of literacy coaching, discuss the Literacy Collaborative model of whole-school literacy reform, share the rationale for the study, and the research questions that guide it.

Literacy Coaching

The literacy coach position is a complex one, requiring coaches to work with teachers, administrators, and other school and district stakeholders to support the literacy programs in their schools (Bright & Hensley, 2010; Calo, et al., 2015; Fountas & Pinnell, 2009; Hathaway, et al., 2018; Lyons, 2002; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Mraz et al., 2008; Pletcher, 2015; Toll, 2018; Walpole & Blamey, 2009). Literacy coaching has become more established in schools over the

past twenty-five years, due in part to the Federal Department of Education initiatives, *No Child Left Behind* (2002), *Read First* (2006), and *Striving Readers* (2007). The rationale for having literacy coaches in schools grew out of the perceived need to improve student achievement and support teachers in two areas: the content knowledge of literacy learning and the most effective pedagogical approaches used to teach that content (Bright & Hensley, 2010; Carlisle & Berebitsky, 2010; Chauvin & Theodore, 2013; L'Allier et al., 2010; Shanklin, 2006; Showers & Joyce, 1996).

People assuming this role, often recruited from the ranks of successful teachers, might have decided they would like to work with adult learners rather than children or be exploring new professional options as educators. Their previous educational experience positioned them as experts in their roles as teachers who are now, in some respects, repositioned as novices assuming the role of literacy coach. This transition may be disorienting to some, while others may thrive from the challenge without feeling destabilized in the process (Hunt & Handsfield, 2013; Selvaggi, 2018; Wenger, 1998). Some literacy coaches receive specific training before or as they take on the role (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012; Hunt & Handsfield, 2013; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Scharer et al., 2008; Selvaggi, 2018) while others negotiate the new terrain without full preparation or support. Many schools have job descriptions listing the specific duties of the coach, while in others the role is vaguely described or evolves over time once the coach begins to work with colleagues. Educational organizations like the International Literacy Association have standards for the qualification and training of literacy coaches, but in some cases these are not used as guidelines by districts hiring their coaches (International Literacy Association, 2018).

The coaching literature in recent years has focused on defining the role of the literacy coach in order to clarify the responsibilities and requirements of this position (Blamey et al.,

2008; Coskie et al., 2008; Elish-Piper et al., 2009; Fountas & Pinnell, 2009; Lyons, 2002; Mraz et al., 2008; Otaiba et al., 2008; Toll, 2005, 2018). There is no "one-size-fits-all" description of literacy coaching, but all assert that there are many dimensions inherent to the role. Examples of the actions coaches might engage in over the course of a week include any or all of the following: lead professional learning sessions, model literacy lessons, work one-to-one with teachers, gather and analyze data from formal or informal student assessments, meet with stakeholders at the school or district level, work with students, or plan curriculum with teams of teachers (Calo, et al., 2015; Coburn & Woulfin, 2012; ILA, 2018; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Mraz et al., 2016; Toll, 2015; Wren & Reed, 2005). Sometimes the administrators or a group of educators in a particular school district only slowly defines the parameters of the role after a person is hired and the specific needs become evident over time (Bean & Ippolito, 2016; Blachowicz et al., 2010; Coburn & Woulfin, 2012; Hathaway, et al., 2018; Ippolito, 2009; Matsumura et al., 2010).

Often, stakeholders carry different expectations, and this can lead to confusion or stress, not only on the part of the coach, but for teachers or administrators working with coaches as well (Ferguson, 2014; Hathaway et al., 2018; Hunt & Handsfield, 2013; Rainville & Jones, 2009; Roller, 2006; Toll, 2018; Walpole & Blamey, 2009). For example, if the coach is hired primarily to work with teachers, but in reality spends much of her time analyzing data and attending meetings, both teachers and coach will be disappointed and frustrated. Having worked with literacy coaches as a member of the Lesley University Literacy Collaborative team for thirteen years, I observed the challenges of the coaching role even when there were clearly delineated expectations and supports in place. I believe it is incumbent on those of us who aim to support them to prepare coaches not only for the complexities of their roles but for their evolving

identities as coaches and the importance of building common understandings of their role with stakeholders in order to support their successful transitions.

Coaching Identity

There are many studies that focus on the development of professional identity in teachers and professional identity in general, but there are currently only several that look specifically at the identity of literacy coaches (Calo, et al., 2015; Hathaway, et al., 2018; Hunt & Handsfield, 2013; Mraz et al., 2008; Rainville & Jones, 2008). However, other studies have identified several important personal characteristics that are key to their coaching effectiveness, the *kind* of person most likely to succeed in the role. Attributes include interpersonal skills such as being highly reflective, patient, having the capacity to build trust and collaboration, and to recognize others' strengths (Coskie et al., 2005; Elish-Piper et al., 2009; Pletcher, 2015). In addition to these personal characteristics, coaches need extensive content area knowledge of the research, theory, and practices of literacy instruction and an understanding of adult learning, professional development, and literacy coaching practices (Chauvin & Theodore, 2013; Mraz et al., 2016; Toll, 2015; Walpole, & Blamey, 2009; Wren & Reed, 2005). Add to this list of personal and professional characteristics the ability to analyze and use assessment data, support a vision for improved teaching and learning, and develop shared leadership across the school and it is easy to recognize the need for specialized training and support for literacy coaches (Blachowicz et al., 2010; Bright & Hensley, 2010; Chauvin & Theodore, 2013; Coskie et al., 2005; Galloway, & Lesaux, 2014; Lynch & Fergusson, 2010; Swift & Kelly, 2010; Robertson, et al., 2020). Although this is an extensive list of practices and personal characteristics, these studies do not directly address professional identity. To understand this phenomena, I expanded my research to

include teacher professional identity development as well (Cohen, 2008; Colbeck, 2008; Collay, 2006; Day et al., 2013; Devos, 2010; Kraus, 2006; Soreide, 2006).

As educators transition from teacher to coach, potential shifts in professional identities may occur in newcomers to coaching who, for purposes of this study, I refer to as "novice coaches." Colleagues, stakeholders, professional interactions, or school culture might support these shifts in identity. On the other hand, these same elements might make transitions more difficult.

Novice coaches may be changing their roles within an ongoing community of practice of which they've been part, or they are joining a new school district with which they're relatively unfamiliar. Each of these entry points presents its own set of circumstances and challenges that affect the transition into the new role. The culture of the school community; the way people interact within the environment; norms and attitudes about teaching and learning all play an important part in the development of the coach's role and identity (Calo et al., 2015; Matsumura et al., 2010; Robertson, et al., 2020; Toll, 2018; Wenger, 1998; Zembylas, 2003). If the school community has a clear understanding of the expectations of coaching and the norms within which stakeholders will engage with coaches there is a greater chance of success—for students, teachers, and the coach.

Although some studies have examined the professional identity development of literacy or content coaches specifically (Calo, et al., 2015; Hunt & Handsfield, 2013; Mraz et al., 2008; Rainville & Jones, 2008), I hope that my research will add to what we know about their evolving professional identities and the supports and challenges that influence this process.

Background of Literacy Collaborative

The participants in this study were enrolled in the Literacy Collaborative (LC) training program at The Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative (CRRLC) at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. They each worked in a school that had adopted the LC model. This instructional model was initially developed in 1986 at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. Lesley University joined the project and began training literacy coaches in 1996 (Scharer et al., 2008). Since then, the CRRLC at Lesley University and The Ohio State University, the trademark holders of the model, have been training sites for literacy coaches whose districts forge a school-university partnership that aims to support the whole-school Literacy Collaborative model[1] (Lyons, 2002; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Scharer et al., 2008).

Literacy Collaborative is a complex whole-school literacy model designed to improve student achievement, support teachers as they implement effective teaching practices, and develop shared leadership and commitment to the model across the school. Thus, the model combines university training with in-house professional development and coaching provided by the new literacy coaches on site. Literacy Collaborative includes research-based literacy teaching practices, on-site professional development and coaching provided by the trained literacy coach, a school leadership team, administrative support at the school and district level, and an ongoing school-university partnership. The Standards for The Literacy Collaborative language and literacy framework include time for teaching of reading, writing, and word-study/phonics. The

[1] "Literacy Collaborative is a comprehensive school reform project designed to improve the reading, writing, and language skills of elementary children. The cornerstone of this project is dynamic, long-term professional development [and coaching]. School-based literacy coordinators are trained in research-based methods; provided with ongoing professional development as they continually implement research-based approaches in their own classrooms; and supported as they provide on-site training [and coaching] for the teachers in their schools. The goal of this comprehensive effort is to significantly raise the level of literacy achievement for all students" (http://literacycollaborative.org).

LC model is currently implemented in grades pre-kindergarten through grade eight in many schools across the country (Atteberry & Bryk, 2011; Scharer et al., 2008).

In addition to these teaching practices, the Literacy Collaborative includes the training of a school literacy leadership team and administrator, securing the commitment from the district to support the model, creating a plan to collect and analyze student achievement data, and the training of a literacy coach who is responsible for providing in-house professional development and coaching for educators in the school.

The two-year process of LC coach training consists of three graduate-level courses, on- and off-site support for the coach-in-training as well as the literacy leadership team, and principal, and annual ongoing professional development for coaches and administrators. This support is provided by a team of faculty-liaisons based at each university. In recent years the training has shifted from on-campus classes to a hybrid model that combines five weeks of on-campus time with online work and webinars across two years. This takes place while the coaching candidate is teaching full-time during year one, and teaching and providing professional development to school-based colleagues in year two. It is a rigorous program designed to immerse candidates in simultaneously learning and applying new teaching practices in their classrooms and then working with adults as professional developers and coaches. The participants receive on-site coaching from their university faculty-liaisons across the two years of initial training. The school district, as part of its commitment, pays for this training and coursework, and the coach receives nine graduate credits upon completion.

The first year of coursework and implementation focuses on potentially new classroom teaching practices while the second year supports the novice coaches as they begin to provide professional development and coaching for their colleagues and continue to teach part time in

their classroom. Across the two years, the faculty-liaison makes site visits to the school to foster a successful implementation.

During year one, the coach-in-training attends training at the CRRLC in Cambridge for five weeks spread across twelve months. There is an online component that includes readings, assignments, and time to meet synchronously with cohort for occasional webinars. Coaches-in-training continue to teach in their classrooms full-time and begin to apply the instructional practices as they learn them. This process is intensive as they balance job responsibilities and family life with graduate level academic work, the implementation of new practices, and taking time away from home and work to attend training on campus. During this first year, the coach-in-training works with a designated faculty-liaison from the CRRLC, who visits the coach two to four times and provides support through email, telephone, or other means throughout the year. The faculty-liaison is also responsible for giving regular feedback to the student and grading all assignments.

During the second year, the novice coaches continue to teach students part-time, but also begin to move into their roles as literacy coaches. They plan and provide professional learning sessions focused on the content of literacy teaching and learning, schedule classroom visits and coaching for all teachers in their training class, meet with their principal and school literacy team, and continue to teach part-time in their own classrooms. Once again, the participants are learning on the job, as they continue to implement teaching practices, and add the complexity of teaching adult learners and working with a variety of stakeholders in other ways. The first cohort of teachers in the training class can range in number from eight to fourteen classroom teachers who come together, on average, once every two weeks to attend professional development focused on specific aspects of literacy content or teaching methods facilitated by the novice

coach. In addition, she schedules classroom visits with each cohort member between training classes in order to observe the implementation of aspects of the teaching model as teachers begins to practice it in their classrooms.

Coaches work with their administrators and school literacy teams to build the leadership capacity of team members and other teachers across the school. The goal is to build both understanding and buy-in of the whole-school literacy initiative so that the novice coach, teachers, and other stakeholders are aware of and in accord with the school's vision of a cohesive literacy teaching and learning model. The Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative faculty-liaisons visit the novice literacy coaches during this second year as well, and coach them on three aspects: classroom teaching, planning and delivery of professional learning, and actual coaching sessions with their colleagues. The faculty-liaison meets with the principal and leadership team during these visits if possible.

Over the course of these two years, the literacy coaches receive a great deal of support from the CRRLC faculty-liaisons through coursework, school coaching visits, email, webinars, and other online aspects of the training program. This ongoing partnership supports school-based coaches as they refine their teaching practices, aim to design effective professional learning sessions, utilize coaching language and methods, and strive to develop a shared leadership community across the school. The CRRLC faculty-liaisons meet with the school administration and leadership team as part of their visits in order to develop knowledge of the model, the importance of the coach's role, and ultimately whole-school buy-in based on observing the positive results for teachers and students.

Participants

The four participants in this study had completed their initial two years of training when I contacted them. They were beginning their third year, working part-time with students while providing professional development and coaching for two cohorts of teachers: one cohort which had begun in year two, and the other cohort at the beginning of year three. Two were selected to train as literacy coaches from within the teaching staff of their schools, while the other two participants were hired for the coach position from outside the school. They were supported during their training by CRRLC faculty-liaisons who coached them in the various aspects of their role as described in the previous section. They came to the study with teaching experience, ranging from 6-20 years, and were teaching in public schools in the northeast at the time of the study. Two were in urban schools and two were teaching in suburban settings. As they completed their course work they taught full-time in their schools for the first year and then transitioned to teaching part-time and coaching for the rest of the day during year two. I interviewed them in the middle of their third year when they were all teaching part-time and coaching part-time and had successfully completed their university training program. I will offer a more detailed description of participant selection in the methods chapter. All four participants are females, and in order to maintain anonymity, I have chosen to use pseudonyms and the feminine pronouns, she, her, and plural, they, when referring to coaches, principals, and other educators in this study, regardless of the gender identity of the person.

Researcher's Background

I worked at the Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative at Lesley University from 2001-2018 and was a faculty-liaison for the first thirteen of those years. I worked with my fellow colleagues to plan coursework, teach and coach novice literacy coaches, support them in their schools, and work with their administrators and teams. However, I never

worked as a liaison or instructor to any of the participants in this study, because I took an administrative position at the center before the interviews occurred. Taking into consideration my prior role, I was mindful to set up private interviews with the participants and insure confidentiality and anonymity throughout the process of gathering data and writing about their journeys. My experience as a faculty-liaison was a both a boon and a challenge as I engaged in this research. I had a great deal of background knowledge about literacy coaching in general and the specifics of the Literacy Collaborative model. But this perspective sometimes led me to shift into a coaching position during the interviews rather than maintaining the impartial stance required of my research role. I will discuss this further in the results chapter, but I feel that I was able to glean valuable information from the participants during the interviews despite this challenge.

My motivation for this study rested on my desire to examine how Literacy Collaborative coaches engaged in the role during year three, after the first two years of initial training. After year two of training, the degree of support offered to novice coaches consists of providing a week of ongoing professional development at the university and continued communication between the faculty-liaison, coaches, or administrators when needed. What supports and challenges did they encounter during this first year "on their own?" How did they see themselves evolving into the role of coach and developing an identity as a coach? For thirteen years I had experience with coaches who successfully made the shift and with those who struggled or left their positions. This prompted me to ask questions about whether the CRRLC might develop the training model to be more supportive of their needs, both during initial training and, more importantly, once they were in the field.

I firmly believed that the curriculum and training experiences were a strong foundation, but could it be expanded? My knowledge of the LC training program and my experience in the field helped me to notice elements in the field that were potentially supportive to the new coaches and to reflect on what might be impeding their progress. This prior knowledge may also have biased how I looked at the research participants' responses, and I needed to be as open as possible to interpret their statements with a degree of separation in order to truly hear what they said. As I listened to them and reviewed transcripts I reflected on what their stories revealed about their developing identities as coaches and their perceived effectiveness in their coaching roles.

Research Questions

My research questions are: What are the perceptions of professional identity of literacy coaches as they first engage in the role? What factors are supportive of their growing identity, and what factors might hinder their transitions? How might listening to and coming to an understanding of their experiences, as I aimed to do, inform the work of those in higher education who develop programs to train literacy coaches?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Fifteen years ago I was driving south on Route 24 to a city in Massachusetts close to the Rhode Island border on my first solo visit to Ms. Paul, a teacher who was in year two of training to be a literacy coach. She had been attending classes at Lesley University's Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative (CRRLC) where I had begun working as an instructor a few months earlier. Her school had contracted with the CRRLC to join in a whole-school literacy initiative known as Literacy Collaborative. I was new to the role and was being mentored into the position by the Assistant Director at the Center. Previously, my mentor had accompanied me on several coaching visits to teachers in other school districts, but today I was on my own. I was nervous. During the two-hour drive I reviewed in my mind how things would go today: sign in at the office, meet the novice coach, observe teaching, debrief with the novice, meet with the principal and school leadership team...Suddenly I was crossing a bridge that said in big, bold letters, "Welcome to Rhode Island!" How did that happen? I was supposed to be in Massachusetts!

Not a very propitious beginning to my first solo venture as university faculty-liaison and coach to the novice literacy coach that day. I would be an hour late for my meeting with Ms. Paul and miss some of the classroom visit we had scheduled. Wanting to exhibit a calm, professional exterior, I suddenly found myself phoning the school office, begging for forgiveness...and directions. This tardiness did not help bolster my confidence as I entered the school and began to explain my late arrival to Ms. Paul and the administrator with whom I was to meet later that morning. It took all of the courage I could muster to get through the first hour of that coaching visit. I had not yet fully built my "coaching identity," nor did I have the complex background knowledge and experience that I needed in order to do so. I was still in the process

of *becoming* a professional who taught at a university and helped other teachers become literacy coaches. However, this feeling of dissonance called up in me the desire to attend to what would make me more successful on my next visit.

Prior to this I had been both a classroom teacher and a reading specialist in various public school settings. Eighteen years of experience had built my identity as a teacher who could manage professional transitions. I knew what I valued in education, had good relationships with my students, their parents, and my colleagues, and identified myself as a successful educator. I had recently added adult educator to my resume as I'd begun to lead professional development sessions for my school colleagues, parents, and other district educators. When my role changed slightly, I adapted and took on the responsibilities (and identity) I believed pertinent. But each time the role, and in some cases school district, changed, it took me time to adapt. I had to learn new curricula, new grade-level requirements, meet new sets of colleagues and administrators, and a different student population. This took time, but there was a certain degree of expertise that I brought with me from previous teaching assignments that served me well in each new role. I had my confidence and identity as a teacher to support me as I became acquainted with the parameters of my next position within the public elementary school environment.

I brought this expertise to my role as a university instructor and coach, but there was a bigger shift within this context. I was working primarily in a university setting rather than in the public school system, and was teaching adults rather than children. I was working with a variety of teachers from different schools across the country, not the friends and colleagues I had worked with for years. I was responsible for supporting the literacy initiative of entire schools, and in some cases, entire districts, not just the instructional needs of the twenty-five or so students in my classroom. The boundaries had expanded, and the dissonance I experienced with this shift

was greater than that of any other teaching position I held. This was not the comfortable social support of the "family" of professionals that develops within the walls of a particular school over several years, but a new adventure every day, with new people, a new role, and a new environment. I felt an increased need to acquire a higher degree of competence to meet these challenges, even though this was a career trajectory I had chosen.

As I write this, I realize my journey might have been similar to those of other educators. following one path or another on the road to their first teaching position. They first experienced the educational environment through their own childhood encounters at school. They began teaching with a good amount of prior knowledge about content and pedagogy. They recalled what their own teachers were like, considered the mentor teachers they worked with and the practice teaching they did during college. But it was not until their students walked into the door on that first day of school that they began to understand what it was to be a teacher…that they began to form an identity as a teacher.

Is this process the same for literacy coaches? They arrive in their position with some years of experience in the classroom, and might have a firm understanding of what it is to be a teacher, who *they* are as teachers. But literacy coaches step out of classroom teaching and enter the place of being observer, role-model, curriculum developer, data analyst, and coach, working with adults who are, in most cases, their peers. Their primary role is now to help teachers develop their practice—and along the way, these professionals develop new identities as literacy coaches. It is that first moment when coaches interact one-on-one with a teacher that they begin to put on the “mantle” of coach. When I met with Ms. Paul on my own that day, I had to *be the coach*. Despite the discomfort I felt, I had to put on my professional cloak and rise to the occasion, drawing on my previous experience in various roles and the mentoring I had received

to do *this* job: behaving professionally, even though the content knowledge and specific experience to support my new professional role were still tentative.

How do people construct professional identities as teachers or literacy coaches, and what happens when professional roles change? The concept of professional identity development is complex and can be analyzed and understood in different ways. In order to understand the answers to these questions, I've chosen to examine professional identity in specific professional contexts in order to consider how identity can be revealed and/or constructed through interactions, conversations, and narratives. Understanding the complexities of personal and professional identity development might help educators build programs that support literacy coaches, (a) as they develop understandings of the theoretical and practical aspects of their roles, and, (b) as they develop a sense of agency and professional identity within their roles. My goals in this section are to describe theories of identity development, explore shifts in professional identity through that lens, and use this knowledge to consider how to more effectively support educators as they make the transition from teaching children to working with their adult colleagues, specifically as literacy coaches.

Theories of Identity Development

Identity Changes

Some theories of identity development look across the length of a person's life and the growth a person goes through as she moves toward adulthood. Erikson's (1959) theory of development is foundational to such studies. His theory looks at the dissonance that is created as a person moves from one stage to the next over a lifetime, and helps one think about the negotiation of those dissonances that help people grow as individuals. Without dissonance there might not be learning that leads to the next level of development.

Psychologists, Harre and van Langenhove (1999) present the idea that people have two kinds of identities: personal and social. “Within the lifespan, while personal identity must at some level be stable, social identity generally changes” (p. 60). This stable, personal identity has to do with who one is as a person. But there are always changes in people’s lives and different communities to which they belong. As people move through these spaces, their social identity grows and changes in response to the environments in which they repeatedly find themselves. People take on roles in these places: parent, chairperson, friend. They demonstrate their social identities in what they say and do within different contexts. They can maintain a more or less constant personal identity, but can move in and out of social identities that might demand different actions or ways of being in a variety of social situations.

This viewpoint would help focus thinking about the professional shifts people make as they change jobs. Harre and van Langenhove (1999) refer to this as “positioning.” For instance, when someone has been a teacher in a school, and developed “ways of working” with colleagues based on that role as a peer, she may have to shift the way she positions herself as her role changes to literacy coach and she relates to those very same people in different ways. This can cause dissonance, both from the position of the coach, and from the teachers’ points of view—how she sees herself, and how she is seen by them. Both of these aspects contribute to a shifting sense of professional identity, and what she needs to call on to make that shift.

Burke (2006) refers to "identity control theory" as "a set of self-relevant meanings held as standards for the identity in question" (p. 81). He goes on to talk about the standards that are part of delineating a particular role, and how changes in identity evolve from understanding the meanings of those standards. In regard to the coaching role, these standards vary and are sometimes ill defined. In a survey of literature on the roles of reading specialists (including

literacy coaches) Galloway and Lesaux (2014) found that there were a variety of roles expected of these professionals, and that they varied among school districts. The International Literacy Association has developed *Standards for the Preparation of Literacy* Professionals (2018) that are available for school districts and universities. However, these may not be implemented depending on the school district's needs or understandings (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012; Matsumura et al., 2010). It is difficult to list a definitive list of standards for the role of literacy coach due to different interpretations and needs. Sometimes the standards of two different roles overlap and can inform one another. For example, in both the teacher and the coach role there is the particular knowledge of pedagogy and content that might well overlap, although the actual role descriptions would differ.

Rather than dissonance, Burke talks about "discrepancies." The discrepancies exist between a person's perceptions of the role and the standards. Other stakeholders who don't follow the perceived behaviors expected by the standard can affect these discrepancies as well. Any discrepancy between perceptions and the identity standard will affect behavior and emotional response: the larger the discrepancy, the larger the emotional response or distress (Calo, et al., 2015; Coburn & Woulfin, 2012; Lynch & Ferguson, 2010; Matsumura et al., 2010; Pletcher, 2015). When teachers transition to literacy coaches there is a move toward a new standard. They take many of the perceptions from their previous role to apply to the new standard, but in some cases the new standard is not clearly defined. The coach may not be adequately prepared to fulfill this standard. If the primary educational training of the coach has centered on knowing teaching practices to help students who have difficulty reading, but has not included working with adult learners, it might be difficult for the coach to lead professional development sessions or coach teachers (Galloway & Lesaux 2014; Selvaggi, 2018; Toll, 2018).

This might result in slow movement toward the new standard, until "the perceptions match the new standard" (Burke, 2006, p. 84).

Narrative Identity

Another group of theorists look at identity through the lens of narrative. They believe that people *are* the stories that they tell, and the stories they tell help to shape them (Cohen, 2008; Clandinin & Connelly,1989/2000; Soreide, 2006; Watson, 2006/2007). They agree that identity is a process that is changeable over time, and with experience (Kraus, 2006). As coaches engage in narratives, they not only share their thinking with others, but have the opportunity to reflect on what they are saying, and learn from that as well. "Identities are constructed in the narratives we create and tell about our lives; how we externalize ourselves to ourselves and to others…in other words, people construct narratives and narratives construct people, and our identities emerge through these processes" (Watson, 2006, p. 510). In the talk that occurs between and among professionals, comfort or discomfort with a role is expressed. Professional expertise, or the challenges of the day are discussed. Narratives can be analyzed to gain insight into how one positions oneself within the story—as the protagonist, the agent of the action, or as the receiver. Narratives can also be analyzed to reveal positioning, both of and by the narrator (Kraus, 2006). Kraus maintains that narratives can be used to create social bonds.

> People do not simply choose affiliations, they have to negotiate them with others and are positioned within them by others. Their distance to some collective identities or their closeness to others must be expressed by them—and affirmed or rejected by present others. (p. 109)

This thinking can be used to examine how professional identities are revealed and negotiated through narratives as people shift from one role to another. Although a person might have been

established and comfortable in one role, when a new role is assumed, negotiations might have to begin again. Developing new relationships with colleagues is a key ingredient to feeling successful in a new role.

Cohen (2008) studied teachers in a culturally diverse urban charter school in the Midwest where “expectations for professional engagement in and out of the classroom are high” (p. 80). Her data comes from a focus group of three teachers who had been at the school for at least five years. She studied role identity, and defined it as being “produced and reproduced as [it is] negotiated through social interaction” (p. 81). Cohen used discourse analysis to look for explicit and implicit indicators of teacher identity in the narratives that came out of her focus group session. She concluded that not only does engaging in dialogue give listeners the opportunity to theorize about professional identity of teachers, but it also allowed the teachers to express their values and beliefs, thus reinforcing and building their professional identities.

Engaging in dialogues with teachers who were transitioning to coaching roles, as I did, resulted in narratives that gave indications of participants' perceptions of themselves in the new roles and insights into successes and challenges they experienced as they made those transitions. It is interesting to consider how professional values and beliefs might be affected as a person takes on a new role. If the instruction the teachers engage in as they are coached is different from what they had previously practiced, theoretical dissonance may result as the coach works with her colleagues. The coach may have to reflect on how she introduces the new system of pedagogical and content-related understandings in order to anticipate how to deal with challenges related to the dissonance expressed by some colleagues.

Soreide (2006) did a similar study with five Norwegian female elementary school teachers. She showed how teaching identities were constructed through narrative, and through

discourse analysis those identities could be better understood. She noticed that there was a negotiation between several identities as teachers talked with each other about their roles. Narrative allows not only for the construction of a story, but also for reflection on that story by the speaker and the listener. Change and growth can happen as a result of that reflection. In this way, narrative analysis can help to understand the process of transition as participants reflect on the process of change as expressed in their stories.

Zembylas (2003) discussed teacher identity through a poststructural perspective of emotions. He maintained that "In a poststructuralist approach to identity, identity is a dynamic process of intersubjective discourses, experiences, and emotions: all of these change over time as discourses change, constantly providing new configurations" (p. 221). The teacher's positive and negative emotions were affected by the social interactions and the power structure in which she engaged. Her emotions affected the way she interacted within those boundaries as well. These emotional reactions influenced the teacher's sense of agency within these interactions, and could affect learning and motivation. Zembylas discussed the interconnectedness of social and emotional aspects of interactions, saying that society's image of what a teacher is affects how that teacher thinks about herself. If society or individuals value teachers, then this has a positive effect on the emotions, but if they see the teaching profession or teachers negatively, then it can take away from the recognition that would support that teacher's agency. The political climate within which teachers work also affected their identity. "Teacher identity, then, is an effect of discursive practices, and since emotion discourses are a paramount component of such practices, teacher identity formation is informed by discourses on teachers' emotions" (p. 224). This can relate to novice coaches as well. If the members of the school community have not accepted the coaching initiative, or if some members have negative feelings about it, then the coach’s job

becomes more difficult and her identity development may be impeded if she is not seen as an accepted member of the school community.

Situated Identity

Many researchers think about identity as *situated* and relational to the position of the person and those in their immediate environment (Colbeck, 2008; Gee, 2001; Kraus, 2006; Watson, 2006). The sociocultural aspect of identity is concerned with interactions between the person and others within a specific environment. As people take on new experiences, they develop understandings about how to act in specific situations identified with their profession. The idea of situated identities is broken down even further and separated into situated and substantive identities. Situated identities are changeable with shifts in the environment, professional situations, or social groups, whereas substantive identities are more stable across time (Day et al., 2006). Situated identities are reflected in the thinking of Harre and van Langenhove's (1999) previously discussed social identities as well as Burke's (2006) ideas about perceptions of identity standards that might shift with changes in roles.

As teachers take on roles as novice coaches or educational leaders they develop new sets of understandings about themselves as individuals and as they relate to others within their professional environment. These understandings are different from those they had as classroom teachers. Previously, their identity was centered on how they related to and educated children. Included in this image of themselves were their knowledge of content and pedagogy and their relationships with colleagues, parents, and the school community. As coaches take on new roles, their *situated identity* (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Gee, 2001) shifts because they are in a different environment, working with people in a different way—even if the teachers are the same people who were a part of the coach's previous professional community. Looking at the teacher

or coach's "identity as a product (a result of influences on the teacher) and a process (a form of ongoing interaction within teacher development) suggests the dynamic that takes place" (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 177). As coaches take on new learning with regard to the job at hand, they come to understand the product aspect of their role, the content of literacy learning, for example. When literacy coaches interact with colleagues they encounter in new ways, they have the opportunity to learn about the process of that interaction, how to work effectively with adult learners.

In their study of literacy coaches' situated identities, Rainville and Jones (2008) noted many adjustments that coaches made as they interacted with different teachers in variety of ways across a day or week. The coach was:

> …wielding power in a variety of ways, including positioning herself as expert and instructing a teacher, as colearner and subtly guiding teachers toward the rethinking of one particular practice, and as a person having difficulty wielding much power at all when faced with being positioned as an outsider. (p. 8)

This last statement illustrates that there are times when the role of the coach is not accepted or understood by some teachers in the school. It can even be misunderstood by the administration—or by the literacy coach herself. When this happens, there is dissonance and potential conflict or resistance. The literature on roles of reading specialists and coaches shows that in schools where the coach, teachers, and administration share a common understanding of the coach's role, student achievement is higher. In contrast, student achievement is lower in schools where there is more ambiguity about the role and where there is a school culture resistant to change (Galloway & Lesaux, 2014; Matsumura et al., 2010). There is a clear relationship between increased student achievement and clearly defining the role of the literacy coach and

supporting them with the professional development they will need to assume these roles. It is important to negotiate how coaches and colleagues will work together, especially when the role is not previously well-defined and the culture of the school is not accepting or open to change.

Professional Identity

The concept of professional identity looks at how a person's beliefs and values come into play when they engage in a new profession. Day et al., (2006) discuss how, especially in education, personal beliefs and life experiences are directly linked to how teachers understand and execute their role in the classroom, and how emotions affect what teachers do and how they relate to children and peers across the day. Teachers take on this new knowledge, and as they become more familiar with it they judge which aspects will work for them based on their own beliefs and comfort level with them (Cohen, 2007; Colbeck, 2008; Reybold, 2008). Because the teaching profession is based on personal, day-to-day relationships to such a large degree, there are connections between personal and professional identities because of the part emotions play into the role: "There are then, unavoidable interrelationships between professional and personal identities, if only because the overwhelming evidence is that teaching demands significant personal investment" (Day et al., 2006, p. 603).

Day et al. (2006) cite a study done by Kelchtermans (1993) of the career stories of ten experienced Belgian primary school teachers. Kelchtermans discussed how the professional self evolves over time, just as the personal self does. This is an important point to consider as one looks at the shifts in professional identity of literacy coaches. In other work, Kelchtermans (2009) introduces five parts in this evolution: self-image, self-esteem, job-motivation, task perception, and future perspective. Two themes that were found in his study were stability in the job and vulnerability. As teachers felt comfortable and established in their positions, and reached

their goals, they felt satisfied. If the person was negatively judged by others in the community or in the media, (relative to test scores, or student achievement), a feeling of vulnerability resulted. It is interesting to note that in this study, as vulnerability increased, there was a tendency toward passivity and conservatism (Day et al., p. 604). This feeling of uneasiness might also result from being in a place of dissonance, because of new initiatives or changes in procedures. It could be important to how one negotiates situational changes in identity. The dissonance that comes at times of change sometimes causes one to feel uncomfortable when moving into a new role.

Kelchtermans (2009) discusses teachers as those who are at the center of the act of teaching and points to the importance of considering the teacher as a *person*. Teaching is "relational and interactive" due to the fact that teachers engage in their practice with others (their students) and the curriculum. "One's actions while teaching, are being looked at, evaluated, and made sense of" (p.259). He goes on to state that a teacher's self-understanding is linked to how others see her, and it is important to consider this relational characteristic. He prefers the phrase, self-understanding, rather than identity because it includes looking at oneself as both product and process. I believe this relates to novice coaches, whose self-understanding is developing as they interact with their colleagues in a variety of ways.

> Teachers' [coaches'] narrative accounts of their experiences are not just informative about how they think about themselves. Rather they construct that self-understanding in the interactive act, at the same time (implicitly or explicitly) inviting the 'audience' to acknowledge, confirm or question and contradict the statement. Narrative accounts revealing one's self-understanding are moments of *interactive sense-making.* (p. 263)

This feeling is apparent as one takes on a new position or job. For the teacher moving toward being a coach, the safe, known place of relating to children as students and colleagues as

equals is replaced by feelings of dissonance that may occur while providing professional development, observing colleagues teaching, modeling practice for them, or engaging in coaching conversations. This shift involves taking on a role as one who is more knowledgeable—not quite on equal footing—and positioned differently within the school community. For those coaches who have worked in the same school prior to becoming a coach, the shift in position may be unsettling, both professionally and personally. For those joining a new school community as they start out as a coach, it can be equally disquieting, whether or not the new community is welcoming or open to coaching (Calo, et al., 2015; Hunt & Handsfield, 2012; Lynch & Ferguson, 2010; Matsumura et al., 2010; Pletcher, 2015).

Taking on professional identity occurs at two levels: externally and internally. In their article on doctors who are establishing their professional identity as both physicians and teachers, Stone et al., (2002) discuss the importance of socialization into a new role, that of teacher:

> Externally, individuals learn new information and develop a new social set while becoming acculturated to a profession. Internally, it becomes more of a transformation where the profession is seen as a calling, or as McGowen and Hart refer to it, subjective self-conceptualization associated with the role. (p. 181)

This group studied ten doctors who had been successful clinical teachers for at least two years. They found that a process of "professional socialization" occurred as practitioners became acculturated into the community of educators, and took on their new role among the more experienced doctor-educators. The researchers found that doctors took a stance as educators even though they had no formal training in teaching, and used the vocabulary of teaching although they did not have knowledge of educational theory.

Joining with others who are in the same profession and in the same role allows one to both observe and interact with those who have more experience. These more experienced mentors provide support and demonstrate knowledge and behaviors that are part of the profession. This works well when there are mentors close by who are in the same role, but when one takes on a new role in an institution where there is no one else doing that job, or when it is "new" to the institution, it can be complicated. People take on the role in an environment where no one understands what that role is…or where there are no mentors to follow. Literacy coaches frequently find themselves in such a position. They are either offered the position within their school and leave their teaching job behind, or they are hired into the school from outside and face not only learning the parameters of their new role, but learning it in a new environment with new colleagues.

In her chapter on professional identity development, Colbeck (2008) discusses how doctoral students work to develop professional identities as they shift from their previous roles. "Once an individual has accepted and internalized expectations for a role as part of his or her identity, that identity becomes a cognitive framework for interpreting new experiences" (p. 10). Support from others in the community of scholars can help the shift happen more smoothly. Colbeck says that people may organize the different situated identities they have into hierarchies, and may privilege those identities that have a higher status, denying the newer identities in a specific situation. "When two identities with contrasting meanings and expectations are activated at the same time, the individual is likely to experience stress" (p. 10). The transition from one role to another can present dissonance as a person takes on the new identity, and adds on the accompanying job expectations and social responsibilities (Burke, 2006, Colbeck, 2008).

Collay (2006) discusses the idea of teachers' professional identity, the factors that influence it, and how teachers can be supported when they take on leadership roles. She states that teaching is the one profession that people are exposed to throughout childhood and into the adult years. When a teacher begins a career in the classroom, she brings with her all of her years as a student, along with ideas about what teaching is as it was observed throughout the sixteen or more years of her own schooling. "This lifetime exposure to teachers' work means that teachers arrive at their first positions with strongly-held assumptions about who teachers are and what they do" (p. 133). Collay goes on to say that teachers encounter tensions as they shift from teaching to leadership roles. These tensions might come from external authority figures, or could be related to authority issues within the teacher herself. The shift in professional identity that happens as one moves from teacher to leader can be exacerbated by ambiguity issues with the responsibilities of the new position (Burke, 2006, Collay, 2006; Hunt & Handsfield, 2010; Matsumura et al., 2010). These ambiguity issues might be intensified when a teacher takes on a coaching role without fully understanding what it involves.

Role identities are socially situated within a community of practice. In education, this might be the individual school, or the district, made up of the professionals who work together to achieve common goals. Cohen (2008) discusses the fact that not only are teachers working within their community of colleagues who contribute to the meaning of the teaching role, but that the individual teacher must negotiate identity within the expectations of that community. "Social roles are powerful organizing structures because people get recognition, positive reinforcement from others, and other rewards when they accomplish roles successfully" (p. 82). Their importance varies depending on how much a person values that role, how often they engage in it, and how well the individual understands the "normative beliefs" that underpin the role.

Cohen (2008) uses discourse analysis to examine the conversations between teachers in order to understand how those conversations shape and demonstrate the teachers' identities. She maintains that providing opportunities for teachers to engage in talk with one another can help support them in reflecting on their professional identities. This is easy to facilitate within a school that might have fifteen or twenty teachers who work together as teams. But when the school has *one* literacy coach in the building, finding this kind of support mechanism is more challenging. The coach has to look beyond her own school environment to find other coaches with whom to dialogue and find support. Coaches who are fortunate to work in districts where there are several coaches usually find time to meet regularly to share ideas, successes, and challenges. This allows them to discuss their "normative" beliefs and aspects of the literacy initiative, and attempt to provide consistent implementation across the district.

Providing Support for Identity Development

Systems are needed as teachers, who, as stated earlier, rely on support to make the shift to coaching or leadership positions (Collay, 2006; Devos, 2010; Kreiner et al., 2006; Selvaggi, 2018; Toll, 2018; Warin et al., 2006). Teachers and coaches encounter many challenges as they attempt to take on new responsibilities, and it is important to discover which support systems need to be put in place to help them make these transitions. When people enter the teaching profession, they bring with them some understandings of what it is to be an educator, but there is still much to learn about the specific school culture and environment as well as much to consider about one's professional identity. When a literacy coach is hired from within the school, there is the potential problem of taking on a leadership role while readjusting well-established relationships. As has been mentioned earlier, if the role is ill-defined, or if others in the school

have not accepted the idea of having a literacy coach or do not understand the parameters of the role there can be dissonance on many levels (Calo, et al., 2015; Matsumura et al., 2010).

Transformational pedagogy might be used to help teachers move into leadership roles. "A transformational pedagogy must investigate both what teacher leaders know and how they know it, or address both informational and transformational learning" (Collay, 2006, p. 138). Teachers moving into a leadership position might engage in reflection so they can interpret their experiences and internalize them (Warin et al., 2006). Linking theory to practice will help with the process of learning as well. If teachers, administrators, and the new literacy coach engage in reflection around the changes that are happening based on the new role of coach, they may view the transition from multiple perspectives. Allowing people to reflect on the impact the change might have on them, both personally and professionally (with regard to previously held relationships) might be a helpful process.

Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) discuss the complexity of understanding identity, and the interconnections of the factors that shape its expression. They begin by exploring the definition of identity, and conclude that this definition is complex and as stated earlier in this paper, there are a combination of personal and professional aspects to a teacher's identity. Gee (2001) recognized that identity suggests a 'kind of person' within a particular context. Identity is changing, and constantly evolving as people learn new things and adapt to new situations.

It is important to support teachers or other educators who take on leadership roles and shift their professional identities in the process. This support can take the form of mentoring, time to reflect during the training process, and opportunities to engage with others in discussions about aspects of the new role. Shifting from teacher to literacy coach can mean a move to a leadership role within the school. The power dynamic between colleagues shifts, and can create

personnel (and personal) issues. The role of the literacy coach differs from that of a classroom teacher or reading specialist who work primarily with children. According to their research review, Galloway and Lesaux (2014) state that: "...both principals and literacy coaches reported that the job included formative observation of colleagues, modeling of instructional techniques, curriculum management, teacher training, and staff development" (p. 520). This variety of roles carries with them increased responsibility for school-wide initiatives and literacy success, as well as the professional development of the staff. It puts the coach in a position of power to be an agent of change that is inherently included in the role. With these shifts in power, comes a shift not only in the way the coach sees herself, but in how she is viewed by her colleagues. These power shifts might be exacerbated by social, gender, or racial issues (Collay, 2006; Sommerlad, 2007) as well as the existing culture of the school (Galloway and Lesaux 2014; Matsumura et al., 2010; Pletcher, 2015).

There is a need to address shifts in role and identity during the training process for teachers who are moving into leadership roles within their schools, and for literacy coaches who begin to work in schools where there are no clear parameters for the job. As coaches are trained, they learn what is possible as part of their new roles, but it is not until they have been assigned to a position within a school that they discern what exactly is involved (Selvaggi, 2018). Educational programs might include opportunities for coaches-in-training to reflect on the perceived shifts they anticipate, and consider the new responsibilities they will incur. Collay (2006) suggests three actions that can be taken by educators: “revisit assumptions about how teachers lead; analyze patterns of professional socialization that support and hinder teacher leadership; and model a transformational pedagogy in our educational leadership programs” (p. 134).

The process of taking on a new, situated identity is not static. It is an ongoing voyage, one that can be supported or thwarted along the way. It is important to give trainees opportunities to learn about the new role, work with others in the field to understand the role more fully, and then as individuals, evaluate and internalize it (Colbeck, 2008; Gibson et al., 2010; Hall & Zacher, 2007; Selvaggi, 2018; Toll, 2018; Watson, 2006). The development of professional identity is nurtured through inclusion in communities of practice. Because literacy coaches are frequently isolated within their buildings, there is little opportunity within their school to interact with other coaches. They can meet with teachers and administrators within their buildings, but meeting with other literacy coaches to discuss theory and practice, successes and challenges, would position them on common ground with colleagues in the same role, and help them more readily identify themselves as coaches.

"The teachers [coach's] active, critical engagement in theorizing professional identity suggests that ample opportunities to engage in identity talk should be an important part of teachers' [coach's] professional environment" (Cohen, p. 92). If coaches, teachers, and administrators engage in conversation around the literacy coach's position, it might help all parties understand the role better and help the coach step into her new shoes. Identity development is socially constructed, through dialogue, interactions, and demonstration of professional expertise (Gibson et al., 2010; Pletcher, 2015; Reybold, 2008; Robertson, et al., 2020). One "becomes" a literacy coach through training, living the role, negotiating it though interactions and conversation, and receiving support along the way.

Literacy Collaborative Training

When teachers come to the Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative, they are supported with course work, classroom visits, coaching, and ongoing professional

development. There is much to learn within a small amount of time, and the learning occurs as the role transition is taking place so that there is time to practice with the support of university faculty-liaisons. This is a challenging endeavor for most people, even with the amount of support they are given. It challenges them on professional, emotional, and personal levels. These novice coaches have one foot firmly planted in their classrooms, still positioned as teachers during their first year of training. After that they straddle the positions of teacher and coach as they transition into their roles as literacy coaches and then take on even more responsibilities across the district.

Supporting people who move into new professional roles is an important task that requires appreciating the factors that contribute to understanding not only the parameters of the role, but the social and professional attributes that help them to *be* the person in that role within the context in which they will be working. Support can happen in a variety of contexts: within universities, within the school setting, and within the community of literacy specialists and coaches (Galloway & Lesaux, 2014; Selvaggi, 2018; Toll, 2018). The literature supports the notion that engaging in talk with others in similar roles, reflecting on their journeys, and attending to the emotional and professional dynamics of identity change can provide the kind of support that will lead to smoother transitions. Providing experiences that simulate the role or give people opportunities to discuss and reflect on it would be helpful as would defining and building clear expectations of the role with administrators and colleagues within the individual school settings. Understanding the complexities of the role, as well as the theories of professional identity development and how to support it are important for those who work in educational programs for teachers and literacy coaches.

As part of this study I analyzed the narratives of coaches in order to examine their transitions into their coaching role. This included their work with with teachers and

administrators in their schools, administrators in their districts, and groups of coaches working together. The narratives contained references to the emotional, social, and educational aspects of their roles. The stories offered insights into how the coaches saw themselves in the context of their current professional lives. They expressed differing levels of comfort and discomfort with their role and revealed differences in their view of themselves as coaches and the implicit demands of their professional transition. As I analyzed their stories many commonalities and some differences emerged. However, they all painted pictures of people very much in transition into a new and somewhat intimidating professional role.

Adult Learning and Professional Development

Learning in adulthood is multifaceted and multipurpose. Merriam et al. (2007) advise that it can take place in formal, non-formal, or informal settings. It can be individual or organizational. Sometimes people take on new learning because of personal interests or needs. For example, learning a new language, or how to do home repairs. At other times the learning is professionally oriented: on-the-job training or continued professional development to keep current with the latest trends in one's line of work, or to conform to training initiatives within an organization. In some cases, the purposes might support a combination of personal and professional goals, such as when one works toward an advanced degree in education.

In some professions, the professional growth and development might happen across the organization. An example of this kind of organizational learning might be the trend toward professional learning communities in education. Members of a school district or individual school might decide to work together on a common initiative, and make a plan for engaging in study and discussion that will help achieve that goal. This may lead to organizational learning that could "change an organization's practices and culture" (Merriam et al., p. 43). Adult learning

can happen for a variety of reasons and in a variety of settings. The focus in this section is on formal adult learning that takes place in educational settings: academically, in the college setting (both face-to-face and virtually) and in the classrooms and meeting rooms of elementary schools.

As I stated above, there are a variety of reasons *why* people decide to undertake learning...some of them voluntary, and some required by employers. Merriam et al., (2007) cite several reasons why people participate in adult learning based on research done by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (Valentine, 1997, as cited in Merriam et al., 2007). Chief among these reasons (90.6%) was career or job related learning, with only 10.4 percent attributing the desire for learning to personal interests (p. 62). They also consider why people do *not* engage in learning or professional development. Several studies have indicated that cost, time, and personal responsibilities are high on the list of why adults do not participate in formal learning (Johnstone & Rivera, 1965; Valentine, 1997, as cited in Merriam et al., 2007). In addition, lack of confidence was cited as a contributing reason (p. 66). Women were more likely to list family related responsibilities as interfering with continuing their learning, while men related that job responsibilities kept them from participating. It is interesting to note here that the vast majority of people who have been trained as literacy coaches at Lesley's CRRLC have been women. During the time I worked there, there were fewer than ten men, and over two-hundred women who completed the program. This is, to a large extent due to the gender distribution of people who teach at the elementary level. There are currently more women than men who teach in kindergarten through grade eight schools.

Those who do apply to their schools to take on the position of literacy coach through the CRRLC do not have to worry about personal costs, because their school districts pay the tuition for the three required courses, travel and lodging expenses as well as ongoing professional

development in the years following initial training. The program requires them to attend several weeks of classes at Lesley University, which means many must travel and take time away from their families and friends across a two-year period. They must also engage in rigorous study: reading, writing, and videotaping their teaching as they go through the process. In addition to being away from home for class time at Lesley, they take time when they are at home and teaching in their full-time positions to successfully complete the required coursework. They prepare substitute plans for their classrooms each week they are away. Even though there is no financial burden on them to do this work, there is often a heavy impact on their personal and professional lives.

The Literacy Collaborative program is very demanding on peoples' time, energy, and lifestyles. There have been several instances over the years where people have decided to drop out after the first few weeks of classes because of the intensity of the program and the impact it has on their personal lives. During interviews with potential candidates there is a concerted effort to explain the rigorous nature of the coursework and the ways in which this learning experience will potentially affect their lives. Some people understand this or cope with the strain, while others don’t initially grasp the full import. Schools invest a large amount of money into training these professionals, and when coaches drop out, it has a huge impact on the potential success of the literacy initiative in the school or district.

Assumptions, Theories, and Models

Andragogy

Whether one calls Malcolm Knowles' (1980) ideas about adult learning a theory, a model, or a collection of understandings about adult learners, his ideas on andragogy are most frequently the first mentioned in texts on adult learning (Kang, 2007; Kiley et al., 2004; Merriam, 2008;

Merriam et al., 2007; Trotter, 2006). Knowles defines andragogy as the "art and science of helping adults learn" as opposed to pedagogy, which focuses on helping children learn (Knowles, 1980, p. 43). He compares the assumptions of pedagogy and andragogy, noting that when thinking about the learner, the pedagogical assumptions are that learners are passive receivers of information who depend on the teacher to convey content related to subject matter. Because they are young, children bring little experience with them, and they are ready to learn when society says they are ready. Andragogy, on the other hand, proposes that adult learners are ready to be self-directed. Yes, they benefit from having a teacher facilitate their learning, but they are more in charge of where, when, and what they are ready to learn. Knowles also believes that adults, in contrast to children, bring a lifetime of experience with them, and that new learning must be connected to their previous experiences if those learning experiences are to be meaningful. Adults see learning as contributing to their developing competence in a variety of areas: sometimes related to their work, and sometimes to their personal lives. Adults can apply their new learning immediately to their professions or to their interests, while from a pedagogical point of view, children acquire knowledge for knowledge's sake, in order to learn more before moving onto the next level of schooling.

It is interesting to note that Knowles thinks of these two approaches as a "models of assumptions" related to learning and teaching, and reports that once his colleagues began using his model of teaching with children, using the understandings of andragogy, "they were producing superior learning" (p. 43-44). In fact, Knowles goes on to say that he sees pedagogy and andragogy on a continuum and not as separate entities; that children and adults can engage in both, depending on their learning needs at a particular time. Knowles points out that children learn to be passive receivers of information as a result of the more traditional teaching practices

that they are exposed to. As adults, they sometimes expect these same practices, that is, the teacher standing in front of the class delivering the information. It sometimes takes time for adults to understand that they can be active and engaged in the process of learning. This depends of course, on their previous experiences with education, and the culture in which they were raised.

Knowles proposes principles of teaching that take into consideration the needs of adult learners as is stated in the andragogy model. He suggests that learners clarify their purpose and desired outcomes for engaging in specific learning. The teacher can assist in clarifying these outcomes by defining or modeling what "successful" achievement would look like, and helping the learners to identify specific learning goals that would lead to achieving the outcomes. Teachers construct varied learning experiences that will facilitate learning, and a sense of mutual inquiry (Knowles, p. 57). Kiley et al., (2004) as well as Knowles, suggest that educators take time to get to know their adult students first, in order to be able to support their needs as learners. This includes finding out about their experiences and their needs, and learning about possible obstacles to their learning.

Knowles' set of assumptions is centered on individual learners. He and others who discuss his model (Kiley et al., 2004; Merriam et al., 2007) look at it as an analysis of the way people learn that then informs teaching practices. Knowles (1980) does not see his set of assumptions as the end all and be all of adult education. In fact, he discusses how they can be applied to working with children in order to open up the possibilities of more self-directed or self-motivated learning in young people that will lead adults to be life-long learners. He states, "I don't see andragogy as an ideology at all, but a system of assumptions about learners that needs to be tested out for different learners in different situations" (p. 59).

Merriam et al. (2007) discuss the challenges that other researchers have made to Knowles' work. It seems as if others look at it as a theory, even though Knowles thought more broadly about it, and they try to argue against it from that position. The biggest objection seems to be that it focuses on individual learners, outside of their social milieu, and that it is necessary to see people as being part of a community, and as having a cultural background that affects their learning (p. 88). Merriam et al. cite Jarvis, (1989) and Sandlin (2005) as challenging Knowles' lack of placing learning in context. Sandlin makes the point that the lack of attention to societal factors like race, gender, and culture privilege the point of view of the dominant, white, male culture and diminish the importance of others (Sandlin, 2005, as cited in Merriam et al., p. 88).

Constructivism

For many people who work in the field of education, their introduction to constructivist theories began with Piaget's *The Language and Thought of the Child* (1926) and Vygotsky's *Thought and Language* (1962). Both men looked at how children develop their thinking processes through active engagement in learning activities, but their theories differ in several key aspects. One of the main differences is how they look at the social context of learning. Whereas Piaget sees the child interacting with his environment, and learning independently, Vygotsky sees the learning occurring within a social and cultural setting. In fact, Vygotsky looks at three levels of social context: learning with one other individual; within a structural context, like a school; and within the greater cultural milieu (Bodrova & Leong, 2007). According to Bodrova and Leong, Vygotsky saw language as a mediating tool to be used between the learner and the teacher, and proposed that learning is a socially mediated action. "Because learning occurs in shared situations, language is an important tool for appropriating other mental tools. To share an

activity, we must talk about that activity. Unless we talk we will never be able to know each other's meanings" (p. 14).

Vygotsky recognizes different developmental periods of learning and the idiosyncratic nature of individual learners. For these reasons teachers should know students well, and be able to support them in their zone of proximal development. He believes that students bring with them all of their prior knowledge as part of their learning history, and that teaching should take into consideration what the child knows, and what the child is ready to know. It is here that the learning happens. Fosnot (2005) summarizes some general principles from this learning theory that can be applied to teaching adults: "(1) learning *is* development; (2) disequilibrium facilitates learning; (3) reflective abstraction is the driving force of learning; and (4) dialogue within a community engenders further thinking" (p. 33-34).

Although Vygotsky's constructivist ideas are used to describe children's learning, they have been developed and applied to adult learning models as well (Kegan, 2000; Lambert et al., 2002; Merriam et al., 2007; Spigner-Littles & Anderson, 1999). "Concepts such as cognitive apprenticeship, situated learning, reflective practice and communities of practice are found in both adult learning and constructivist literature" (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 293). Adults bring with them a lifetime of experiences, and new learning must take into consideration that experience, whether it is academic, practical, or emotional. Connecting the new learning to what is already known allows people to place it within the context they bring with them. "In order for learning to occur and become an integrated useful part of the learner's memory, new information must be somehow tied to the learner's goals, experiences, previous knowledge, values, beliefs, and or socio-cultural factors" (Spigner-Littles & Anderson, 1999).

It is important for instructors to take into consideration socio-cultural factors when working with adult learners, both to consider the cultural backgrounds of the people they are teaching, and to help those people be mindful of using critical reflection as they engage in learning. "...they may take an approach that focuses on social justice, encouraging students to question critically why social inequities exist and how these inequalities remain part of the educational experience" (Baumgartner, 2001, p. 34).

Transformative Learning

Mezirow (1997, 2000) introduces the Transformational Learning theory as learning that changes a person's frame of reference, which is the way in which one sees the world and all that is in it. A frame of reference is built over a lifetime and supported by the person's cultural, social, and educational background. "Learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one's experience as a guide to future action" (2000, p. 5). The goal of transformative learning is to help shift a person's habit of mind toward being more inclusive, open, and reflective. The learning happens through constructive discourse with others that helps expand the learner's point of view.

Frames of reference are "the structure of assumptions and expectations through which we filter sense impressions" (2000, p. 16). Mezirow goes on to say that the lens we see through predisposes us to be more accepting of frames of reference that are similar to our own, and to be skeptical of those that are not. Frames of reference have two dimensions, as mentioned above: habits of mind, and points of view. Habits of mind are a "set of assumptions" that might fall within the following categories: sociolinguistic, moral-ethical, epistemic, philosophical, psychological, or aesthetic (2000, p. 17). If we look at epistemic assumptions, for example, they might revolve around a particular approach to teaching and learning: a more traditional

pedagogical approach, versus a constructivist approach. Habits of mind, according to Mezirow are articulated as points of view. These points of view are demonstrated through our behaviors, feelings, judgments and beliefs on an unconscious level. Our actions in the world are grounded in our habits of mind and point of view. We often reject points of view that are not in line with our own. Mezirow goes on to say that we reject these alternate points of view because our own are so much a part of our identities, that we see other points of views as challenging those identities.

"Learning occurs in one of four ways: by elaborating existing frames of reference, by learning new frames of reference, by transforming points of view, or by transforming habits of mind" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 19). Mezirow asserts that we have to become critically reflective of our own assumptions if we are to achieve transformational learning. To do this we must engage in discourse in order to both hear new viewpoints, discuss our own, and put them into perspective within the new learning. "Transformative learning refers to transforming a problematic frame of reference to make it more dependable in our adult life by generating opinions and interpretations that are more justified" (p. 20). Reflection is key here because if we are convinced that our assumptions are "correct," then we might never think to change them. If, however, we are presented with alternatives, and engage in discussions with others, and in reflective dialogue with ourselves, we may come to wonder if our current assumptions are correct, or perhaps, the only way to look at an issue. If indeed we do engage in this discourse and reflection, we may decide that there are other points of view to consider, and ultimately change our habits of mind to integrate these new understandings.

Mezirow (2000) outlines what happens during transformational learning as a series of phases that begin with a disorientating dilemma. This can be an encounter that challenges our

habit of mind. It unsettles us and causes us to question our beliefs or way of being. This is followed by a series of steps that include reflection, recognition, exploration, and planning a course of action. After making a plan and acquiring new skills and knowledge, the person tries out the new role and over time, builds confidence until this new practice is fully integrated into the person's life (p. 22). Transformational learning is at a deep level that goes across social and cultural learning. It becomes a new way of being in the world.

One example from education might involve a teacher who has been teaching using traditional methods of lecture and note-taking because she believes transmitting information is the best way for students to learn. However, if she participates in a learning experience that demonstrates how students who engage in discussion and problem-solving with their peers become more engaged and active in learning, she may begin to question whether her point of view is the only way to approach teaching. While engaging in discussion with other teachers who use this more constructive approach to learning, or engaging in constructive experiences during professional development sessions with colleagues, she may initially feel threatened by the realization that there may be other, different or more effective teaching methods. However, if she takes the risk, observes others, and eventually tries it for herself, she may find that it is an effective, and more engaging way to teach and learn. This shift may impact her point of view, because she will see students not as passive receivers of information, but as active, engaged participants in their own learning. She will look for new ways to provide constructive experiences across the day. In addition, it might lead her to think about power structures in schools, and how developing agency in her students might empower them to think outside of the hegemonic effects of education on gender, race, or economic strata.

However, there are some who might question whether this is truly an example of transformational learning. Newman (2010) might argue that the example above would be an example of *good* learning, but that it is not transformational. He says that *transformational* is too strong a word, and that the theory itself is too complex to be possible. He asserts that, "The one constant in all definitions of learning is change. And these changes are to be expected from well-resourced and competently delivered programs" (p. 38). He goes on to cite a study by King (2009) who surveyed people in order to evaluate transformational learning. Newman maintains that we cannot trust that people have undergone transformational learning just because they say they have. He defends his position against transformational learning by listing four flaws in the research that supports it. He maintains that the examples of transformational learning cited in Mezirow's book, *Learning as Transformation* (2000) are examples of *good* teaching practices, and says that the term 'transformational' has been overused. Newman (2010) cites the following aspects of learning: instrumental, communicative, affective, interpretive, essential, critical, political, passionate, and moral. “In different acts of learning different aspects will dominate, but when all nine are present we will have, with all the ambiguity the word implies, *good* learning" (p.51).

Kegan (2000) discusses a constructive developmental approach to growth, maintaining that growth and development is a lifelong process, and that adults have different meaning systems through which they understand experiences. Kegan mentions "four quadrants of the psychological self" (p. 46) that have implications when we think about learning: cognitive, affective, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. The cognitive realm encompasses a person's ability to take on new information and integrate it into what is already known. The affective domain deals with emotions, how the person sees herself: active or passive, agentive or victimized.

Interpersonal refers to how the learner relates to and interacts with other people, and intrapersonal refers to how the learner reflects on her own learning and development. Learning can affect any or all of these aspects, as well as being affected *by* them. If a person is overwhelmed with emotions, whether they relate to the learning environment or to personal issues, it is very difficult for learning to occur (Dirkx, 2008; Kegan, 2000; Shuck, et al., 2007).

Kegan, in discussing transformational learning, cautions against overgeneralizing the term, and seeks to discuss the "genuinely landscape-altering potential in the concept of transformational learning" (2000, p. 47). He maintains that there is a difference between informational learning and transformational learning, but that they are both important. He says that rather than just behavioral changes, one must look for epistemological changes if the learning is to be transformational. In addition to several other points, he says that adult educators must take time to know their students' current epistemologies as well as the "epistemological complexity of the present learning challenges they face in their lives" (p. 48).

Kegan compares informative and transformative learning, and maintains that the former affects changes in *what* we know, whereas the latter affects changes in *how* we know, which is what epistemology is all about. He goes on to talk about *meaning-forming* and *reforming meaning-forming* as being essential to epistemological development and the "psychological line of thought" that is constructive developmentalism (p. 53). Within this paradigm he discusses a "temporary equilibrium between the subject and the object in one's knowing" (p. 53). Kegan explains that the *object* of one's knowing is what we can control, and reflect on, whereas *subject* is something—a way of being, perhaps—that controls us. For example, we might be controlled by society's views of who we should be, until we understand how those expectations limit us, and we determine to rise above them and take control of our lives. He says, "Constructive-

developmental theory looks at the process it calls development as the gradual process by which what was 'subject' in our knowing becomes 'object'" (p. 53). This, to Kegan is empowerment and growth, and he maintains that in order for it to occur, the educator needs to know where the student currently understands in order to facilitate the learning and growth that will lead to transformative learning.

Merriam et al. (2007) cite Freire's (2000) sociocultural approach to adult education as an example of transformational learning. They describe the relationship between student and teacher, and how it changes over time as the learner engages in problem solving and dialogue. "Through dialogue, generative themes or concerns are posed by the learners themselves and become the content of a learning situation" (Merriam et al., p. 140). They describe Freire's idea of conscientization as being similar to Mezirow's idea of perspective transformation.

> Although conscientization is always a political act in Freire's theory, it can be seen as similar to perspective transformation in its characterization of adult learning as the process of becoming aware of one's assumptions, beliefs, and values and then transforming those assumptions into a new perspective or level of consciousness (p. 141).

Brookfield (2000) takes up the idea of critical reflection and advises that we need to look closely at the term, and keep its original meaning, which is at a much deeper plane than the many ways it is currently used.

> For something to count as an example of critical learning, critical analysis, or critical reflection, I believe that the persons concerned must engage in some sort of power analysis of the situation or context in which the learning is happening. They must also try to identify assumptions they hold dear that are actually destroying their sense of well-being and serving the interests of others: that is, hegemonic assumptions." (p. 126)

Belenky and Stanton (2000) also address critical reflection as they discuss asymmetrical relationships between learners and teachers and Mezirow's focus on the ultimate goals of development. Learning takes place across a lifetime, and during that lifetime the kinds of relationships people have with their teachers, whoever those teachers may be, creates a predisposition toward learning that can color the learner's vision of herself, and her identity as a learner. Marginalized learners seldom see themselves as having a voice in educational settings. "Transformational theory also presumes relations of equality among participants in reflective discourse when, in actuality, most human relationships are asymmetrical" (Belenky & Stanton, 2000, p. 73). The authors go on to contrast the characteristics that Mezirow describes as being important to transformative learning, "maturity, education, safety, health, economic security, and emotional intelligence" (Mezirow as cited in Belenky and Stanton, 2000, p. 73) with those characteristics of disadvantaged citizens who may be lacking several or all of those preconditions because of their life situations. Belenky and Stanton say that discourse communities where marginalized learners feel free to engage, reflect, and learn from others can be established, but that teachers must develop conditions that take into consideration the needs of the learners. The ideas behind transformational learning include reflecting on the inequities of society and helping disenfranchised people get the most out of life.

There are clearly many supporters of Mezirow's theory, and the questions that some raise (Brookfield, 2000; Kegan, 2000; Newman, 2010) have to do with the scope or depth of perspective transformation, the overgeneralization of the term, or whether the term is appropriate at all. Despite these challenges, it is a theory that presents many aspects of adult learning that are reflected in other theories as well. Perhaps, as Newman says, it is all *good* teaching and learning.

Women, Learning, and Development

Belenky and Stanton (2000) discuss women's learning and development as they look at how Gilligan's (1982, 1993) work addressed Kohlberg's (1984) research on moral development. Kolberg's research subjects were all male, and so his "levels of moral reasoning" were based on the responses of men and boys to a series of moral dilemmas. Gilligan learned that when she mapped out female responses to those same questions, women and girls responded differently, noting "an ethic of care" and "response mode" that included using dialogue to resolve conflicts (Belenky & Stanton, p. 78). Belenky and Stanton share understandings gained from *Women's Ways of Knowing* (Belenky et al., 1996), a study of the responses of one hundred thirty women with regard to acquiring knowledge and ideas. From this data the researchers describe five meaning-making frameworks that they maintain are important to consider as we look at development.

These categories of learners are: Silenced, Received, Subjective, Procedural, and Constructivist Knowers. Belenky and Stanton describe a process that is designed to help people develop the ability to effectively engage in discourse communities. They describe Silenced Knowers as "voiceless," and limited to learning only from their own experiences. They do not see themselves as being able to be taught and do not see words as anything else but weapons. These women need safe environments where they can be drawn into conversations with caring people. Bridwell (2012) describes such a setting in her research with homeless African American women in Boston. Women attending classes at a homeless shelter to work on their GED took part in a class called "Loves Herself" as well as more academic classes. During the class, women were encouraged to engage in dialogue with one another in order to share their hopes, fears, and experiences. This kind of environment might be effective in creating the safe place needed to move Silenced Knowers forward.

The next category, Received Knowers, learn from others and do not question authority. They think that knowledge exists in the world and that it is passed on from person to person. They do not understand that knowledge can be generated, or that they can generate it on their own. Received Knowers see knowledge as absolute and unquestionable. In contrast, the next category of learners, Subjective Knowers, understand that they can develop ideas of their own, and in fact they focus more on their own ideas than on the ideas of others. They do not have the ability to look at other's ideas and they question authority. They have difficulty in engaging in reflective dialogue because they are threatened by thinking that there might be ideas other than their own.

The fourth category, Procedural Knowing, is distinguished by having two different approaches to learning: separate, and connected. Separate Knowers take a questioning stance when considering other people's knowledge, and look for flaws in their arguments. This can work against having effective dialogues because it does not create a mutually respective playing field and can shut down other people's thinking. Connected Knowers, on the other hand, look for strengths in other people's ideas, and try to connect to the other person's point of view. By looking at ideas more positively, people with the connected way of knowing are open to listening and considering other people's as equal to their own. This makes it possible to engage in reflective dialogue and to take on new thinking and learning through dialogue and creating a level playing field where all ideas are respected.

The final group, Constructed Knowers, learn through taking a stance that includes many of the aspects of the approaches to learning described above. They respect knowledge and experience and they are able to both criticize and be empathetic toward other people's ideas. "Constructivists have thrown aside the dichotomies that privilege men over women, speaking

over listening, thinking over feeling, doubting over believing, and public over private" (Belenky & Stanton, 2000, p. 90). Belenky and Stanton feel strongly that learning occurs best on a level playing field. Whether the people are adults, men, women, or children, those involved in creating dialogues with one another must come to the table with respect and an understanding that ideas hold merit. As they compare Mezirow's transformative learning theory and their analysis of women's ways of knowing, they state:

> "...transformative learning....as described by Mezirow—places Separate Knowing in a central role in the construction of new knowledge and adult transformations. It seems equally clear that there are other processes that are equally vital but less well described in this body of work." (p. 91)

Their work looking at how women see themselves as learners has opened up new possibilities of thinking with regard to planning for meaningful educational experiences that will help all learners, including those who may be disenfranchised.

Belenky and Stanton go on to describe the teachers and leaders who would be most effective in working toward developing equitable learning opportunities. They state that effective teachers first work to understand where their students are coming from, and keep this knowledge in hand as they construct learning experiences and work with individuals. *Women's Ways of Knowing* coined the term "midwife-teacher" to describe educators who see their students as active constructors of knowledge and work hard to draw out their best thinking" (p. 92). This to me, is an analogy that encourages prospective educators, whether they are teaching adults or children, to consider the learner first, and to assess in some way, where the learner is and what she already understands. Understanding this, the teacher can then proceed to support the student by creating learning situations that are in what Vygotsky referred to as the learner's zone of

proximal development—at the edge of the known, and the yet to be known. By creating emotionally safe, respectful learning environments, all people can be free to explore ideas without fear of criticism or ridicule, where learning and growth are more likely to occur.

Literacy Collaborative Training

Literacy coaches have been attending classes at Lesley University's Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative (CRRLC) for over twenty years. They come to the center to learn how to work with other adult learners as professional developers and literacy coaches. Each person engages in two years of rigorous instruction and coaching while applying a new approach to teaching literacy within their classrooms or with individual students (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Scharer et al., 2008). Across the years, they develop collegial relationships with their instructors as well as their peers and experience a variety of instructional contexts designed to maximize their learning experience in content related to literacy learning, classroom teaching, planning professional development, and literacy coaching. Because of the social constructivist foundation of the work at the CRRLC, they engage in conversations with their cohort members and faculty to co-construct new learning, observe experienced coaches at work and debrief what they see, and have many opportunities to reflect on their own and others' practice. They learn instructional techniques; dig into the content areas and processes of reading and writing; and engage in and observe coaching simulations with one another. They learn about and practice the language of coaching, and how to support the whole-school literacy initiative by working with their leadership team. People experience a variety of instructional experiences: attend classes where new topics are introduced and discussed; view videos of exemplary teaching followed by discussion and reflection; watch teaching demonstrations "behind-the-glass;"[2] visit classrooms to

[2] The "behind-the-glass experience happens in a specially designed learning environment with a one-way mirror that separates the teaching demonstration from the students who are observing it. On one side of the glass, a teacher works with a small group

observe classroom management, organization, and teaching; or share their own videos of lessons with others in their cohort to observe and reflect on the implementation of new teaching practices. They role-play coaching conversations with one another, and work together to develop professional development sessions that they will use with colleagues in their own school settings. Over the course of these two years, novice coaches are involved in an intense "learning on the job" experience as they take all the elements of learning and apply them to their own work in their schools. First they teach young students in the literacy workshops, and then work with their colleagues during professional development and coaching sessions where they introduce the new teaching methods to their peers. The goal of all of this hard work is to implement a cohesive literacy model across all classrooms within the school, and to become the literacy coach who supports that implementation. The goal from the Lesley CRRLC instructor's point of view is to provide exceptional educational experiences that take into consideration how adults learn. By modeling effective instruction, and a variety of ways to engage adult learners, the faculty-liaisons teach at many different levels.

This particular coaching model differs from others[3] in that it is grounded in one model of literacy teaching that is implemented in the school over time and the development of a whole-school approach to supporting literacy learning. The coach and principal work together with a literacy team to support the implementation. It is a complex model that requires shared leadership and buy-in by all stakeholders in the district: the superintendent, the school board, principals, literacy coaches, parents, and teachers. There is an enormous amount of pressure on

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of students, or an individual student to demonstrate a lesson. On the other side of the mirror, teachers watch the lesson with an instructor who continually prompts them to think and talk about what they are noticing as the lesson unfolds.

[3] Some coaching models support whole school initiatives, like Read First, a federal program that encouraged the use of data analysis and prescriptive materials to support improved student achievement. Other coaches work in schools that have more flexible programs or that do not attach in-house professional development to coaching.

the coach to succeed in her own learning and development, and to become a literacy leader in her school who provides a foundation of learning to all members of the school community.

The developers of the Literacy Collaborative model took a "systems approach" (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Scharer et al., 2008) to planning a model of professional development that leads to improved teaching and learning in schools. They developed a "list of interrelated actions, all of which are essential to creating an effective professional development plan that will have lasting effects" (Lyons & Pinnell, 2001, p. 45). These include, among other things, gathering information about the school, creating a vision and goals, designing a professional development and coaching plan, building resources and materials, and creating a culture of reflection and collaboration. In addition to long-term professional development, they recommend frequent monitoring and assessment to determine the effectiveness of all levels of implementation as well as student achievement (Fig. 5.1, p. 46). Key to the success of the program is the literacy coach. Because of this, careful thought and planning go into the selection and preparation of literacy coaches for their multifaceted roles schools.

The faculty-liaisons at the Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative at Lesley University focus on planning effective instruction in pedagogical methods, the content area of literacy and in working as coaches and professional developers with adult learners. It is a many-layered approach that is designed to immerse coaches in instructional practices and content knowledge related to the reading and writing processes and change in kindergarten to eighth grade student learning over time. In addition, the instructional opportunities grounded in social constructivist theory, are structured to engage the coaches in discussions, dialogues, and active learning experiences that will help them plan their own professional development sessions for their colleagues in a like fashion.

As I trained novice coaches, I observed their transition into the position of literacy coach as sometimes a fairly smooth process, and at other times quite bumpy and challenging. It was not the same as engaging in a course of study for one's own personal or professional growth, like enrolling in a master's degree program. The Literacy Collaborative literacy coach is part of her school community and the members of that community are depending on her to become knowledgeable in the literacy model and in her ability to work with other adult learners. The intellectual and professional pressures to succeed often lead the coach to experience intense emotional responses along the way: both positive and negative.

Concluding Thoughts

Novice Literacy Collaborative coaches maintain their teaching position full-time in year one of training while taking graduate-level courses and implementing new instructional practices into daily routines. They then extend their work to planning and facilitating professional development and coaching for colleagues while teaching students part-time. They have one foot planted firmly in their roles as teachers, while stepping tentatively into new roles as coaches. It is a delicate balance that positions them in a new space, both from their own perspective and that of their colleagues. This complex combination of learning and teaching while transitioning into new roles calls on the novice coaches to engage at many levels, cognitive, affective, interpersonal, and intrapersonal (Brookfield, 2001).

Teaching in Literacy Collaborative schools is grounded in the social constructivist theory of Vygotsky. Many of the adult learning theories mentioned in this paper have constructivist roots, and the role of active participatory discourse is considered to be important to learning. Developing learning environments where people (whether children or adults) feel safe and valued is a key component of teaching and learning with all age groups. Literacy coaches first

establish their own classrooms and take on the teaching practices that will build agency and engagement in children. Next they move on to creating learning communities with their colleagues that seek to create constructed knowers, as Belenky and Stanton (2000) describe them. The literacy coaches work to understand where the teachers in their school are coming from, experientially and philosophically and build on that knowledge to support a cohesive approach to teaching across the school.

Chapter 3: Methods

In the years I worked with literacy coaches, teaching and coaching them as they took on new pedagogical and content knowledge, I listened to many stories of their everyday experiences. That is part of being a coach: listening. It was also part of my role to reflect on what was said, and engage in constructive dialogue to help both novice and experienced coaches broaden their understandings and take on new learning. The act of narrating is in itself a constructive act. One takes memories of experiences and "tells" them. Considering audience and setting, we tell our stories in different ways to different people across time. We decide which episodes to privilege and which to omit. And over time, the story may change based on new experiences lived along the way.

The coaches I worked with told their stories, and so did I. At times our stories intertwined around common experiences. Those stories, narratives of our professional lives, had the potential to reveal something about the journeys we were on and how those journeys affected who we became. In this section I will delve into the world of narrative: its structure, its meaning to people's lives, the methodologies of narrative analysis, and its place in my research.

The Narrative Perspective

People tell the stories of their lives. In fact, psychologists Bruner (2002, 2004), Mishler, (1999), Polkinghorn (1988), and sociologist Riessman (2008) would say that people *are* the stories of their lives. People use narratives to make meaning of their lives, to tell their stories, reflect on them, and tell them again. People identify themselves through their narratives. Bruner (2002) takes a constructivist view of narratives: "...we constantly construct and reconstruct ourselves to meet the needs of the situations we encounter, and we do so with the guidance of our memories of the past and our hopes and fears for the future" (p. 64). When we narrate our

life stories we describe events that have happened to us at certain times in our lives. Bruner (2004) argues that it is impossible to distinguish the event from the narrative. He uses the term, "mimesis" from the Greek (to imitate), to illustrate that when we narrate something that has happened, we are storying it through "active ratiocination," interpreting it through our own lens at the time that we tell about it (p. 692).

The term narrative carries different meanings, and can be seen along a continuum ranging from the narration of a specific event that occurred in a few moments of time, to an entire life story. "Events perceived by the speaker as important are selected, organized, connected, and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience" (Riessman, 2008, p. 3). Once again, it is not every minute detail that is recounted, but those that are considered *important by the speaker at that time and with that audience*. Certain events are considered important for one audience, while other events may come to the surface for a different audience. It is a reflective and reflexive process. By reflective I mean that the narrator thinks back on personal experiences, makes decisions about what to include, and determines what is learned from the experience. It is reflexive in the telling and in the researcher's analysis. The narrator in telling her story sees herself as part of society, or at least within the "local" group within which the story is situated (Bruner, 2002; Linde, 1993). In the case of my participants, this might be within the school community, the greater educational community, or within the subgroup of literacy coaches. The narrator situates her story within that community, and considers herself relative to other members of that group. Linde (1993) further discusses the concept of reflexivity:

> Reflexivity in narrative is created by the separation of the narrator from the protagonist of the narrative. It permits the narrator to observe, reflect, and correct the self that is being created. The act of narrating itself requires self-regard and editing, since, a distance

> in time and standpoint necessarily separates the actions being narrated from the act of narration. (p. 122)

When the researcher listens to and later analyzes the narrative, she must also be reflexive, considering her own place within the culture and community of the participant, and openly discussing her own response to the narrative as a person within that community.

Bruner (2002) explains the five essential parts of narrative delineated previously by literary critic, Kenneth Burk (1945). They include: Agent, Action, Goal, Setting, and Means. He goes on to say that what drives the narrative is "Trouble." Trouble can intersect between any of the elements to drive the plot (p. 34). This idea of Trouble can help the listener relate to the story. The conflicts that arise in personal stories are modeled in, and reflected back to the narratives of the teller's and listener's culture. "Stories must necessarily, then, relate to what is morally valued, morally appropriate, or morally uncertain...To tell a story is inescapably to take a moral stance, even if it is a moral stance against moral stances" (Bruner, 1990, p. 50-51). We can relate to other people's stories because we have heard similar narratives before within our own cultures. The joys or pathos are part of the human condition. These stories help us know others better, just as they help us understand ourselves. We become familiar with the plots that are common in our culture’s narrative literature. Educational researchers, Clandinin and Connelly (2000), developmental psychologists, Daiute and Lightfoot (2004), and others discuss narrative within social contexts; how our own stories can be modeled on these well-known story lines, compared to them, or be created outside of them. Our familiarity with common plots allows us to connect our stories to the cultural background we share.

Connecting narratives with our lives helps us understand themes of power and empowerment. Stories can help us think about actions, consequences, and choice. They can help

us reflect on taking responsibility for behaviors, actions, and thoughts. Reflecting on one's own narrative can help to identify personal issues that may become generatively applicable to other instances in our lives. For example, in my earlier pilot study (Czekanski, 2009) a coach initiated a discussion with a teacher about the word, *good*. As she discussed this episode in her narrative, the coach commented that the value judgment implied by using the word, *good*, to refer to an act of teaching was evaluative, and not in keeping with her role as coach. The coach realized the value of distinguishing her role as being non-evaluative with this teacher. This realization might become generative if she had this conversation with all of the teachers she was coaching. Generative thinking might help us think more broadly and deeply about who we are as we engage in learning experiences that may be transformational (Butcher, 2006; Johnson, 2008; Larson & Brady, 2000).

Because the events that make up narrative occur over time, their importance may be determined in part by their arrangement in time. Clandinin and Connelly, (2000) maintain that narrative takes place in time and over time, and that the retelling of a narrative at a different time has the potential to shift the narrative based on new experience or learning that may have happened in the interim. Reflecting on past events allows us to view them from a different perspective, internalize them, and learn from them. In this study I asked coaches to tell about a time when they felt like a coach. In reflecting back on their experiences and selecting one or two to share, they had the ability to be both reflective and reflexive in their narration. After relating the event, they then went on to give a rationale for why they chose it. This thinking back on a previous experience allowed the coaches to think more about what makes them feel successful (or unsuccessful) in their role.

Polkinghorn (1988) looks at narrative as a series of plots across time. "...narrative is a meaning structure that organizes events and human actions into a whole, thereby attributing significance to individual actions and events according to their effect on the whole" (p. 13). Events must be connected around a plot in order to be a narrative. Otherwise the story is not really a narrative, but is just a series of events in a sequence. Polkinghorn discusses three different kinds of narrative communication: presentation, representation, and reception. Presentation refers to the experience as it is enacted and understood by the narrator herself. Representation happens when the narrator relates the story to an audience in some way (spoken, written, or enacted). The third form of communication, reception, involves interpretation and understanding by the listener (p. 22). Understanding these three levels came into play as coaches reflected on their experiences, recounted them to me, as their audience, and as I listened to the coaches' narratives and then analyzed them.

Narrative Inquiry

I decided to use narrative inquiry as a major part of my analysis while investigating how educators' professional identities changed over time as they shifted their roles from teachers to literacy coaches. In my work at the CRRLC I worked with coaches, heard their stories, and thought about how much I could learn from them if I deeply reflected on what they were saying and how they said it. That is not to say that I did reflected on what they said in the past. Certainly both the coach and the instructor reflect during every visit. But I began to sense that there was a bigger story to understand. I could learn more about who these coaches were and how they changed over time if I listened to their stories with the depth that narrative analysis requires.

Educational researchers, Clandinin et al. (2007) discuss the importance of understanding narrative as both phenomenon and method. They refer to the importance of narrative in human

understanding. If narrative as a phenomenon is a vehicle used by people to describe their daily lives, then narrative inquiry is “a way of thinking about experience... to use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular narrative view of experience as phenomena under study” (p. 2). Examining narratives, listening to the stories people tell of their lives requires that the researcher take on the role of narrator as the story is analyzed and told again through her eyes.

Using Bruner's (1987) frame of reference, Polkinghorn (1988) discusses the difference between a paradigmatic and narrative mode of narrative analysis. "The paradigmatic mode searches for universal truth conditions, whereas the narrative mode looks for particular connections between events" (p. 17). Knowledge is produced in different ways, and Polkinghorn asserts that the narrative approach is more appropriate when looking for knowledge of particular situations rather than generalizations across narratives. This proved to be true as I analyzed the coaches’ stories. They each differed in some way based on their environments and their personal approaches to the coaching role. However, there were some points of similarity that became evident over the course of the entire interview process because the novice coaches were part of the same training program, were implementing the Literacy Collaborative model within their school environments, and were experiencing some of the same supports and challenges.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explore the place of researchers within the narrative inquiry. To some degree, the researcher becomes a participant in the investigation. This positioning within the environment creates a shared experience between the participant and the researcher. The participant has a story to tell and relates experiences that have happened. If the researcher is a part of the larger social group that she is studying, then she has been part of those experiences to some extent. She listens to the account from the participant’s perspective, but then must present the narrative with the combined lens of participant and researcher. Not only are

researchers concerned with the events in the present, but they must also be reflexive as to events and experiences they have had as part of their own lives. These prior experiences create the perspective from which current events are viewed. This was an important point for me to consider as I did my research. I have coached literacy coaches for many years, and prior to that was a classroom teacher for eighteen years. This positioned me as a quasi-insider in their environment. During my pilot study (Czekanski, 2009) I noticed that, because of my knowledge of their work, the women I interviewed assumed that I would understand the nuances of their stories. This might have affected the way they told their stories, perhaps leaving out details that a more "distant" interviewer might have accessed. While doing my doctoral research I was positioned differently, since I had never met or worked with the participants prior to their interviews. However, I still found it challenging to distance myself and remain a neutral interviewer. I found myself slipping into my coaching role as I listened to their stories or the responses to my questions. This may have impacted the the way participants told their stories and the way I heard them.

Narrative inquiry occurs on many levels, beginning with the story of the participant, couched within the participant-researcher's perspective on that same story. Once the story is told and retold it takes on another dimension when the researcher considers the audience for whom it is published. Just as researchers bring their own lenses to the table when they engage in the study, so, too, does each member of the audience bring a different lens to the reading and interpretation of the text that is created. Researchers tell these stories in order to help others "raise their own questions about practices and see in the narrative accounts stories of their own stories" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 16). This brings to mind some of the thoughts shared earlier regarding narrative in history. "The stories we encounter carry the values of our culture by

providing positive models to emulate and negative models to avoid" (Polkinghorne, p. 14). This knowledge of cultural models applies to narrative inquiry as well, as researchers share stories from which others can learn or gain insights into ways of being and experiencing the world. In my case, the stories of coaches and my analysis of them might inform how training programs adapt to fit the many needs of novice coaches. The process of collecting the stories might have helped the individual participants consider their roles in different ways as they reflected back in time.

Narrative Methods of Analysis

Narrative analysis refers to how we look at narratives in order to learn from them. The research of sociolinguists, Labov and Waletzky (1997) is often cited (Chase, 2010; Mishler, 1999; Riessman, 1993, 2008) as a benchmark for modern narrative analysis. Labov and Waletzky looked at how the narrative was organized and the meaning of different elements of the narrative. They identified the following six parts: "abstract, (summary and/or "point" of the story); orientation (to time, place characters, situation); complicating action (the event sequence, or plot, usually with a crisis or turning point); evaluation (where the narrator steps back from the action to comment on meaning and communicate emotions—the "soul" of the narrative); resolution (the outcome of the plot); and the coda (ending the story and bringing action back to the present)" (as described in Riessman, 2008).

Riessman writes that it was helpful in her research on divorced couples to not only look at the data thematically in order to identify themes across the narratives of different people, but to orient the stories in her analysis according to Labov and Waletzky's organizational structure. In this way she was able to see not only what the couples said, but also to think about how the *way* they told it gave emphasis to certain parts over others. If we agree that the six parts listed

above are "commonalities" of narratives, then analyzing how people arrange the narratives they tell may help us understand the meanings they intend to convey. For Riessman, infidelity was a theme across several narratives, but the way people positioned it in their stories gave it different meanings. In my pilot study with literacy coaches (Czekanski, 2009), the structure outlined by Labov and Waletzky provided a way for me to organize the stories in order to identify important aspects of the narratives.

Gee (2005), whose concepts Riessman also utilized, looks at parsing narratives into phrases, sentences, and stanzas based on the way the words are spoken and phrased. The narrator's use of pauses, shifts in intonation, pitch, or stress all give clues to what she wants to emphasize, or perhaps where a new thought begins. Stanzas are indicated by shifts in pitch or other "linguistic markers" and are generally about a single topic (Riessman, 2008, p. 93). This kind of parsing can help the researcher think in smaller bits, and reveal meaning that might be overlooked when looking more globally at themes or organization.

Analyzing Narratives

Chase (2010), working in the field of sociology, discusses five analytic lenses through which researchers view narratives. Narrative is viewed as: (1) retrospective meaning making; (2) verbal action; (3) both enabled and constrained by a range of social resources and circumstances; (4) socially situated interactive performances; and (5) as an opportunity for researchers themselves to be narrators. *Retrospective meaning making* allows the narrator to make sense of past events. It "communicates the narrator's point of view, including why the narrative is worth telling in the first place" (p. 214).

Treating narrative as verbal action focuses on how the narrator chooses to tell the story, and the analysis here emphasizes her voice. Researchers "highlight the version of self, reality,

and experience that the storyteller produces through the telling" (Chase, 2010, p. 214). *Looking at the social resources and circumstances* helps the researcher to think about the "similarities and differences across narratives" (p. 214). Chase looks at the narrative as situated in a particular community, and looks for patterns that could be applied within that community.

The fourth lens looks at the *dynamic between the researcher and the participant* in a particular setting. Researchers understand that the narrative may vary depending on who the audience is and when and where it is situated. This point was one that became very evident once I began my pilot study and in this current study. I was positioned as an insider, who knew the kind of work these coaches did each day, and supported them in that work to varying degrees. I understood the language they used, the content of their work, the frustrations and celebrations they lived. What effect did that have on the stories they told? Might they have told the story differently to an outsider? I think they might. Lastly, the *researcher becomes the narrator* as she interprets the participant's story. Chase (2010) says that this implies that the previous four analytic lenses apply to the researcher as she begins to tell the story of her narrative research. "The idea that researchers are narrators opens up a range of complex issues about voice, representation, and interpretive authority" (p. 215). Chase's analytic lenses were important in my collection and analysis of the novice coaches' stories.

Semi-structured interviewing (Reinharz,1992) held promise because interviewing in this way allowed me to engage in a dialogue with the participants and give me access to "people's ideas thoughts, and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher" (p. 19). I wanted to hear, in the coaches' own words, what this journey was like for them. Mishler (1999) discusses the idea of identity formation versus development and sub-identities consisting of work, personal, social, and others (p. 8). He goes on to reference the sometimes non-linear

road to identity development, saying that there may be "discontinuities and disjunctions" (p. 13) along the way. My conversations with literacy coaches revealed a shifting sense of identity as they saw themselves in their new professional role, both through their own eyes, and how they perceived others seeing them.

People situate themselves within the narratives they relate. Positionality within the narrative can lend meaning to the analysis, especially relative to the identity of the participant. Riessman (2001) discusses identity construction within narratives, saying that subjects reveal themselves through performances of the narrative. The “self” can be positioned as agent, victim, or as being passive. She presents the idea of turning points, saying that they “open up directions of movement” for participants from past to present. This idea of temporality, viewing the past from the present lens, makes room for shifting identities as participants reflect on their experiences. As coaches re-story events in their past from a different perspective and reflect on those events they tell the story of change over time, and reveal a shifting sense of professional identity.

In constructing their narratives, the novice coaches in this study “languaged” the experiences they had over the past few years. Putting these experiences into words may have helped them to gain new meaning from them as they constructed their narratives and reflected upon them. As the researcher in this study I listened to and reflected on the narratives created by the novice coaches. In fact, during the interviews I interacted with them by asking probing questions. As a former literacy coach myself, this put me in a position to reflect on the narrative, and interpret it through my own lens and my own experiences as a coach. I may have had experiences that were similar to theirs, or perhaps not. Whatever the case, I kept that in mind

because I have made my own journey as an educator in this field, and that my perspective is one of a knowledgeable insider. As Chase (2010) says,

> As narrators, then, researchers develop meaning out of, and some sense of order in, the material they studied; they develop their own voice(s) as they construct others' voices and realities; they narrate circumstances embedded in their disciplines, cultures, and historical moments; and they write or perform their work for particular audiences. (p. 215)

It was an exciting challenge to think about developing my voice as I listened carefully to the novice coaches' voices. An equal challenge was to distance myself enough as I listened and analyzed to insure that I did not take things for granted or see things that I expected to see when they were not really there. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) caution against "narrative smoothing" and encourage researchers to be "as alert to the stories not told as to those that are (p. 182).

Sociologist, Spector-Mersel (2010), makes the case for narrative as a paradigm rather than a method of research or a "subtype of qualitative inquiry" (p. 208). She argues that "the narrative approach entails a distinct type of research, but over and above that it comprises a clear vision of the social world and the way we think, feel and conduct ourselves in it" (p. 209). Spector-Mersel discusses the three dimensions of paradigms: ontology, epistemology, and methodology, but adds three more: inquiry aim, inquirer posture, and participant/narrator posture. (p. 211). She goes on to say that the narrative paradigm is more specific than the constructivist and the poststructuralist paradigms from which it has grown. She calls for a working definition and says, "...dispersing the fogginess of what constitutes narrative inquiry is required in order to defend it from being emptied from essence" (219). I must admit to wondering as I engaged in this research, about the many terms used to describe the narrative approach: narrative inquiry, narrative analysis, life history, life story, and the term, narrative,

itself. However, I appreciated the ability to elicit stories, listen to them, and reflect back on what they told.

In considering all of these methodological parameters, I applied the "commonplaces" of narrative inquiry to my research. Narrative inquiry is complex, flexible, and grounded in participants' stories. During my pilot study I used semi-structured interviews to acquire the narratives, and Gee's (2005) parsing and Labov and Waletzky's (1967/97) story structure to analyze my data. Those approaches seemed appropriate at the time. However, for this current study I wanted to examine the narratives more broadly to identify themes, look for evidence of developing professional identity, and notice what coaches described as supports and challenges. I appreciated the flexibility that narrative methods held, and used an integrated approach to consider what the coaches' stories conveyed.

Interpretive Paradigm

In addition to the narrative methods described above, I used an interpretive paradigm to understand the lived experiences of literacy coaches as they engaged in their work. I asked coaches to share their experiences and perceptions within their work environment, which naturally involved experiences with colleagues and stakeholders within the culture of their school and district. These experiences were socially constructed and best understood through the eyes of the coaches. It was difficult to remove my own prior experiences from this lens, since I taught in public schools for eighteen years and worked as a trainer of literacy coaches for thirteen. I know schools well, and have acted as a mentor and coach to many teachers and coaches-in-training. There was no way to dismiss my own experiences, but trying to put them aside, I used the lived experiences of the coaches in the study to examine how they made meaning of their new roles within their educational environments. I hoped to understand the

coaches' experiences by analyzing their actions and responses to other stakeholders; listening to what novice coaches encountered in their day-to-day lives and how other stakeholders were both affected by and affected the coach. This gave me some inkling as to how their professional identity begins to shift over the course of their two-year training and first year of full implementation.

I decided on a qualitative approach to this research because of my interest in the phenomenon of professional identity development in educators making a shift from a teaching position to literacy coaching. The qualitative approach allowed me to gather data from the participants via semi-structured interviews (Reinharz, 1992) in which they responded to questions and told stories of their experiences in the field. Engaging in narrative analysis as well as phenomenological reduction helped me look at the data from two perspectives.

Research Design

This is a descriptive phenomenological study of the work experiences of literacy coaches who have completed their first year in the role using narrative analysis as well as mining the data for themes using in vivo and values coding (Saldaña, 2016). I collected data from my participants through semi-structured interviews and used the method of phenomenological analysis outlined by Giorgi (1997, 2008), the research psychologist who adapted and pioneered the method, and has described phenomenology in over a hundred publications. He states that, "What is sought is a description of a situation as lived and understood by the participant from the perspective of the natural attitude" (Giorgi, 2008, p. 38). This method fits well with the focus of my research, which asks, what are the perceptions of professional identity of literacy coaches as they first engage in the role.

Bracketing and Reflexivity

When engaging in phenomenological study, one must reflect on one's own previous experiences and biases related to the topic being studied. Since I worked with literacy coaches for thirteen years, it was important to step back, or bracket (Giorgi, 1997), my prior knowledge and experience so that I could better hear, without bias or preconception, what the research participants had to share about their experiences. I came to the Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative in 2001, after having taught in a variety of educational settings for eighteen years. While at the Center I, with my colleagues, helped to plan and teach the three courses taken by the coaches. In addition to the academic work, faculty-liaisons at the center are teamed up with coaching novices and work directly with them as liaisons to their schools. This includes making four to eight coaching visits over the course of two years of training. On coaching visits in year one, the liaison visits the coach's classroom, engages in reflective dialogue after observing the novice coaches' teaching, and visits with other stakeholders at the school, like the principal and leadership team.

During year two, the novice coach begins to offer professional development and coaching to her colleagues. These classes often happen after school for about two hours twice a month. The total number of hours of professional development the coach offers her colleagues should total sixty hours over two years. The way this plays out in different schools varies on the district's ability to support teachers' professional development. There are usually between eight and fourteen teachers in each PD cohort during the first year, and additional cohorts are added each year until all classroom teachers in the school have received the sixty hours of initial training. Support personnel like reading teachers, learning specialists, librarians, etc. may also be included in training classes, either with classroom teachers or separately. Depending on the size of the school, this means that novice coaches might have several new cohorts of teachers over

two or three years. The participants in this study had an average of twenty-four teachers in two cohorts at the time of the interviews.

In addition to the professional development classes, the novice coach visits each cohort member's classroom during a part of the literacy block at least once or twice a month and offers time for reflection and debriefing after the lessons are observed. If the school has fewer than fourteen classroom teachers to train, the coaching load is fairly reasonable, and coaches are able to meet with all classroom teachers for coaching visits during the month. If it is a large school, with over twenty classroom teachers, this becomes more challenging and the coaching visits may be spread over longer periods of time.

Because of my position as faculty liaison to many novice coaches, I was able to see a wide variety of implementations, supports, challenges, successes, and occasionally, failures. Not only did I observe the coaches and engage in lengthy conversations with them both before and after their observations, but I got a sense of the level of support being offered by the principal, teachers, literacy team, and other stakeholders (parents, school boards, central office administration). Some of this information came second-hand, through the discussions I had with the coach while at the school, while at other times I met directly with some stakeholders.

Additionally, I worked with a team of faculty liaisons at the Center who frequently shared their observations, counselled one another, planned together, and continually tried to revise and update the training program, including courses and field experiences. At one point, the training program was modified by shifting from eight weeks of face-to-face coursework at the CRRLC, to a hybrid model of five weeks of face-to-face meetings and the equivalent of three weeks of online experiences. These changes came about in order to make it easier for schools to participate in the program.

My experiences with coaches ran the gamut of positive and negative outcomes to everything in between. Some educators took to the role naturally, engaging with adult learners as successfully as they did with young students. Other coaches struggled with giving up their classroom responsibilities and felt uncomfortable working with their adult colleagues. A small percentage dropped out of the program in years one and two without completing the training. Many rose to the challenge and transitioned successfully into their roles as literacy coaches providing professional development and coaching to their colleagues, meeting with parents, working with other coaches and district leaders, and developing excellent working relationships with their principals. A few decided to go back to classroom teaching after coaching for a year or two because they preferred working with children or were uncomfortable in their role as coach.

By participating in their experiences as their liaison, I had first-hand knowledge of both their struggles and their successes. I brought all of this experience to the study, and while it provided me with an insider's view, it also sometimes interfered with my objectivity. Even though I had not previously met or worked with any of the participants, I could visualize their experiences as I reflected back on the coaches I had worked with over the years. My initial responses to the data were clouded with this experience. I had to work hard not to jump to conclusions, but to really listen and keep an open mind about their stories as I reread the transcripts again and again.

Participant Recruitment and Identification

The participants for this study were four literacy coaches who participated in two years of Literacy Collaborative coursework and were in their first year beyond training, working full-time as literacy coaches/classroom teachers. Each made the transition from another role in education to literacy coach with the help of Literacy Collaborative, a program of studies designed to

prepare them to take on this new role. The coaches worked in elementary schools that entered a partnership with the Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative at Lesley University. According to Englander (2012), when identifying subjects to be part of a phenomenological study, it is imperative that they have experience that will lend itself to understanding the phenomenon. I identified this particular target group because the participants had undergone the same preparation and were engaged in their roles as literacy coaches for approximately the same amount of time. Consequently, even though each one brought individual experiences and were in different school environments they were initiated through the same training program. I submitted an application for human subject research to the Lesley University Institutional Review Board (See Appendix A).

Having received approval, I proceeded with participant recruitment (See Appendix B). I gathered my pool of participants by sending letters of inquiry to a specific cohort of educators who completed the two-year Literacy Collaborative preparatory program. They were beginning their first year as fully-trained coaches in their schools. From this group of about twelve educators, four people responded that they would be willing to participate in the study. I reviewed the informed consent forms (See Appendix C) with each them individually, and assured them that their identities and the identities of anyone they referred to as well as their school and district would remain anonymous throughout the study and in any publications related to the study. Those who agreed to participate were all female Caucasian teachers with between six and twenty years of experience in the classroom prior to taking on their new role as coach.

Since I worked at the Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative at the time the data was gathered, I assure participants that I would not reveal their identities to anyone at

the Center or their school districts. I was no longer an instructor in the Literacy Collaborative program, having taken on an administrative role at the CRRLC at the time data was gathered, and am not now, nor have I been in a position to affect their individual standing with their instructors, the CRRLC, or their school districts. Because the participants had already completed their coursework and graduated from the program, they were no longer in a position to be evaluated by the instructors at the CRRLC. Interview data in the form of MP3 recordings and transcripts were stored under numbered codes on my personal computer and identifying information was not made available to the public or anyone associated with their work or with other CRRLC personnel.

Gathering and Analyzing Data

Collecting narratives

After receiving the signed informed consent documents from the participants, I met with each one in a location of her choosing and engaged in semi-structured interviews (Reinharz, 1992) in order to elicit detailed narratives from them about their perceptions of the role and of themselves as literacy coaches. This included descriptions of their work with colleagues and stakeholders within their districts, as well as their past experiences as educators, and the process they went through to be chosen as the school's coaching candidate. Semi-structured interviews consisted of nine open-ended questions along with occasional prompts inviting participants to share more details about specific events (see Appendix D). I encouraged the novice coaches to be as specific as possible with the details of their narratives. I recorded the conversations using a digital recording device, and took notes as needed during the interview as well. I relied heavily on the recorded narratives, as I wanted to be fully present to listen attentively to the narrator in order not to miss any observable nuances from facial expressions or body language. These

expressions might bring additional meaning to the words that were spoken, and would be important to note. Interviews took place in a variety of locations according to the participant's choice for their convenience and lasted approximately ninety minutes to two hours. After each interview I made notes of any visual observations or actions. The most challenging aspect of the interviews was maintaining the role of a neutral interviewer. I found myself slipping into the role of coach on several occasions as participants shared their experiences. I had to remind myself more than once to step back and listen rather than engaging as a participant in the conversation.

Reading the narratives and bracketing

After collecting the narratives, I listened to them two or three times to get a sense of the whole, or global meaning of each narrative (Giorgi, 1997; Groenewald, 2004). While prior experience is helpful in understanding the context and experiences of the participants, I was aware of bias or preconceptions that I might bring to the data collection or interpretation. At this stage of analysis, I took time to describe in my notes what I noticed globally, rather than interpret or explain it, so that there was "an intrinsic account of the phenomenon" (Giorgi, 1997, p. 238) for each participant. Next I had the transcripts transcribed by a transcription office, reread and checked the recorded narratives against the transcriptions to be sure they were accurate and made edits where necessary. Finally, I read the completed transcriptions several times, making notes in the margins of possible themes within each individual narrative.

By reading the whole narrative and being open to what the coach said, I was able to get a sense of what the separate parts of the narrative might be in later readings (Creswell, 1998; Giorgi, 1997; Groenewald, 2004). I created a spreadsheet to note my initial perceptions for each participant, focusing on the two prime questions: "Describe the role of the literacy coach in your school," and "Talk about a time when you said to yourself, 'I feel like a literacy coach today.'"

By creating a document with four columns, one for each participant, within which key phrases under the two questions were highlighted, I began to see similarities and differences in the responses of the four participants. Although my next step was to look at the individuals separately, this action of putting their responses side by side was helpful as a first step to looking for patterns.

In vivo coding

Next, I created a separate document for each participant, with four columns. The first column contained the transcribed words of the participant, the second was for initial in vivo coding. The third and fourth columns were for future analysis. I read the transcripts of the individuals again and in the second column noted significant comments in the words of the narrator (In vivo coding, Saldaña, 2016), I wanted to use the participants' own words in order to be sure to capture their ideas without injecting any potential bias from my interpretation. I selected sections of the text that related directly to their role as coach in the school, interactions they had with principals, teachers, or other stakeholders, and their response to the question of a time when they felt like a literacy coach. In addition, I located similes, metaphors, or other verbal expressions that expressed their views of their experiences. This process helped me to identify salient parts of the text to use in further analysis (Creswell, 1998; Giorgi, 1997; Groenewald, 2004).

Values coding and narrative analysis

During the next round of analysis, I reread the transcripts of individuals and in the third column engaged in values coding (Saldaña, 2016). Since I was looking for indications of the growing professional identity of these educators, I decided that values coding, which looks at values, beliefs, and attitudes might provide helpful information for my analysis. I charted this

data for each individual participant in order to get an idea of their own perceptions of their role and their developing identity. I looked specifically at two questions in depth. These questions elicited narratives that gave insights into both the coach's perception of the role in her school and also how she perceived her own success in that role. I looked into these two questions through the lens of values coding and narrative analysis, thinking that this would further enhance my understanding of the evolving identity of each participant. By comparing her perceptions of what the role was, and her own perceptions of success, I might know more about her journey.

Clustering meaning units

Once I read through all the narratives again, and made a list of the meaning units from each narrative in the participants' own words, I reviewed the four participant lists and looked for statements that were similar in focus. I jotted these statements on post-it notes and arranged them according to similarity of topic on charts. I looked at redundant statements closely to determine whether there were slight differences in meaning, or whether some might be eliminated because they were the same (Groenewald, 2004).

I created a series of charts using post-it notes listing these statements together according in categories, rather than by participant in order to identify themes, once again "bracketing" my own preconceptions and knowledge, and looking for the meaning communicated by the participants (Creswell, 1998; Giorgi, 1997; Groenewald, 2004). This process required going back and forth between lists, transcripts, and occasionally listening to the recorded narratives in order to assist in deriving central themes that were authentic to the participants' perceptions of the experience. Topics were grouped together, and analyzed again to determine central characteristic of the interpretation. I later returned to these charts, read through all the comments, moved sticky

notes around and created new headings where needed, based on the big ideas emerging from the comments.

Summarizing, validating, and revising

As I reviewed my charts and coding I took time to write analytic summaries to describe them. I was careful not to cluster themes that might be slightly different. Groenewald (2004) suggests that, "Unique or minority voices are important counterpoints to bring out regarding the phenomenon researched" (p. 21). Once themes were clustered, I examined the essential meanings that were expressed by the coaches. These helped me determine and describe the essential characteristics of professional identity that were articulated and supported by the experiences and reflections the coaches shared in their narratives. By describing the attributes of identity, and the experiences, beliefs and values that contributed to the development of those attributes, I elaborated on the phenomenon of professional identity of literacy coaches: to consider what contributes to or hinders its development; to consider how it is expressed in the narratives; and to consider, finally, how professional development or support from coaching programs might contribute to it.

The final step in this phenomenological analysis was to, once again, return to the original narratives in order to substantiate the claims I made. I looked for specific examples from the data to support my analysis, and listed those details. This is the "phenomenological reduction" (Giorgi, 2008; Groenewald, 2004) and comprises the written analysis of the data in order to support the description of the phenomenon. Once this was done, and supported by evidence from the data, I examined it with the lens of considering how this information might contribute to planning and developing programs that might support literacy coaches in their roles within

schools and contribute to their awareness of their professional identity within those roles. I include this thinking at the conclusion of my analysis.

Chapter 4: Living the Role: Developing a Literacy Coach's Identity

Each of the novice coaches in this study participated in the same two-year training program through Literacy Collaborative at Lesley University. Each came to the role with a history as a successful educator. Some were hired to do this job from outside their district through a search process, others came from within the school or district and either applied or were asked to take on the role. They brought different understandings of what a literacy coach is, and learned in different school environments how to implement their role.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to coaching, and there is no universal coaching manual to guide coaches (ILA, 2018; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Mraz et al., 2016; Toll, 2015; Wren & Reed, 2005). Even within the Literacy Collaborative, which has a long history of training literacy coaches, each implementation is different because of the different circumstances within each school or district and the individual dispositions, personalities, and experiences of the coaches and their colleagues. That being said, these four participants had rich stories to tell about how they entered the role and what their understandings of the role were after their initial two-year training in the Literacy Collaborative whole-school literacy model. In this chapter I will share their stories and my analysis of their developing professional identities; how they felt supported or challenged in that role and a specific incident they described as helping them 'feel like a literacy coach.' Each coach tells her story within a different section of the chapter, and all quotes are taken directly from the personal communications they shared with me during their interviews. I have used pseudonyms to refer to the coaches: Ms. Ayers, Ms. Bronson, Ms. Cranmore, and Ms. Durelle, and to their schools. Their stories are broken down into different subtopics within the narrative as a whole.

Ms. Ayers

Starting Out

Prior to taking on her current coaching role, Ms. Ayers had been teaching in another state for nine years. At her previous school, she had been a leader: organizing events, developing curriculum, and building many positive relationships with her colleagues. When she and her family moved to a new state, she was hired at the Compton School as a reading teacher. Within a month the principal asked her to take on literacy coach training as the school entered a partnership with the Literacy Collaborative at Lesley University. She agreed and was sent to the CRRLC at Lesley University with her school's literacy leadership team to begin team training. It was during these five days that she began to develop relationships with new colleagues as they traveled together and engaged in conversations about the school's vision for literacy teaching and learning.

Ms. Ayers had not originally applied to be a literacy coach at the Compton School, but having had experience as a committee leader at her previous school, she was open to taking on a role that would go beyond classroom teaching. She was receptive to taking on this leadership opportunity and making herself vulnerable at the same time.

> I actually think that it [being new] was an advantage because I could make the role what I believed it should be, and I still continue to strive to do that. I don't necessarily have any street cred here [at Compton School], for lack of a better word. At my old school I had taught there nine years and I had a reputation. I had established myself professionally and personally with all my colleagues, and am still very close with them, and so I miss that.
>
> I do want to be very careful to respect the fact that I am a newcomer to this culture, to this school. But at the same time I think that it's an advantage, because I'm new—and this [Literacy Collaborative] is new. I can say, 'Let's try this together. I'm learning as well as

> you are learning.' And I think that vulnerability and being willing to put down my guard, take a risk, and try it out helps. Sometimes it works, but I'm also very willing to share when it doesn't work, and why it didn't work.

Ms. Ayers comes from a place where she was successful and confident in her leadership abilities as well as her collegial relationships. In her new environment, she was aware of stepping lightly and including herself in the process of taking on the new initiative. As she worked to develop relationships with new colleagues, she showed her vulnerability as well as her positive attitude to forge ahead together and build her new situated identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Gee, 2010; Rainville & Jones, 2008). Of prime interest to her was building relationships with her new colleagues and other stakeholders: the principal, teachers, the literacy leadership team members, district personnel, and other coaches. "I had to get to know people; what their teaching was like, and about their theories of reading and writing and how children learn." Her ability to build these new relationships supported her transition into the role.

The Role of the Literacy Coach

Ms. Ayers sees her role as having many facets as she described formal and informal coaching interactions throughout the day.

> What does it mean to be a literacy coach? It means a lot of different things—to wear a lot of different hats, to have a bunch of plates spinning up on little spokes at all times. I think that's what really drives me and interests me and excites me the most—because I'll walk down the hallway and I'll be stopped five different times. But it will be for five different reasons and for five different *roles*, if you will. One will be focused towards PD; one will be focused towards, 'Hey, can you check out this lesson?' Another one will be focused on intervention and 'How can I help this child?' And another one will be, 'Can you send that e-mail out

> again, because I don't know what's happening next week with the PD?' That variety is what drives me—interests me the most. It's fun!

She is both challenged and energized by the array of experiences she encounters every day. The metaphors of juggling and wearing many hats convey the range of tasks that are part of her work as a coach and bring a vitality and positive emotional response to the role that engages her (Rainville & Jones, 2008; Zembylas, 2003).

> A literacy coach is someone who guides their colleagues in thinking about teaching, and how and why teaching in certain ways might be more effective than others. So far a huge part of my role has been building those relationships with my colleagues and coaching them. The professional development piece is equally as big, but it's less intimate in the way relationships are built. A PD session is nice because we have been able to be a group, a cohort together and think about these topics within the LC framework, but it's really been the coaching, the one-on-one that I find to be the most effective to instill change.

Ms. Ayers has built her relationship with teachers by interacting with them both formally and informally. The more formal interactions during individual coaching and professional development allow her space and time to introduce new ideas and teaching practices with her cohort and follow up with each teacher during coaching visits to classrooms. Combining these two professional venues with more casual interactions across the day fosters the development of the trusting relationships she identifies as being central to her work (Cohen, 2008; Kraus, 2006).

When asked what contributed to her thinking of herself as a literacy coach, she highlighted her training at Lesley University, how her colleagues at school see her, and the respect she feels from her principal. She also noticed how her students benefited from the classroom instruction that is part of the literacy model. Other colleagues contribute to her

identity by participating in professional learning and coaching and developing mutual respect through their work together. “My colleagues sometimes say, ‘I don’t know how you do what you do.’ It feels really good to hear, and strokes my ego.”

There is a developing level of respect and shared responsibility with her colleagues, who also take risks by trying out new instructional techniques in their classrooms. “I do find myself pinching myself at times because I love it so much. But at the same time, it’s important to be very humble.” She refers to the “incredibly amazing” district-level coaches who have become her mentors and role models, noting their strong relationships with teachers, built on mutual respect (Day et al., 2006; Rainville & Jones, 2008; Zembylas, 2003).

Her vision for successful coaching is very different from the role of an administrator who might tell teachers to implement different approaches to instruction.

> If you’re a coach, you can say, ‘Try this out and let me know how it feels and how your students react to it.’ The teacher is willing to take that risk, even if they had some dissonance or were resistant to it. But they do it anyway, and they see how well it works out. I have seen this happen, and it’s incredible!

Ms. Ayers “embarks on a partnership” with teachers during individual coaching sessions as they engage in the pre-conference before the teaching to discuss how the lesson will unfold. “But then the teacher has differentiated the lesson in a way that just blows my socks off! And all of a sudden, it’s ‘Wow!’ and I can’t take credit for any of that.” Other times, she goes into classrooms to meet with teachers and they have forgotten that she is coming to observe.

> I'll walk into a classroom and the teacher will say, ‘Oh, geez, we have a session today?’ But at the same time they are not worried or intimidated, they might say, ‘I don't have anything prepared, but this is what we're working on.’

> And we just kind of hit the ground running. I almost got worried at first, thinking, 'Oh, geez, I'm not doing my job, because they're not prepared for me.' But I almost think that I'm *doing my job better* if they're in such a secure place that when I walk in, regardless of the time of day or what day it is, regardless if we have something on a schedule, they are actually right where they need to be in terms of adult learners. They say, 'Oh, well yeah. This is what we're doing, this is what we're working on. Do you want to see this?'
>
> And I say 'Well, it's not about me. It's what you want me to see. What do you want to work on together?' So it's really neat.

The teachers do not seem worried or intimidated, and invite her to come in to see what they are working on with their students. As a result of this comfortable relationship, Ms. Ayers feels as if she is accomplishing her goals of not only building trusting relationships, but also being able to drop in on teachers who are comfortable with their teaching practices. There is a give and take, with the novice coach putting the teachers in an agentive position as they identify what they will work on together. The positive culture of learning and openness in this school both fosters learning partnerships and the development of the coach's identity (Day et al., 2006; Kelchtermans, 2009; Cohen, 2008).

I feel like a literacy coach today

Ms. Ayers has had positive and negative experiences with teachers in her cohort, and described the ups and downs that are part of her work. These shifts in feeling are a part of her everyday life, and contribute to how she feels about herself as a coach (Kelchtermans, 2009). They do not seem symptomatic of underlying problems within the culture of the school or with her growing identity as a coach (Hunt & Handsfield, 2013; Matsumura et al., 2010).

So many times when I'll walk away from a classroom and I'll have this downtrodden feeling in my heart, like, 'Oh no, I failed miserably. I'd better jump ship now.' And then there are others, more times than not, when I walk away and I think, 'Oh my God, this is working! They're taking it on!'

She described a specific example of a teacher who had forgotten about a visit, but invited her to come in to observe her guided reading lesson anyway.

This was a perfect example where we've built such a strong relationship: I walked into her classroom, and she said, 'Oh, no. We have a coaching session today? I am not prepared. I don't have anything prepared, but this is what I'm doing. I'm doing a guided reading lesson, and this is what's happening, and this is what we are working on, and this is the text, and this is why I chose the text, and these are the students with whom I'm working, and these are their needs.' She described her rationale and plans for the lesson.

And I said, 'Okay, great.' And I asked her, 'Well, so do you have any recent running records?' And she said, 'No.' So, I kind of got that feeling of, 'Uh-oh, I just should maybe turn tail and run.' But then I said, 'Well, why don't we take a running record together during this guided reading lesson?'

And she said, 'Well, why?' And again: uh-oh, panic. And I said, 'Well, let's just do it. Let's—I'll take a running record, while you take a running record and go on with the lesson and everything we had talked about in the preconference. But I just really want you to think about what this running record tells you about your student, and where you might take him or her.'

So, I came to her room a little later on that day, and we took a running record together. She took the running record and she went into this beautiful teaching point. I mean,

> the prompts were as if they came right out of the *Prompting Guide*. And it was just—it was poetic.
>
> And so then we met in our post-conference and I nudged her to think about taking daily running records, and how it was so useful. So, I came to her the next time and she brought me the running records that she had done from, not just that one guided reading group, but the next five guided reading groups.
>
> She was telling me how she was using the running records and I walked back to my office thinking that I was just, like, the cat's meow and I was the best coach in the whole entire world. But then I couldn't figure out why she had not been utilizing them to their fullest. And so when I picked away at it with her, the problem was timing.

The coach problem-solved with the teacher about how to fit running records into her day, and the next time she visited, the teacher was taking them more frequently. Ms. Ayers reflected about the teacher's understandings, and her initial disappointment that the teacher was not including running records in her daily practice: an important component of guided reading lessons. Ms. Ayers dug deeper to identify the reason this was not happening and was able to work out a resolution that helped both the teacher and coach to feel successful.

> But that was a moment where I thought, 'Here was a cohort member that had been with me for a couple years now, and she wasn't doing something that I would say is fundamentally a *you have to do* kind of thing.' So that was pretty cool to work out.

During this interaction, Ms. Ayers' emotional responses ran the gamut from failure to elation as related in this recollection. However, while talking with the teacher, she maintained her coaching stance, using language to prompt for more information and to get behind the

teacher's thinking. In doing this she learned more about the teacher's practice and was able to problem-solve with her

When coaches provide professional development sessions around specific topics, they sometimes expect to see results quickly. After they gain experience, they realize that implementing new teaching and assessment practices takes time. Teachers do what they can to put things into practice, but it often takes more than a year for them to realize the value of the practice, how to implement it, and how to fit it into their schedules. It's a combination of integrating the rationales as well as the techniques. Taking on new teaching practices is complex.

Another incident she described was working with a reluctant teacher. "She's a little bit of a tough nut to crack. So I have approached it in a very gentle way and taken it slowly." She talked with this teacher about her students as writers, and taking time to read professional books together. The teacher was reluctant to try out new practices in the classroom, and the coach felt challenged, but reflected on it rather than getting frustrated.

"So I feel there are walls going up. She puts up walls for a reason. So what is that reason? I need to approach her in a different way because this is where she is." The coach is taking small steps and trying to figure out why this teacher is resistant. Some teachers feel insecure with change, while others are comfortable doing what they have always done. Whatever the reason, this coach is taking time to get to know the teacher better, and through building a relationship may discover how to "break down the walls." Matsumura et al. (2010) found that a teacher's willingness to take on new practices was sometimes associated with their years of experience. Veteran teachers sometimes proved resistant to change, while novice teachers were more open to new learning. This might have been the case with this particular teacher, but Ms. Ayers will persevere and work on "breaking down the walls" of resistance.

Training

The Literacy Collaborative training at Lesley has helped Ms. Ayers to take on the coaching role, and grow into it over time. During the training year, coaches participate in role-playing with one another, often around videotapes they make of their teaching. They take turns "coaching" one another during these sessions and practicing the language of coaching. This role-play helped her to think about her colleagues as adult learners, and consider different approaches to working with them. She identified it as one of her biggest challenges, but is motivated by the new challenges of her role.

> I remember sharing videos of our own teaching and role-playing coaching one another [during our training class]. I walked out of that coaching session thinking, 'I can't do this.' But because it is the biggest challenge that has driven me—like it's the hardest—it makes me want it more.

Working with Stakeholders

Ms. Ayers has extremely supportive administrators, both at her school and district level. She also works with collegial district-level coaches and literacy specialists within Compton School. This supports her growing identity as a literacy coach because the culture of the school and district support the vision and goals of the literacy initiative (Ippolito, 2009; Matsumura et al., 2010).

> I'm very fortunate that I have such a supportive principal and district administration. We [the principal and I] meet once a week. I fill her in on all the things that are happening in terms of the LC work, but also in my role as a literacy coach in the building. So that can range from anything like my work with the consulting teacher of reading on Read Across America week or working on our Fidelity of Implementation tool for LC. It can span what is very

unique and specific to our school to something big like figuring out the schedule for professional development.

Ms. Ayers supports the Literacy Collaborative initiative, but continually thinks about how she represents the vision and goals of her own school.

There is another piece of my role as coach: building relationships with my principal, the district curriculum director, the reading teacher in my building and a district coach who also supports teachers in my building. These people are very established in their roles and, thankfully the reading teacher and I get along very well. We meet weekly and have developed mutual respect. My principal has been a dream in terms of being an administrator but I also want to do a good job and make sure I'm in constant communication with her, and that we are on the same page.

When situations come up with district coaches or district administrators I want to know where my principal stands, so that I can represent the initiative and the partnership with Lesley [CRRLC], but also that I can make sure to represent Compton School. I think in a professional setting you have to make sure that you're *respectful* of all parties involved.

We [Literacy Collaborative coaches] work in our own schools, but we have been very cognizant to make sure we are a cohesive team. We [LC coaches] have our own professional learning community and meet once a week to plan and make sure we stay in touch. I'm very blessed in the fact that we LC coaches meet every week to plan and make sure we are a cohesive team.

Ms. Ayers has the good fortune of working in a culture where people are supportive—from administrators to fellow coaches to teachers. Being new to the school, she has taken time to

build relationships across the school and district. This, plus her innate desire to meet challenges and "wear a lot of different hats while juggling plates in the air" motivates her to engage in the work of being a coach. She describes the positive comments she gets from colleagues who admire her ability to meet the complexities of her role as "feeding my ego." She feels energized by the many things she does every day, even though there are times when she feels "Oh no, I've failed. I'd better jump ship now!" More often than not she is elated that she has this job. "I do find myself pinching myself at times because I love it so much. But at the same time it's important to be very humble, if that makes any sense."

This coach seems to feel comfortable with both the highs and lows of the role. She is happy when things are working, the teachers are implementing practices that they see as successful, and she has developed relationships born of respect and cooperation. She is also comfortable when it doesn't work and sees this as a challenge to overcome. Even though she may experience periodic lows, she is reflective about them, and tries to work them out by giving more time to the learning process for both her and her colleagues. She has a well-developed identity as a coach, due in part to her own nature and professional goals, but also because of the culture within which she works where she both positions herself and is positioned by colleagues *as the coach.* In addition, her personal characteristics of risk-taking, flexibility, and reflectiveness support her own positive stance toward any challenges that arise. She faces them as the coach.

Ms. Bronson

Starting Out

Ms. Bronson had been teaching in a district for fifteen years when the opportunity to become part of the Literacy Collaborative presented itself. The assistant principal of her school

approached her to ask if she would like to begin training as a literacy coach. The administration was looking for new options to improve students' literacy achievement, and they heard about Literacy Collaborative.

> Initially I said yes, because I like new things and I went home and looked it up online. I became really excited and thought it was right up my alley. The more I learned the more excited I became. But then one day at training, when I realized I was going to have to train adults, I said, 'Oh-oh, I need a break.' Because I didn't have a full picture of what I was getting into. Even if I had a skeleton [of an idea] I would have been in better shape. But I only had, like, from the knees down. I didn't have much [knowledge] going into it, but the more I learned, the more I was excited.

Many coaching candidates do not have a full picture of what they are getting into when they sign on to become a coach (Hunt & Handsfield, 2013; Lynch & Ferguson, 2010; Otaiba et al., 2008; Matsumura et al., 2010; Mraz et al., 2008). In Literacy Collaborative, novice coaches receive training in foundations and theories of literacy learning and specific teaching approaches. Many start out thinking that teaching will be the extent of their job, then they learn about adult learning and development and realize their role extends beyond teaching children. The main part of their work will be working with adults, planning professional learning sessions and engaging in individual coaching conversations. This is a surprise to many of them, even though the coaching role is explained before they begin training. In addition to the part-time teaching they continue to do as part of their role, they work with administrators, teachers, team members, and district stakeholders is. The role is quite complex.

Ms. Bronson began her training at one school, but then transferred to Stafford Elementary located in the same district due to a set of circumstances beyond her control. When she arrived at the Stafford School, the teachers immediately looked at her as their coach.

> A lot of the people at Stafford Elementary were on board [with coaching] before I got there. At my old school, I was a teacher, I had taught different grades, and people knew me as a teacher, so I was anticipating that it would be such a strange shift for me [to be the coach].
>
> But then going to a new school, and them saying, 'This is our literacy coach.' I felt like they already had this idea that I *was* the literacy coach, and that maybe I had some information. It was to my advantage because at my old school, I had taught for 15 years. We [the other teachers and I] had basically grown up together, had friendships, etc. It would have been a challenge to shift my role there.

Ms. Bronson began her LC training at one school, but then moved to another in the same district. This was a stressful move for her because of the uncertainty of the new environment. However, she found the teachers to be welcoming and to position her as their coach from the beginning. This took away some of the concerns she had about being the coach at her previous school where she anticipated she might have problems with the transition.

The Role of the Coach

Ms. Bronson is a resource to her colleagues. Once she began working at Stafford, she found that people approached her with a variety of questions or requests. "People feel comfortable with me coming into their classrooms. They request additional coaching sessions and sometimes come down to me without me hunting them down." Some coaches in the study described reluctant teachers who did not want to participate in the coaching process. Ms.

Bronson felt successful with her cohort of teachers, describing times when they approach her, or when teachers worked together to solve problems without her help. “Teachers seek each other out. When teachers I have worked with feel comfortable working with other teachers I feel like something good is happening.” This coach is building a community of learners who can work on their practice and support one another because of the way she works with them within this positive environment (Coskie, et al., 2005; Matsumura et al., 2010).

Ms. Bronson builds trust with her colleagues by being prepared for her coaching and professional learning sessions. Teachers trust her to do the best she can and set up processes that will be helpful to them as well as respecting confidentiality and not talking about them with others.

> If I go into a coaching session and I’m not prepared I have broken the teacher’s trust because I’m not doing my role in the way I’m supposed to do it. If I’m meeting with my principal and don’t have the professional development session planned I have broken her trust because she is trusting that I’ll be thoughtful in my planning. Confidentiality is huge. Teachers trust that I have the best interests of the team and school in mind. Trust helps define my role.

Ms. Bronson is a facilitator of interactions between and among her colleagues: working with them in professional development and coaching sessions. She emphasized the fact that teachers are busy in their own classrooms and that working together often gets lost in the shuffle of busy days. Part of her role is to link teams of teachers across and within grade levels. Because of her extensive teaching career, she can relate to how busy teachers are, and how it is sometimes difficult for them to add extra tasks to their days. She organizes and facilitates these meetings as

a way to bring people together and support the literacy model. She knows her learners (Kegan, 2000; Spigner-Littles & Anderson, 1999).

> I feel like I'm a bit of a link between grade levels, and not because people don't want to, but now there is a person who can do that. When teachers are in classrooms working hard every day, they don't have the time to think about everything else that is happening. Part of my facilitating role is helping to set the stage a bit, like how to work together and attack things together. That's a harsh word, but how to approach problems in a way that we can solve them.

She facilitates challenging situations that sometimes involved approaching controversial issues. These include competing district initiatives, the administration, or the evaluation system: things that might go against practices teachers engage in as part of the Literacy Collaborative. She is "the voice or complaining, or the voice of reason" at district meetings or meetings with her administrator.

> I'm sometimes the voice of things that don't want to be said. Things that you don't want to talk about, but they are holding us back. So I feel like I have to 'throw myself to the wolves' a little bit now and then—and that's part of my role if I had to define it—yes, that would be part of it.

Ms. Bronson reflects on her own teaching practice and models the reflective process with the teachers. "I continue to think about what I am doing, not only to model it, but to figure it out —being public with my practice and public with my own struggles."

Other aspects of her role include providing thirty hours of professional development to two different cohorts across the year. "The pressure is on me to make professional learning valuable for everyone, even if they are not classroom teachers." This challenge was mentioned

by all of the coaches. Providing professional development to classroom teachers who implement all aspects of the literacy model is different from providing PD for learning specialists, classroom support personnel, or other colleagues who only implement parts of the model, or perhaps do not implement it at all (Matsumura et al., 2010).

Most administrators support the idea of building awareness of the model across the school, and including all educators in some aspects of professional development. This usually means that coaches either include all personnel in their regular professional development sessions or design specific professional development for educators who are not classroom teachers. Either way, they have to accommodate the learning needs of their various colleagues.

Working with the principal and literacy leadership team are also part of the coach's role (Ippolito, 2009; Matsumura et al., 2010). Ms. Bronson met with her principal once a week and her literacy team once a month. Her principal was very involved in supporting the implementation of the model: ordering books and materials, attending professional development sessions, and adjusting schedules to accommodate coaching and professional development. The literacy leadership team worked together to organize the school's leveled book room and this activity helped to build community within the school as well as providing the hands-on workforce needed to organize the books.

I Feel Like a Literacy Coach Today

Times when Ms. Bronson feels successful as a literacy coach include setting up situations for people to have time to reflect on their practice together. Over time she gained confidence in herself and the way she worked with adult learners. This included providing professional development that later supported her work in individual coaching conversations with teachers. All of this work contributed to her feeling like a literacy coach.

> You've set up PD, had the pre-conference with the teacher, and gone into the classroom and thought about something with them. And then they are reflecting on it, usually in the post-conference It's during those times when I am finally quiet—like I learned to 'put a sock in it'—when I *hear* the teachers. And it might not be that they have come up with a big understanding or they have 'come to Jesus.' It doesn't have to be something big. But when I'm sitting there and I'm *listening*. That is the moment for me. I *hear*.
>
> We have created this time and this space where you can be reflective on your practice and reflective about your students and your decisions as a teacher. And you are doing it together. And I'm like: 'This is so exciting! This is literacy coaching!' That is my internal dialogue and I get excited to do it again. That's when I feel like a literacy coach: when I am quiet, when I am not talking. And that is when you say: 'This is worthwhile. This is good stuff.'

A specific example of this occurred when a teacher was doing a lesson that was not going very well. Ms. Bronson asked her if she trusted her students to do the work. The teacher responded, "Maybe they could have figured it out if I had let them." The coach described a shift that occurred in the teacher's thinking at the point when she realized she was holding her students back.

> And there was that little shift in her thinking. And I thought, 'This is what being a literacy coach is. Just that little shift. Maybe it will have a big ripple effect, and maybe it won't, but you feel somehow that it's important that she is having that little shift. And that *I* got to be part of it was so exciting! I felt like a literacy coach that day: not every day, but *that* day.

Literacy coaches use specific language moves during their encounters with teachers in professional development and coaching conversations. While language that teaches, prompts, or reinforces thinking is important, sometimes giving quiet wait time is as valuable (Forbes & Briggs, 2006; Heinke, 2013; Ippolito, 2010; Lipton & Wellman, 2003; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001) and can lead to the coaches understanding their learners more fully.

Working with Stakeholders

Several obstacles presented themselves to Ms. Bronson, the first being her relationship with her principal, who was very involved in the implementation of the literacy model, and how teachers saw that relationship relative to the trust she was developing with them (Ippolito, 2009; Matsumura et al., 2010).

> Separating myself from administration in a way that people feel comfortable is an obstacle, especially in our situation where administration is very involved in everything. I almost think it would be easier if the principal were less involved, it would create a more natural separation, but I have to work for that separation. I have to say publically in meetings, 'I can't talk about it, I'm the literacy coach. That's not going to be something that I can comment on.' Even to direct questions from your boss, in a meeting, in front of everyone, you have to say, "I can't comment on that," in no uncertain terms, so that people understand you are not going to cross that line privately or publically.
>
> Setting that relationship up, has been an obstacle…and maybe obstacle is not the right word, but it is something I have to work on and be very conscious of, and not be caught off guard. You have to almost have a *filter* with what you are going to say, so that is also an obstacle.

Another challenge that arose as she worked with colleagues was their prior experiences with literacy coaches. Her district had previously employed literacy coaches who used different methods, and some of the teachers in the building had worked with them. Those experiences had left teachers feeling wary of engaging with her as the new coach.

> When you go into the coaching role you have all these ideas laid out that you should do. Then you encounter teachers who have had negative experiences with other coaches and you have to be very clear that, 'I am not her.' With those people you have to create new ideas about what it means to be coached. I've actually been in coaching sessions where people need to vent about past experiences, and I have to be very clear about, 'So this is me…this is how it's going to go with me.' And make sure they know that I am open to feedback. So that has been an obstacle: creating this new idea about what it means to be coached for some people.

One teacher was not succeeding in her teaching practice, and Ms. Bronson felt responsible for her failure and potential dismissal. These comments were unusual and not shared by other coaches. Coaches strive to build success stories with teachers, but in this case, the teacher was not succeeding despite the coach's work with her. Ms. Bronson shared her stress with this situation (Zembylas, 2003).

> One thing that is really hard, is that you don't want to contribute to someone's path in a way that is negative. Like I feel very responsible for some of the teachers I work with, especially if they are newer. I know they are working very hard, and I know they might not be there yet, and I know their jobs are on the line. So I feel like an obstacle for me is being too responsible for them. But I'm *not* responsible for them. They have to take

> things on in their own way, and in the end their job is in their hands and not mine. There is a big piece of that that is *very stressful* for me.
>
> There is this huge emotional piece like you can't take responsibility for someone's success…without taking responsibility for someone's failure. So *really you can't take responsibility for eithe*r, so you have to set yourself with sort of a *protective* thing…like you are still involved, you're still engaged, you're still doing absolutely everything you can without 'sewing yourself to people' in a way that is too much. That is a huge piece for me, that struggle.

Ms. Bronson moved to a new school within the district when she began coaching. She had to build relationships with new colleagues as well as debunk concerns they had about literacy coaches because of their previous experiences. Her primary aim was to build trust and build a community of learners with the teachers. She described herself as successful when she could hear what her colleagues were saying. When she *listened* to them. This was especially true if they were reflecting, questioning, or sharing ideas in other ways. Ms. Bronson put a lot of effort into showing teachers that they could trust her to have their interests at heart, and that she kept their conversations confidential. She worked hard to develop a trusting, but "boundaried" relationship with her principal, stressing the importance of teacher confidentiality. Trust was the most important aspect of her job for Ms. Bronson, and interestingly, it was trust that was challenged. She was able to address this challenge, and it helped her to build relationships within her new environment, which in turn supported her growing identity as literacy coach for herself and with all stakeholders (Matsumura et al., 2010; Ippolito, 2009).

Ms. Cranmore

Starting Out

Ms. Cranmore was ‘drafted’ into the coaching position at the last minute, less than a month before school was to begin in September. The person who was scheduled to be the coach left abruptly and the principal needed to find a replacement. The principal approached Ms. Cranmore, who was a teacher in the school, to see if she would be interested in the job.

Taking the position required that she engage in Literacy Collaborative training over the next two years, while taking on the role of the coach in the school. She had little time to consider the full implications of her decision, since the administrator presented it as a ‘dire need.’ After talking with a faculty-liaison at the CRRLC and learning a little about the training process, she accepted this challenge because she considers herself to be a reflective practitioner.

> At the time the administration presented it as a dire need. They said, ‘We need someone to fill this position.’ I spoke with a faculty liaison on the phone at the time and said to her, ‘I'm very apprehensive about taking on the position because I haven't been teaching very long. I'm not sure I know enough to be able to do this.’ At the time she said, ‘You just need to be the type of person who likes to reflect and think about your practice.’ I thought, ‘Yes. That's me.’
>
> Certain administrators at the school really think this [LC] is important. Other administrators just don't get it and in part I think is because they haven't been involved [in taking it on]. And as a result, you know the administrator who's on board has been very busy. And I think I am trusted and they believe that I'm getting in there, while other administrators think it's something that I brought to the school that I'm championing. So this has been very difficult and I think that the staff gets sort of mixed views of what's going on.

Despite having fewer than ten years teaching experience, the administration expressed confidence in her ability to take on the role. Ms. Cranmore had not heard about the initiative prior to being approached by the principal, who made the decision to take on the Literacy Collaborative initiative without presenting it to the staff. At that point, the principal, assistant principal, and the previous coach-candidate were the only ones who knew about it. Unfortunately, this meant that the level of initial buy-in by the rest of teaching staff was minimal (Ippolito, 2009; Matsumura et al., 2010).

Adding to the challenges of the implementation, the principal who brought in Literacy Collaborative left the school during the second year of implementation and a new administrator was hired who was not familiar with the model. This meant that the coach was seen as a key driver in the implementation even though the new principal did the best she could to learn about it. Because the principal was very busy during his first year at the school, it was difficult for the coach to work out a regular meeting schedule with her.

> Because there's not as much follow through on the administration's part in terms of coming in and talking about the different components of literacy collaborative, some teachers sort of feel like maybe they don't have to do it [implement the teaching model]. The teachers who just naturally are more reflective and enjoy this sort of thing, it's good with them. And I'm seeing changes in their classrooms. It's really fascinating.

It is difficult to support a literacy model when teachers have different opinions about its merit or when the administration has not taken time to make expectations known. Ms. Cranmore feels the tension between teachers who are open to the initiative and those who resist it or ignore it. This means that she is on uneven footing at the start, as are the teachers. They have not been included

in discussions about the model prior to hiring the coach, and have little buy-in or understanding. (Matsumura et al., 2010).

School Culture

Ms. Cranmore described the culture of her school and the teachers' response to taking on the Literacy Collaborative initiative. Her role as coach included providing professional development sessions and individual coaching with the teachers in her training cohort. She described actions the principal took to support her work and how the teachers responded to her efforts to set up professional development and coaching sessions.

> Right now what we're trying to figure out is the professional development schedule. The school administration went to a lot of trouble to make time to make it appealing to teachers to participate.
>
> But the coaching has been all done on good faith. In the sense that teachers are having to schedule their pre-conferences and their post-conferences before school or during their prep time or things like that. Some teachers are perfectly happy to do that, and some teachers are sort of neutral. The sense [with them] is maybe they have to do it. And then there are teachers who don't [schedule coaching]. And at a point you start to feel like, 'I don't want to chase those people down.' But they are so unbelievably unpleasant that it's it feels almost counterproductive. But it's interesting. I feel like my relationship with teachers—I feel like I know so many more teachers in the building now.

Although some teachers are reluctant to engage in coaching sessions and it feels unpleasant for her to "chase them down," Ms. Cranmore feels positive about developing relationships with teachers in her building. Before becoming the coach, she was somewhat

isolated and worked primarily with teachers at her grade level. Now, she works with teachers at four grade levels.

> So I feel like my relationships in that sense have improved and I know a lot of people. It's been very funny to see people's ability to compartmentalize. As much as they might be very unhappy that I'm going in to their classroom to do whatever, later on they'll see me and they'll start asking how my weekend was and it's totally normal. I don't know. It's been really interesting for me to experience because I feel like, I tend to think that, 'She hates me because—like I don't know?' But I don't think it's that. And I really don't think it's me. I think I'm the messenger, and it been sort of challenging.

Ms. Cranmore sees the teacher's negative attitude as directed more at the literacy initiative, since they did not have full buy-in, and not at her personally. Because there is little administrative support beyond scheduling professional development, some teachers do not sign up for coaching. They have to give up their preparation time, lunch, or other personal time to arrange for pre-conferences and debriefing meetings with Ms. Cranmore, and this does not always happen willingly for some, while other teachers think it is OK. She uses the word, *challenging*, several times in her narrative, and yet adds an attitude of hopefulness that things will change in the future.

The coach is working with twenty-four teachers and described scheduling coaching visits as challenging. She has had two cohorts of teachers in professional development over the past two years. All teachers are now included in her coaching load.

> It's been hard with so many people on deck for coaching, it is very, very difficult to consistently see anybody. Really long chunks of time can go on between an observation and a visit and I'll show up and it's like things are totally different from when I last saw it.

> It’s not necessarily a direction we had talked about, or they'll be dealing with something else and then I feel unprepared because it was not what I was expecting.
>
> That’s one of those things that next year I'm hoping will be different, because next year I'll better attend to visits and better stick with everybody and follow through. I'm a little worried that the first group will feel like the group that kind of fell through the cracks because I was trying to figure it out.

Ms. Cranmore plans to change the way she schedules coaching in the future. The first year she used a voluntary sign-up system, and found that some teachers were not signing up. During her second year she tried having a specific day and time for each teacher over the course of a month. This new system worked as long as the coach was in the building, but when she was called out for a meeting, she missed the coaching visits on that day. If there was a holiday or special activity, it meant that the teachers scheduled for that day and time missed coaching for a month, as rescheduling was almost impossible due to the large number of teachers. Ms. Cranmore was frustrated by this lack of consistency and felt that she let teachers down when this happened (Rainville & Jones, 2008; Zembylas, 2003). This continual frustration does not support her growing identity as a literacy coach. She has the personal attributes to support her growth: perseverance, hope, and problem-solving strategies, but she is also faced with many challenges (Coskie et al., 2005; Dirkx, 2008; Hunt & Handsfield, 2013; Mraz et al., 2008; Rainville & Jones, 2008)

> Well, I feel like a lot of it is loose strings that I could be taking care of and I could be figuring out in some way and I haven't figured it out. But I don't think it's entirely true because I've made a lot of changes to the way that I schedule things and people still cancel on me. Last year I tried having them pick their own times for every single

meeting. That didn't work.

So this year we tried a model where they selected a time that would work for them at the beginning of the year, and then I would repeat that schedule. It was a rotation of like an A-week and a B-week and a C-week and I would repeat that rotation. But then what I realized is that for example, I'm on a district committee and I would find that I was not going to be in the building on Wednesdays consistently and so for several weeks in a row the same teachers missed their session, and I couldn't reschedule them because the rest of the weeks were already full.

During her first year coaching, Ms. Cranmore had ten people in her professional development class, and she was scheduled to coach them once every two weeks. In her second year of coaching she added fourteen more teachers in cohort two. They also participated in professional development and were added to her coaching rotation. Cohorts one and two each had separate professional development classes, once every two weeks or so. This meant that Ms. Cranmore was preparing professional development plans almost every week as well as trying to see each teacher once or twice a month.

Last year buy-in was not totally there [with cohort one], so that made it challenging. But because there were fewer of them [ten in the first cohort] it was easier in a sense. This year I feel like I'm trying to deal with so many people [24] and so many outside distractions, like days off or meetings. A lot of people say, 'Just sign me up for coaching.' And I do, but then I get to their classroom and they say, 'Today is not a good day. We have a field trip.' or something like that.

Ms. Cranmore expressed several contrasting ideas. On the one hand, she feels challenged by the obstacles she is facing, and wonders if she has "figured it out" at this point. But then she

recalls the efforts she has made to accommodate people's schedules, and cites the fact that they still back out of coaching sessions with her. She has hopes for next year, amid the struggles she has faced this year, and looks forward to making plans to "tighten it up so it feels better."

She is feeling isolated in her school because the principal is new and has her hands full with other duties. The teachers have not bought in to the initiative, and in some cases actively resent the coaching, cancelling scheduled visits at the last minute. The lack of buy-in and preparation in this particular school environment have put the coach in a position as "the messenger" of the initiative, with little back up from her administration. It is hard to determine whether things would be different for her if the initiative had been accepted by the staff at the beginning, or if she had more years of experience, but the first two years have been challenging for her in several ways. She is working with twenty-four teachers, which is a large number with whom to schedule coaching visits across a month. She feels bad when she misses a session with them, but does not have time to reschedule. It is a frustrating situation for her that is not supporting her developing identity as a literacy coach (Hunt & Handsfield, 2013; Ippolito, 2010; Lynch & Ferguson, 2010; Matsumura et al., 2010; Otaiba et al., 2008; Shuck et al., 2007; Zembylas, 2003).

The Role of the Coach

Ms. Cranmore sees herself as someone who helps teachers reflect on their practice. This vision is grounded in what her school administration has conveyed to her, and at this point in her journey to becoming a literacy coach, she reflects on what they have said.

> In my mind a literacy coach is somebody who—It's sort of the school's way of saying they realize how important reflection is in our teaching practice. The literacy coach is the person who they assign to work with teachers to have that opportunity to reflect and to

> think about how to move forward and get better. My school says reflection is important and I think it's a hard shift for some teachers to make. This year has been very challenging.

In order to build a reflective community, Ms. Cranmore provides professional development for two cohorts of teachers. Sometimes this means preparing one session a week for three or four weeks in a row. This takes a lot of time, because she wants them to be successful. She juggles this professional development and coaching with teaching children every morning.

> How do I see myself? As much as I love the classroom teaching, and I still think that might ultimately be where my heart lies, I've devoted a lot of my time to my work with coaching this year. I feel like I'm talking about it all the time. Not in a bad way, but just always thinking about professional development sessions. And when I go into people's classrooms, thinking about what they are doing and what I'm doing in the classroom and how it connects and diverges. And how can I fix things in my classroom, and how I can help them think about their classroom teaching.

Ms. Cranmore is in transition from teaching to coaching (as are all four coaches). She is working on both areas of her professional life at the same time. As previously stated, Literacy Collaborative coaches spend the first year of their training working in their own classroom, learning new practices of teaching reading, writing, and language and word study. During their second year of training they add coaching to this classroom work. This means they plan professional learning sessions for their first cohort of teachers, schedule individual coaching sessions, and still teach their students for about half of the day. Juggling these responsibilities within a supportive environment is challenging, but when the school culture is not positive for any number of reasons, the stress on the coach is greater. For Ms. Cranmore, several aspects are

missing: a supportive principal, teachers who understand the school's vision and literacy model and who are willing to actively work with the coach, and someone in the building with whom she can meet regularly to share her experiences. Without these support systems within easy reach, Ms. Cranmore's journey is more of a challenge (Ippolito, 2009; Matsumura et al., 2010). And yet, she is feeling positive about the ways in which she is interacting with others in the district.

> More and more I can see how the work I've done with LC is impacting my way of thinking in a lot of other areas. I'm on the instructional leadership team and I feel like when I go to meetings and discussions are going against what we are working on in Literacy Collaborative, I try to bring it up and make it known…like a defender. More and more I'm thinking about what is developmentally appropriate for children.
>
> So that has been weird. I almost find that it feels like being more reflective or more aware. But I feel like I'm trying to see things from all sides as a result of the work I've been doing to best understand what is going to make sense in the long run.
> And I think I'm a better teacher for it. And I feel much more confident in my teaching abilities than before starting Literacy Collaborative.
>
> Although I'm much more frustrated with myself now because I'm being pulled in both directions. Quite honestly I feel like I can't show up unprepared for PD, but I could show up in my classroom with a last-minute plan. This is not how it should be because at the end of the day the ones who will be hurt are my students, which goes against everything LC is about. I'm not living up to my own expectations.

Even though Ms. Cranmore is frustrated and disappointed in herself because of the pressure she is under to be well-prepared for her work with adult learners, she talks about being a better teacher because of the learning she has engaged in with the Literacy Collaborative. Even

though she has insufficient time to plan for both professional development and teaching in her classroom, she feels as though her teaching has improved. She described being able to take the "long view" of where her students are headed.

> That has made my teaching easier and better. Now, I know where I am headed in general and that gives me more confidence and helps me see the good in what my students are doing. I focus on the positive and on what they have under control and I see that it is OK, and we are working toward getting other things under control.
>
> That being said, when students don't have something under control, I'm not thinking, 'Why don't you get it?' I'm thinking, 'What did I do wrong?' So that has been hard. I am very reflective and can be highly critical of myself, which is funny, because I don't necessarily feel that way about other people. Part of this is feeling like because I am the coach, shouldn't I be the model?

Ms. Cranmore continues to look deeply at her own practice of teaching, and while she feels as if she has grown as a teacher, she feels frustrated by not having enough planning time for her classroom teaching. She has noticed however, that being a reflective practitioner and sharing her thoughts has an effect on her own work and on the teachers. It is interesting to note at this point, that just as teachers take on new learning at different rates, as previously mentioned, novice coaches are on their own journeys and proceed at their own pace as well. For some coaches, it seems like a relatively easy transition. For others, it takes longer, especially if the coach is experiencing positive growth in one area, like working with her students, and finding challenges in working with adult learners. Ms. Cranmore's school culture is not helping her transition to coaching, but her own learning and teaching practice are growing and deepening. This is her path, and she continues to reflect on her progress across the two roles. Sharing her

own journey is helping her to gain access to teachers in the school because she is open with her struggles and successes.

> And I constantly think this is good, and it has helped people to sort of like having me come into their classrooms more. I had someone say, 'I don't feel you're judging me negatively, and I really appreciate how honest about your own work you are. And you are much more relatable because of that.' This was really nice to hear, and I appreciated that.
>
> But at the same time, it's one of those things that works against me when teachers who have been around for a lot longer think I'm coming in to teach them something that they didn't know. When I talk about an issue I am having in my own classroom, they say, 'Of course, because you've only been teaching for so long.' I guess it's a double-edged sword.
>
> I think a lot of the pressure I'm feeling is because I'm not immune to the pressure from administration and the district mandates. One of my long-term goals for coaching is finding a better way to connect Literacy Collaborative and other things the district wants us to do, that are not going together. But I'm still very optimistic, and you know, 'carrying the flame' and feeling like we can do it.

This last quote exemplifies the additional pressure that Literacy Collaborative coaches deal with every day. Not only do they have to take on the mantle of coach, but they have to support a literacy initiative that may not be supported within their school or district. In fact, this district has begun several initiatives over the two-year period Ms. Cranmore has been in her role, and many of them conflict with the practices of Literacy Collaborative. Her goal is to "find a way to connect Literacy Collaborative and other things the district wants us to do." But without district support or the intervention of her principal, teachers feel pulled in many directions, and

are just as frustrated as the coach is. “Somebody told me, ‘New initiatives come in and roll out every five years.’” Ms. Cranmore shared. This may speak to the teachers’ lack of buy-in. They are used to new ideas rolling in, and rolling out again. This adds to the challenges Ms. Cranmore feels because Literacy Collaborative could easily be among the initiatives that peter out.

Ms. Cranmore sees differences between her role as teacher and her new role as coach and people’s perceptions of her in both roles. She has a growing awareness of the importance of effective teaching.

> As a teacher, because I was relatively new, people underestimated me. As a coach, I’ve become more involved in the school and district and know more people now. I do a lot for the school and I enjoy doing it. I think it has changed the way people see me. I don’t know if I feel more important—I feel like both jobs are equally important. I feel more confident in my teaching and understanding of how people learn. Adults are much more challenging students than children.
>
> The term, coach, rubs a lot of teachers the wrong way, and I don’t even think of myself that way. I know I’m not more experienced than them, but I do know I have no problem looking at my teaching inside and out, and really pulling it apart. I have access to all of these interesting resources that CRRLC provides us with, and I know how to find information when I have a question, so I’ve really tried hard to get people to think about it as just a chance to talk to somebody [about teaching] instead of just talking to yourself. *You don’t have to be bad to get better*. It’s continued work and continued reflection that help you be more effective.

Ms. Cranmore shared her own professional growth. She has a role in the school and district that alters people’s views of her. She reflects on how being in this role has allowed her to

see things within her school and at district meetings that she would not have seen as a classroom teacher. Her views of the importance of effective teaching have expanded and she wonders how she can improve her colleague's effectiveness as teachers. She wants to support the idea that, "You don't have to be bad to get better." This is in line with the constructivist beliefs that learning begins with what the student currently knows and understands. It is supported with the help of a "more knowledgeable other" who scaffolds learning through teaching, modeling, sharing in the planning, and allowing the student to try it on their own, with support. Reflection plays an important role for both teacher and coach as they look back on lessons together and determine next steps. Ms. Cranmore has had the opportunity to see a wider range of teaching approaches in her school through her visits to classroom. She began the process of training for a coach with only six years of teaching experience. Much of this time was spent in her own classroom, without knowing what else was happening in her school. As she began to realize the range of teaching practices being used, it opened her eyes to many possibilities, and encouraged her to continue to work on her own teaching practice.

> Being a literacy coach—being on this side of the fence—I see just how important teaching is. I mean, I always thought it was important. I went into it as a career because I enjoyed it. But I realize that as a classroom teacher I did some things differently from other people. And other people did things differently from me. But I didn't realize how different our classrooms are, and teaching styles are. I feel I was less aware of that as a teacher in my own classroom. And one of the things I'm working on now is I want to see the positive things when I visit teachers, just like I do when I am teaching children.

> Right now the way things have gone with teacher buy-in and all, I still feel like I'm playing defense. I get very anxious going into certain teachers' rooms. And I have to remind myself to start by looking at what was happening that was great.
>
> With my students I can see the long term of where we want to go. And with coaching the teachers it's not totally clear to me where we are going. So I feel like I'm moving on a day-to-day basis and not meeting with them as frequently so it's hard to build that idea of where we are headed.

Ms. Cranmore voiced similar feelings about her coaching as she voiced when she described being a new teacher 'going day-to-day.' "When I first started teaching it was very day-to-day. But now I look at what my students do and think it is amazing!" Being a novice in any profession is tenuous at first. It takes time to build the 'big picture' of the goals they are working toward. Ms. Cranmore feels more assured of her understanding of teaching now, especially after her Literacy Collaborative training. She knows where she is headed with her students, and is able to see how they are working toward those goals and notice what they have under control. With the teachers it is different. The combination of her anxiety, the lack of buy-in, and not knowing exactly where they are headed make this more of a challenge for her. She continues to reflect and problem-solve.

> At this point a lot of people walk out of professional development and say, 'What do you want to see when you come visit me?' I really honestly think it would be different if there was more consistent follow-up on my part. But now they feel as if the administration isn't looking.

People in her training class express a laisse faire attitude that underscores their lack of buy-in. But Ms. Cranmore takes on some of the responsibility as well, citing her inconsistent

follow-up with some teachers. She cites the importance of building a rationale for this initiative. This usually happens before the initiative is brought to the school, and the former administration did not do this. In addition, the district has other initiatives it has brought on. As a result, Ms. Cranmore is left peddling fast to communicate rationales as well as dealing with the overwhelming burden teachers are facing: too many initiatives (Matsumura et al., 2010).

> I think it speaks to building a rationale for this kind of thinking and this kind of working. The other thing is sometimes they agree and say, 'We hear you and agree it makes sense, but we have all these other things we have to do. So how are we supposed to do those things and this?' I think in general the district has taken on too many initiatives and meshing them is difficult. And that is not to say we couldn't mesh them down the road. I'm trying to get us there, but sometimes I feel like I don't have time to think about it. There is so much happening now.

In addition to lack of support from her principal, Ms. Cranmore's district has brought on many new initiatives in a short period of time. Many are in direct conflict with Literacy Collaborative. This puts the coach at a disadvantage, and puts too many things on the teachers' plates. They cannot take on this many new initiatives at once. Everyone is frustrated. However, Ms. Cranmore gets some positive feedback from teachers, and once again reflects on beginning to take the long view herself. She goes so far as to express "joy" at her ability to take on a new perspective.

> Some teachers have really helped me feel like I'm doing a good job. And some have made me feel like, not like I'm doing a bad job, but they have not bought in to LC, and they see me as the messenger. I feel like the administration, for the most part, is confident in my ability to do what I'm doing. And there are a lot of teachers who say, 'I couldn't do

what you are doing.' Some mean it in a positive way, and others are like, 'I never would have made that decision.'

So that's interesting. But the way I think about things has shifted, and I like the way I think about things now. I feel like I'm more capable of looking at things from all sides and feeling like I can be objective in my evaluation of things. I appreciate my ability to look at things more objectively, whether it's my students or assessments or the teachers I'm working with. Because I'm thinking on a bigger scale now. And it makes me *feel joyful*. It brings some of the joy to my work.

Despite the frustrations and stress that Ms. Cranmore feels when she tries to schedule coaching visits or gets push-back from some teachers, she is resilient. She uses words like "joy" to describe her feelings. She perseveres and is determined to work on schedules and her own capacity to meet challenging situations head on. She acknowledges the shifts in her own teaching and in taking the broader view to helping others in her school. She is on the road to developing her coaching identity despite the challenges because she has a vision of what she should be (Plimmer & Schmidt, 2007; Rossiter, 2007; Trent & Lim, 2010).

I Feel Like a Literacy Coach Today

Ms. Cranmore described two incidents that helped her feel like a coach. The first one centers on a teacher who was working on writing projects with her students and had recently been using some of the methods introduced in Ms. Cranmore's professional development classes.

I guess when people want to try something out in their classroom, that's when I feel like an effective literacy coach. I feel like, 'I'm doing this. This is happening!' There is one teacher—I feel as if she makes things easy. Her thinking has shifted in so many ways. She had pulled together student writing and this was the first year she had handed them

> blank booklets and let students write their own stories. She started telling me about all the things she was starting to see in her students' writing. That made me feel like we were having a conversation. Whenever we meet it feels like we are having a conversation as opposed to, 'I'm here to do something.' And she was so excited to share with me and to talk about her students' work. But it didn't feel like two teachers sharing their students' work. It felt like she wanted to talk about the shift that had occurred.
>
> And then I saw another teacher was using booklets in her classroom for writing, and I really felt like I had introduced something and now I was starting to see the domino effect.

Ms. Cranmore mentioned having conversations, not just as teachers sharing ideas, but noticing that a teacher had made a shift in her thinking. Some might call this transformational learning. Moving away from previous ways of looking at teaching, to understanding a new approach that might prove more beneficial for students. Going beyond this, Ms. Cranmore notices other teachers taking on this element of teaching as well. This "domino effect" is often the beginning of a shift in thinking that goes beyond one teacher to an entire grade level team. Once people begin sharing effective techniques, others are more open to trying them. She identifies as a coach when she sees this happening and she is positioned as the coach by the teacher during these "conversations." It is evidence of her work with teachers, and the possibility of extending the work to grade levels or other groups of teachers.

She described another incident in which she facilitated a professional development session that inspired conversation among the teachers and new understandings about the way the word study continuum works. Teachers became excited about their new learning.

> Another time I felt like a coach was at a professional development session about the word study continuum. I saw the teachers standing up and talking with one another and thinking about it and discussing where items [word study principles] would go and pushing back on other things. That really made me feel I was facilitating something important. I was doing important work with the teachers and hearing the different conversations that were going on. Teachers were taking pictures of their work and saying they would use them in their portfolios.

Ms. Cranmore facilitated this professional learning experience and realized she was making a difference by bringing teachers together to share new information with them and set up learning experiences that allowed them to process the information with one another and engage in professional learning. She was validated when she listened to their conversations and realized that they valued the work enough to consider including it in their professional development portfolios. Ms. Cranmore previously indicated that her comfort level when planning and facilitating professional development was greater than when she worked with individual teachers in coaching visits. This is one part of her role that is supporting her growing identity. She was successful, was positioned by the teachers as having been effective, and noticed the shifts in teachers' understandings as a result of her work.

Reflecting further on times when she did not feel like a literacy coach, Ms. Cranmore sometimes felt she was letting people down, or she was not yet as experienced as other coaches in the district.

> There are other times when I am called to a [district] meeting and have to say, 'Sorry, I can't come to your classroom today [to a teacher who had a coaching visit scheduled]. And I don't feel like a literacy coach in that moment. I feel like a person who is bailing

> on something she said she would do and she's not doing it. I'm still trying to see myself as a coach, and I know that's my position, and when I'm with more experienced coaches, I still feel like I have a way to go.

There are several other coaches in Ms. Cranmore's district who have more experience than she does. She is supported by meeting with these coaches regularly, but also feels as if she might not be as effective as they are. In addition, the demands of district meetings that took her away from her building at regular intervals made it difficult for her to maintain her regular coaching schedule. This made her feel as if she was "bailing on something she said she would do."

Supports and Challenges

Ms. Cranmore had monthly meetings with other Literacy Collaborative coaches in the district and these meetings were her greatest source of support. The LC coaches met on a regular basis, shared their progress or challenges with one another, and discussed how the implementations in their schools were going.

> The other coaches have been lifelines. It's been huge to know that there are other people who know what is going on. When something great happens, everyone celebrates, when something isn't going well, everybody is like, 'What can I do to help?' And I feel like that is what has helped me to stick it out. If I didn't have that, I don't know if I would have made it to this point.
>
> I really love that group and look forward to meeting every month. I always walk away from it feeling that not everything is perfect, but I can get through this. Everyone has challenges, and it helps us all to realize that it could be worse. And people share what

they have done to solve problems and what has worked. It helps keep the excitement up. It's fun to be with people who enjoy coaching and want to do this work too.

Ms. Cranmore ended her story by sharing that her monthly meeting with the other coaches in the district extended the energy she felt after ongoing professional development across the year. Their monthly discussions not only involved sharing successes and challenges, but also gave the coaches the opportunity to dig into topics that might have been raised at the annual PD. Or coaches would suggest topics in coaching or teaching for further discussion at their meetings.

Most Literacy Collaborative coaches attend annual ongoing professional development at the CRRLC and this was another factor that helped keep Ms. Cranmore involved in the coaching initiative. The four-day Literacy Collaborative professional development is designed to introduce new ways of thinking about teaching and coaching. It often includes role-playing or sharing coaching videos. "When we have ongoing PD at Lesley I always leave feeling like my brain has grown five times. It helps me head into my own PD with more energy and bounce in my step."

Ms. Cranmore wished she had pushed harder with her new principal to meet with her every week. These weekly meetings with administrators help inform them of issues or celebrations and elicit the support that conveys to teachers that this is an initiative that is valued by the administration.

I set up a meeting with my principal and explained that there were concerns I had going into next year. I asked for her help figuring out how to face them. She replied, 'Great! I can't wait to hear about it, and it sounds good.' I feel like I should have pushed harder this year to meet with her, but honestly, getting a meeting was difficult. The biggest

> hurdle for me is to get over my fear of rejection. I get nervous and don't always feel like I push myself to just deal with it.

Ms. Cranmore is reflective and understands that her own nervousness gets in the way of her work with teachers and with pushing to meet with her principal. She fears that if she does not move teachers forward, the initiative may suffer and be set aside as ineffective.

> Change is hard and can take a long time, but I get nervous. Do we have that kind of time? How much time can it take before people get bored and do something else, or before someone steps in and says, 'This clearly isn't working so we are going to do something else now.'

Ms. Cranmore has had three years of challenges, beginning with her last-minute drafting into the coaching position and then with the change in school administration as she engaged in LC training. She began her work with very little teacher buy-in, meager support from her administration, and a flurry of district initiatives that conflicted with the Literacy Collaborative work she was leading. The monthly meetings with other coaches in the district boosted her morale and helped her return to her work energized and supported. Some teachers in her building understood what she was trying to do and gave her positive feedback. Others openly questioned the initiative and shared their doubts with her or canceled their scheduled coaching visits. The new principal in her school had her hands full and had little time to meet with or support this novice coach, other than sharing the confidence that she thinks she is capable of doing the job. With little positive reinforcement from teachers and her principal, Ms. Cranmore still "feels joy."

She looked forward to solving problems and being more effective next year. Engaging in the coaching work opened her eyes to the variety of teaching styles and approaches in her school, and she wanted to make things better for all students by working with teachers so they could be

more effective and cohesive in their approach to teaching. She was excited about her own teaching, and her new perspective on how children learn and was amazed at what they could do. She felt she was able to see things from many sides, and make more informed decisions. Although she felt anxiety when she worked with some teachers, she realized that she had to be the one to help people move forward. That would only happen if she engaged fully in the work, overcame her fears, and began to see the big picture of what her coaching work might accomplish. She demonstrated that she was moving toward *becoming* a coach with a vision toward the future, despite her challenging situation. By being resilient and setting goals for her adult learners just as she did with her students and for herself, she might be able to realize those dreams.

Ms. Durelle

Starting Out

Ms. Durelle previously worked as a special education and classroom teacher and this experience led to her decision to move on professionally into a different role at her school. She applied for and was hired to be the literacy coach in her school. This position served her growing need to work with adult learners as problem-solvers in seeking out effective approaches to helping students learn.

> The light of my day was helping kids figure out how to read and watching that lightbulb go off. With struggling readers I'd have to problem-solve and figure out how to help them. As I had more years under my belt as a teacher, it became attractive to me to have those conversations with other teachers—to kind of figure it out in a collaborative way. So when the literacy coach position came to be an opportunity in our district it seemed

like it was kind of meshing both of my favorite things. So I went for it, and I'm glad I did, you know, because I like the different layers. I love that.

Ms. Durelle enjoyed layers of support from colleagues at school, other coaches and administrators in the district, and the continuing support of her faculty liaisons at Lesley. She emphasized how important those layers were to her success. "I feel supported from all sides—like I can't flounder because there's always somewhere for me to reach out. Even though I'm a literacy coach supporting teachers, there are times when I need the support as well."

She recognized that she embarked on a purposeful journey, but that she still needed support to help her grow into this role. Her training at the CRRLC at Lesley University emphasized the importance of using effective language and taking a constructive stance in the coaching process. There was a process of sharing information and then continuing to think about it. "I want my colleagues to understand this as an ongoing conversation and there's never a time when they have to *just know*." Ms. Durelle's beliefs and values meshed with those of the literacy model and she was grounded in the constructivist stance of shared learning. This helped her to feel comfortable in the role, and supported her developing identity.

The Role of the Coach

Ms. Durelle saw the role of the coach as "the missing piece" in supporting a comprehensive literacy initiative in her school. The school had been implementing reading interventions that were in line with the Literacy Collaborative philosophy (Reading Recovery and Leveled Literacy Intervention), but classroom instruction was "a mish-mash" of different approaches to teaching.

Before Literacy Collaborative every teacher was teaching literacy in a different way. Some were using one curriculum and other teachers were using different ones. It was not

> that bad, but there was no consistency. I am able to help teachers see what things are important to student learning, how to help guide instruction so students are getting the most learning out of the literacy block.

As coach, she helped teachers take on the LC model of teaching so that classroom instruction and interventions were more in line with one another, thus giving students the best chance for success and building consistency in teaching approaches. This was where she was grounded, and she shared these values with her colleagues and other stakeholders in the district. Her principal understood the model and supported her in her role (Kose & Lin, 2011; Matsumura et al., 2010; Ippolito, 2009).

Fulfilling her role in the school meant working with all the teachers, classroom and specialists, in order to help them understand the value of the LC model. This is a challenge many coaches face as their schools take on Literacy Collaborative. She understood that commitment to the model must be shared by everyone in the school, regardless of their role.

> There are twenty classroom teachers and then there's support staff, reading teachers, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologists, and counselors. In order for us to really become a true Literacy Collaborative school everyone in the building needs to understand the value and why we do what we do. Part of my role is to help whoever is in my cohort to take on the understandings of what makes sense for them in the role they are in. It's a juggling act because everyone's roles are so different.

Coaching and professional development look different for classroom teachers than they do for resource room teachers or other support staff. Ms. Durelle provided professional development to classroom teachers, and described that as "easy." However, when considering the needs of other staff members, it became more complicated.

> Working on everyone having buy-in to the model is part of my role. Using professional development and coaching sessions with people in my cohort, but also having unofficial coaching sessions like having conversations in the hallways or showing them resources where they can go to find answers [is part of the work].

Her role as coach included analyzing student assessment data, which was a prime concern at this school. She and her team members made decisions on intervention plans for students in order to help them make measurable progress across the year. In addition, she works with intervention teachers to help them examine their running record data and decide on next steps for students receiving support.

> Our school is in a place now that we can start having that conversation about what intervention looks like and what it means for different students. My role as a literacy coach is to help them think more about the reader as an individual: why we're doing that intervention and maybe take them to resources to see what this looks like at this level. Are students able to read at a higher level? What are the behaviors we're looking for? And I hope that as that literacy coach I'm able to help them think more about it.

Working with Stakeholders

Ms. Durelle compared her work with students to her new role working with adult learners. She led conversations and professional learning sessions with her colleagues, working together as equals.

> Working with adults is very different than working with children. I felt so confident when I had my small groups as a special education teacher. And [as a classroom teacher] I could hold together 20 five-year-olds in a classroom, and we could get things done and be productive.

> But then when you stand in front of adults it's very different. To have those conversations with adults and try to help them manage their learning as equals you sort of have to really think about the way that you're talking to them. And for some of the teachers that I'm coaching right now a lot of the first couple months was just relationship building. I had to build that relationship first and make it feel safe before I could take them into different resources at professional development.

Some teachers in her district were used to a different model of coaching that was based on demonstration. This was in contrast to the coaching model used in Literacy Collaborative, in which people co-construct their understandings together. Ms. Durelle realizes that the way teachers saw her was couched in their previous experiences with coaches who worked in different ways. She worked to help them understand that the two methods were different, and they might expect a different experience when they engaged in coaching with her. This was somewhat of a challenge, because the district coaches did still interact with teachers and positioned them differently.

> Not that it's a negative thing, but it's just when we trained at Lesley it was more about helping a teacher to come up with the understanding on their own and experience that 'ah-ha moment,' just by discussing a quote to bring them to a deeper understanding. And so it's a different feel. But there are still some teachers who think of the other coaching model that we had in our building, and say, 'Why aren't you just telling me what to do?'

She invited teachers into her own classroom to observe her teaching in order to provide a model of an instructional practice, which they could discuss afterwards. In this way she tried to gently introduce them to new methods through modeling, professional development, and coaching visits once they began implementing practices in their own classrooms.

> So when we have conversations together, if I'm feeling like that they're not following where I'm guiding them, I think it would be much easier for me to just go in and model. But we have a system of pre-conference, observation, and post-conference instead. So for a lot of teachers that's the way we are able to see what works and what doesn't. I scribe what actually happens during the lesson and we debrief it together afterwards.
>
> When you have specific examples of what happened while observing their teaching, it's easier for them to think more about what to do next or how to change the lesson, because they look at what works in their own teaching.

She described observing a guided reading lesson in one teacher's classroom. The teacher was concerned because she thought the lesson had taken too long. Ms. Ayers scribed the lesson, including the timing, and used it to help the teacher reflect during their debriefing conference.

> I said to her, 'Your whole lesson from soup to nuts was fifteen minutes.' And she couldn't believe that because when you are in the moment you are not looking at the clock. But I think feedback like that help the teachers to really say, 'Oh, I can do that. I can fit in another group if I'm organized before the literacy block starts and I have all my materials. I can get those groups in.' So just using them as examples is helping them to think more about their instruction and see what makes sense in their classrooms.

Despite the fact that teachers at her school were used to a different model of coaching, focusing on demonstration or modeling, Ms. Ayers persevered and encouraged her teachers to try new approaches and then reflect on their progress together during debriefing conferences. Her grounding in the process of coaching allowed her to share her understandings confidently with teachers. Using a gradual release of responsibility approach, through modeling and debriefing

she demonstrated the process so that she could use it with them in their classrooms. This gradual work toward the Literacy Collaborative model of coaching seemed to be working for her.

The Coaching Culture

Ms. Durelle met weekly with the other LC coaches in the district. They problem-solved issues that come up and planned their professional development classes together. The coaches in her district were at different stages in their LC training, and that worked to their advantage. Coaches who were trained first brought their experiences to the table, and the more recently trained coaches brought fresh ideas and new learning from the CRRLC. They worked together to deliver a cohesive message to all educators, knowing that each school's implementation would look a bit different (Matsumura et al., 2010; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001).

> Because we are a district, we try to get the same message to all the teachers. But each school is its own community and each coach is different. I know while we were training we talked a lot about how the school itself is its own community, and each LC school is a different community, which it is. My school is very different from the others in the district. But the message that we send to them is cohesive. Each school takes it on a little bit differently.
>
> And even within the building, at our PD session today we were talking about conferencing during writers' workshop, and how we help the students to really apply what we're teaching them in a small-mini lesson, in a large-group mini lesson, in conferencing. How we help them to take it on independently through the future. And just at a table of nine teachers there were five different ideas of how to hold children accountable for what their learning is. That discussion alone shows that there are so many differences, depending on where you are [in your teaching experience].

Ms. Durelle looked at herself as a positive person, who, through her experience working as an interventionist was always looking for options to solve problems. She saw this as supporting her developing identity as a coach (Coskie et al., 2005; Rainville, & Jones, 2008; Zembylas, 2003). She modeled a positive approach to problem-solving that she hoped teachers would emulate.

> I think about 90% of the time my glass is always half-full. So, I think as a literacy coach, one of the things I bring to the table is thinking that there is always something we can talk about and that I'm still a learner as I go through this process. I'm hoping that I can pass that on—that positive feeling and the idea that there is never an end point.
>
> There are students who struggle, students who plateau, and there are some management pieces that just don't work. But there's always another place we can go or another approach we can try. And I hope the teachers I work with in coaching, through professional development, or conversations in the hallways will think about that. There is always another possibility.

There was a culture of support and problem-solving that developed in Ms. Durelle's school in which teachers sought out the learning specialists including her, to share issues about children or to ask about resources that might be helpful to their learning.

> I think a big part of feeling successful is that through the coaching sessions and the PD sessions teachers show me respect. I think, you know, looking for not even advice or—I mean, sometimes advice. But sometimes, ideas for different ways that they can instruct, or change their instruction. I hate the word change, though…different things they can take on in their instruction.

The principal and other members of the literacy intervention team added their support as well. She described her principal as having a good understanding of the LC model and how it would support student learning. This contributed to her identity as well.

> To have an administrator who is willing to rock the master schedule in order to provide time for coaching and professional development sessions is pretty supportive. This contributes to my work as a literacy coach because if the principal weren't that supportive it would be a lot more stressful for me. The principal has a good, solid understanding of the value of what we are doing and why we are doing it, and how it is really going to support the student learning in our building.

Ms. Durelle met with her administrator once a week to discuss the 'nuts and bolts" of the collaborative as well as to look at assessment data together and think about interventions. Additionally, they met with the intervention team every eight weeks to discuss students' progress, whether any modifications to interventions might be needed, or whether the student was progressing. As a coach she met with a variety of teams within her building and in the greater district as well.

Students contributed to her identity as a coach by approaching her when she came into their classrooms to show her their writing or read to her. "They know we are talking about how they are learning. Their excitement contributes to me as a literacy coach." Students were actively engaging in the process of learning in their classrooms and were anxious to share their work with the coach when she came in to visit their classroom. Ms. Durelle was positioned as a literacy coach by many stakeholders across her district. In addition, there was a positive culture of learning and interaction at her school. These factors contributed strongly to her identity as literacy coach. She was able to perform her duties successfully with most stakeholders and this

built her confidence and identity (Hunt & Handsfield, 2013; Lynch & Ferguson, 2010; Matsumura et al., 2010).

I Feel Like a Literacy Coach Today

Ms. Durelle felt like a literacy coach when she saw teachers taking on the new learning and applying it to their day-to-day teaching. One teacher in particular made a shift in her thinking over the summer months as she reflected on the previous year's training.

> She was very excited to take on the new learning last year, a lot of it, you know? But just at the surface level. But at the beginning of this year she asked if we could meet to really talk about what she had reflected on over the summer. She shared some things she wanted to dig into and remembered things in professional development and coaching sessions that I had nudged her about.

When they were working on conferring in writers' workshop the previous year, the coach asked this teacher how she kept track of what the students were doing, and what she had been teaching them. The teacher had replied, "It's all in my head." But this year the teacher began using record-keeping forms and was able to use that data to track students' progress and make instructional decisions. This shift in the teacher's thinking had an effect on her as a coach, as she reflected back on her training at Lesley, her first year's experiences in the role, and her more recent accomplishments.

> And so, to me it was like an 'aha moment.' Someone listened—I accomplished something. But I didn't *do* anything, and I think that's why I felt like a literacy coach. Because I didn't tell her what to do. We just had a lot of conversations about certain things. I showed her some ideas, I gave her some tools, and then when she was ready, she took them on. That is something I took away from my training at Lesley. It's really about

> putting it out there and watching them take it on when they are ready for it. I think it was reassuring that it's not all for nothing, you know?
>
> In this fast-paced environment we all have too many meetings and we have to make sure all twenty-two kids are reading at grade level. Like there are a lot of stresses, a lot of pressure. And so I just fumbled through pre-con, observation, post-con and PD last year. It just runs you ragged. You just never know, I mean you can see it in the teaching when you walk through classrooms, but in that rat race you never know what has really sunk in. And so, with this particular experience—and there are a lot of others—it made me feel like this is a good thing for our school. And I'm able to support it.

Ms. Durelle said that she "didn't *do* anything" in the situation described above. But in fact she had done several things: worked to develop a comfortable relationship with the teacher, provided many professional development sessions, and had individual coaching sessions with the teacher for a year. This groundwork laid the foundation that supported the teacher's ability to reflect on her practice based on the training she had and the shifts in teaching she integrated into her instruction. Ms. Durelle, in fact, worked for a year to prepare for this kind of reflection and growth.

A process that she and her fellow LC coaches developed to support reflection and aid in future planning was the use of exit slips after each professional development session. Teachers filled out these slips, indicated what they learned and what they had questions about. When the coaches met they compared the comments on the exit slips from the different schools, and considered what went well during the professional development and what might need to be revisited. They discussed whether there needed to be follow-up in subsequent PD sessions to clear up confusions or to resolve questions. They also discussed whether the session was well-

planned and effective or whether it might need to be revised so that it is more effective next year when they cover this topic again with a new cohort. In this way, the coaches reflect individually and with colleagues, some of whom were actively positioned as novice coaches and all of whom were positioned by one another as literacy coaches.

Ms. Durelle acknowledged the importance of reflection in her work. She reflected on her own, before, during and after observation visits, as well as encouraging the teachers to be reflective of their practice. Reflection is part of adult learning, especially in a constructivist model, and can happen individually or as groups work together.

> Most of the time I'm able to reflect after the pre-conference so that I can be thoughtful during the observation. Then I try to be reflective after the observation to be considerate about what we'll talk about after the lesson. Finally, I try to be reflective after the post-conference thinking about ideas that came up during the observation that we did not talk about during the post-con. I think about what I could potentially bring up during professional development…maybe a thread across several teachers that I might have observed.

Ms. Durelle mentioned reflection as something she encouraged her colleagues to engage in and in something that was important to her work in preparing for each step of the coaching process. Each of the coaches mentioned reflection as being a key element to their role and to their identity They connected it back to their Literacy Collaborative training and mentioned it as part of their personalities: being reflective practitioners as teachers of children and as professional developers working with adult learners (Fosnot, 2007; Kegan, 2000; Spigner-Littles & Anderson, 1999).

Ms. Durelle worked within a supportive environment where her administrator, school team, teachers, and fellow coaches joined together to implement the LC model. She taught in this school before becoming a coach, and it was her love of collaborating with colleagues to help students that supported her decision to become a coach. She mentioned how her positive attitude contributed to her role and how she hoped it modeled a "can do" approach to teaching and problem-solving for the teachers. Her relationship with her colleagues, both in the school and in the district, supported her developing identity as coach (Matsumura et al., 2010; Rainville & Jones, 2008; Plimmer & Schmidt, 2007).

Chapter 5: Interpretation and Findings

Becoming a Literacy Coach

My goals in this research study were threefold: to inquire into the perceptions of professional identity of literacy coaches as they first engaged in the role; to determine from anecdotal evidence, the factors that were supportive and those that possibly hindered the development of the coaches' professional identities and effective transition into their new roles; and finally, to consider how understanding their experiences might inform the work of those in higher education who develop programs to train literacy coaches. In this section I will share the themes that became evident across the narratives through in vivo and values coding.

As I began to analyze data, I looked for themes in the short narratives the coaches shared in response to open-ended questions. The first charts I made included the theme headings: Role of the Coach, "I Feel Like a Coach Today," Supports, Challenges, and Miscellaneous. I believed that by listening to the coaches describe their day-to-day actions, along with a specific time they felt successful, I would be able to understand the role of literacy coach from their perspectives and consider factors that were supportive and challenging to their successful transitions into that role. Their "perceptions of professional identity" might be elicited as they shared success stories as well as when they felt overwhelmed by all they had to accomplish. As stated earlier, what they did each day differed from the daily routines of their previous responsibilities as teachers. During this transition from one role to another their *situated* identity shifted because they were working with colleagues in different ways (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Gee, 2001). Each referred to the shifts they made in taking on this new position. Some of the changes in how they worked with colleagues are listed in Table 5.1.

The Role of the Literacy Coach

Table 5.1: The Role of the Coach: Professional Shifts

- working with colleagues in different ways: moving from teacher-colleague to coach
  - planning and facilitating professional development sessions
  - scheduling classroom visits and coaching conversations
  - being a resource to teachers and literacy personnel
  - modeling teaching
- building trust and maintaining confidentiality in coaching relationships
- modeling being a reflective practitioner and encouraging reflective behavior in others
- using language to elicit reflection
- problem-solving, analyzing data, and learning on-the-job
- working with adults in a variety of professional learning situations
- being a member of the school literacy team
- working closely with administrators, especially principals
- building relationships and setting the stage for collaboration with stakeholders in the school and district
- leading efforts toward implementing a coherent literacy model in the school
- expanding professional interactions beyond the school to the district-level
- supporting the implementation of the literacy model, including navigating conflicting interests in the school and district
- problem-solving implementation issues, alone and with coaching colleagues

The coaches identified these actions and others as part of their definition of coach, and as part of what they did each day. "Wearing many hats," they took on the mantle of coach, whether or *not* they had an effective support system. Each of them *became* a coach through what they did and how they interacted with colleagues despite challenges and with the help of positive interactions that were part of every day on the job. This shifting sense of "professional self" reflected their "ways of working with people" and how they positioned themselves in relation to their colleagues (Burke, 2006; Collay, 2006; Davies & Harre, 1990, Harre & van Lengenhove, 1999; Kose & Lim, 2011; Rainville & Jones, 2009; Stone et al., 2002). Burke's (2006) identity control theory refers to "a set of self-relevant meanings held as standards for the identity in question" (p. 81). As the coaches learned about their responsibilities and the ways in which they would be expected to interact with colleagues within the Literacy Collaborative model, their

identities began to shift in response to the expectations contained in those standards (Elish-Piper et al., 2009; Fountas & Pinnell, 2009; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Mraz et al., 2008; Rainville & Jones, 2009; Rossiter, 2007; Toll, 2005). However, in some cases the standards of the role were not clearly understood by all stakeholders. As a result, there was some degree of dissonance as novice coaches engaged in their role with colleagues (Burke, 2006; Galloway & Lesaux, 2014). Burke (2006) advises that these "discrepancies" between people's perceptions and the standards themselves will affect behaviors and emotional responses and potentially cause distress. This, in turn, might well slow down the change process (Kelchtermans, 2009).

The Literacy Collaborative implementation standards are shared with the district leadership, the principal, the literacy team, and the novice coach. It is up to the school principal and literacy team to share them with teachers and come to an understanding of how the coaching model will work best in the school. The extent to which these discussions differ from school to school is affected greatly by the degree of buy-in from the principal and team. The greater the buy-in, the more likely the teachers will be included in discussions and be made aware of the changes to come. If there is little buy-in or knowledge of the expectations by the principal and team, then implementation rests on the shoulders of the novice coach, and the teachers are less likely to buy into the process (Atteberry & Bryk, 2011; Galloway & Lesaux, 2014; Pletcher, 2015; Robertson, et al., 2020).

"I Feel Like a Literacy Coach Today."

It was fascinating to listen to participants describe times when they "felt like a coach." I decided on the wording of this prompt because it spoke to being actualized in the new role. When coaches were successful, it felt to them like they *were being* that kind of person. "I walked back to my office thinking that I was just, like, the 'cat's meow' and I was the best coach in the

whole entire world" (Personal communication, Ms. Ayers). When they faced challenges, coaches talked about problem-solving or being challenged in their perceptions of themselves. "Oh, no! I failed miserably. I'd better jump ship now." (Personal communication, Ms. Ayers). Their narratives illustrated specific times when they "felt like a coach." They shared the stories and emotions through their own lenses after the events occurred and they had time to reflect on them through "active ratiocination" (Bruner, 2004; Cohen, 2008; Dirkx, 2008; Soreide, 2006).

What interested me was that the participants described these moments using phrases like, "I didn't do anything" or "When I am being quiet" or "When teachers lend me their trust" (Personal Communication, Ms. Bronson). Many times they deferred to what they observed teachers doing to describe when they felt successful. "I saw the teachers standing up and talking with one another and thinking about it and discussing where items would go and pushing back on other things. That really made me feel I was facilitating something important" (Personal Communication, Ms. Cranmore). Thinking more about this, I realized that what they described were the fruits of their labors. They did, in fact, *do something*. They planned and facilitated professional learning sessions; they visited classrooms and engaged in reflective coaching conversations with teachers after lessons; they modeled being reflective practitioners; they modeled lessons; they met with their school literacy team and principal to work on schedules and ordering materials. They interacted with many stakeholders across the day. They *did do something*. However, they did not always say things like, "I planned and presented a valuable PD session," or "I developed an effective way of debriefing with teachers after observations." They negotiated their identities through their interactions and conversations with others (Bean & Ippolito, 2016; Cohen, 2008; Kelchtermans, 2009; Kraus, 2006; Watson, 2006, 2007) and felt

successful when teachers exhibited changes in practice or an openness to reflect more deeply on their learning.

They engaged fully in interacting with a variety of stakeholders to support a new literacy initiative and facilitate learning for their colleagues. But they did not list these actions as part of feeling successful. They listed them as part of their job: the role of the coach. For a coach to feel successful there must be change. The role of the coach is to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning, regardless of the literacy model their school employs. By describing what teachers did or how teachers reacted to them, they described the *outcomes* of their efforts, not the efforts themselves. These were their success stories! The evidence that something new was happening in their schools. Teachers were shifting their approaches to teaching, students were being successful, stakeholders were acknowledging what was happening. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) talk about identity as a product *and* a process. By interacting with teachers and stakeholders in different ways and through varying processes, they observed the product or outcomes of their labors demonstrated in the changes in the ways teachers behaved towards them or responded toward them; in the ways teachers engaged in their pedagogical practices; or in students' learning behaviors.

Through sharing their narratives with me, coaches had the opportunity to reflect on themselves in their new roles. Each had experienced success as a teacher, but they were now novice coaches. This kind of professional move can be disorienting at first, and some of that dissonance can be seen in Table 5.2 below. However, as Watson (2006) says, "Identities are constructed in the narratives we create and tell about our lives; how we externalize ourselves to ourselves and to others…in other words, people construct narratives and narratives construct people, and our identities emerge through these processes" (p. 510). The table lists some of the

personal responses to the role of coach, as expressed to me by the novice coaches**.** As they became more confident in their own work and realized their colleagues appreciated their open, honest approach to collaborating, they stayed the course. Despite the challenges, through what they did each day they revealed that they were on the way to becoming literacy coaches as expressed in Tables 5.1, 5.2, and others shared later in this chapter.

Personal Response to the Role of Literacy Coach

Table 5.2: Personal Response to the Role of Literacy Coach

Personal Actions or Feelings	Challenges
• building new relationships • feeling vulnerable and taking risks • being reflective and modeling being a reflective practitioner • feeling more confident in my teaching role and seeing the importance of teaching to school change • feeling like "this is my calling" to work on supporting the big picture of literacy learning and make more of an impact • listening when people need to vent • maintaining confidentiality • using effective language • creating a safe place to work with adults • seeing the glass as "half full" and being optimistic • being humble • feeling joy	• multi-tasking/wearing many hats • running ragged to make it work • being on an emotional roller coaster • not knowing what coaching would be like • being a newcomer to the school • being one of youngest teachers in school • feeling that people underestimate me • feeling like I'm not living up to my own expectations • hard to give up teaching children • not yet being comfortable with content or "where we are going" • feeling pressure to make it valuable for everyone

These statements reveal some of the personal characteristics and personal challenges of the coaches in the study. Kraus (2006) discusses negotiating social bonds as people take on new identities.

> People do not simply choose affiliations, they have to negotiate them with others and are positioned within them by others. Their distance to some collective identities or their

> closeness to others must be expressed by them—and affirmed or rejected by present others. (p. 109)

The coaches related to people in different ways and within their new roles they both positioned themselves and were positioned by others (Cohen, 2008; Harre & van Langenhove, 1999; Kraus, 2006). They were willing to put themselves "out there" and take risks, both in their classroom teaching and in their new role working with adult learners. Part of that risk-taking involved modeling reflective behavior, which is at the center of social constructivist learning (Kegan, 2000; Merriam et al., 2007; Spigner-Littles & Anderson 1999; Vygotsky, 1978). "Concepts such as cognitive apprenticeship, situated learning, reflective practice, and communities of practice are found in both adult learning and constructivist literature" (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 293). These are common methods used in the Literacy Collaborative professional development model, and were later practiced in professional learning experiences novice coaches provided to their colleagues.

Novice coaches developed trusting relationships with colleagues and worked with them in a variety of ways. Each coach shared the personal gratification this work gave them. One referred to it as "joyful" and her "calling" (Personal Communication, Ms. Cranmore); one thought she was "the cat's meow" when it worked (Personal Communication, Ms. Ayers). All of this despite the challenges they experienced. They had many and varied jobs to do each day, "wearing many hats and juggling several balls in the air" (Personal Communication, Ms. Ayers). For each of them it was sometimes an "emotional roller coaster" that took them from feeling like a failure to feeling like "Yay! This is working!" Yet, even though they often felt like they were "running ragged," inwardly, they were ready to become coaches, work with their colleagues to improve teaching, and make a difference for students. They were resilient and ready to help

foster whole-school change. They negotiated their new identities through their interactions and their conversations with others. They shared their beliefs and values related to the new learning and heard their colleagues' responses. Through this work they started to build their identities as literacy coaches (Cohen, 2008; Collay, 2006; Dirkx, 2008; Kelchtermans, 2009; Kose & Lim, 2011; Kraus, 2006; Kreiner et al., 2006; Mraz et al., 2008; Plimmer & Schmidt, 2007; Trent & Lim, 2010; Soreide, 2006; Watson, 2006).

Looking more closely at their work with teachers and other stakeholders, they revealed that part of what made them feel like a coach was being respected and sought out by colleagues, and through that, developing "social bonds" (Cohen, 2008; Soreide, 2006; Watson, 2006; Zembylas, 2003). They saw themselves as resources, but also as facilitators of learning. Most of all, they felt like coaches when they were helping teachers reflect on their learning, listening attentively, and interacting with teachers to promote change. Zembylas (2003) points out that social and emotional aspects of interactions with others within the immediate environment play a large part in identity formation. The coaches in this study expressed a variety of emotions and reactions to how they were seen by stakeholders, especially teachers. Some of these are indicated in Tables 5.3 and 5.4 below, which show some of the positive and challenging aspects of the interactions.

Positive Interactions with Teachers

Table 5.3: I Feel Like a Literacy Coach: Positive Interactions with Teachers
• teachers make me feel like a coach when they lend me their trust and show me respect • teachers comment on my ability to be honest about my own work • teachers consult me with questions about students or teaching • teachers engage in good conversations during professional development sessions • teachers engage in transformative coaching experiences • when teachers go beyond what was talked about in PD and change things to meet the needs of their students or to extend their use of aspects of the teaching model • when reluctant teachers take things on because they realize it is helping children learn

- teachers take things on in their own time
- being surprised when I see teachers take things on in their classrooms or share what they have done with other teachers
- helping teachers see beyond themselves to the bigger impact of small changes
- modeling for teachers and helping them reflect on what they see
- feeling like "things are working" when I see aspects of the model in classrooms
- seeing slow shifts in teaching: taking baby steps toward implementation
- responding to teachers who seek me out

Identity is socially constructed; that is, a person takes on a new role and identity through their interactions with peers and collaborators (Colbeck, 2008; Gee, 2001; Kraus, 2006; Watson, 2006). In the the case of the novice coaches, their interactions with teachers validated that they were working together within the environment of the school toward a goal. Coaches worked hard to cultivate trusting relationships and communities of learners. Teachers, for the most part, gave coaches feedback that reinforced their sense that their efforts were successful. They came to the coaches for support and ideas, asked questions, and engaged in conversations about teaching and learning. These conversations happened formally and informally across the day as teachers put into practice the pedagogical methods that were introduced in professional learning sessions or reflected on their growing understandings. Once these changes began to occur, coaches began to see the literacy model come to fruition in real classrooms.

Not all teachers were willing participants in these efforts, but even some reluctant teachers tried things out. The coaches realized that implementing a new literacy model takes time for people to try new practices out, take risks, see results, and dig in more deeply (Calo et al., 2015; Galloway & Lesaux, 2014; Pletcher 2015; Robertson, et al., 2020). This was evident with reluctant teachers, especially if the culture of the school was resistant to change. Teachers needed more time to see what was happening as other colleagues took on the model. Some were still resistant, but others took small steps based on which practices they were willing to try. "She [the

teacher] puts up walls for a reason. So, what is that reason? I need to approach her in a different way because this is where she is…I have approached it in a very gentle way and take it slowly" (Personal Communication, Ms. Ayers). The coaches realized that learning takes time and sometimes it included problem-solving tricky situations. They were gratified and encouraged to see small changes taking place in classrooms across the school.

Challenging Interactions with Teachers

Table 5.4: I Feel Like a Literacy Coach: Challenging Interactions with Teachers

- learning how to work effectively with adults through a variety of professional learning activities
- learning and using effective coaching language
- having several identities: coach/teacher/colleague/friend
- maintaining confidentiality
- lack of teacher buy-in
- using a different coaching model than teachers were used to in the past
- working with reluctant or resistant teachers
- some teachers say, "Why don't you just *tell* me what to do?"
- the term "coach," rubs some people the wrong way
- unpredictable how people will respond to coaching
- teachers cancelling classroom visits at the last minute or not signing up to be coached
- chasing people down to schedule coaching sessions
- coaching teachers frustrated with too many district initiatives
- challenging to develop a consistent coaching schedule
- having to schedule coaching during teacher prep time
- being called away to meetings and having to cancel coaching sessions
- teachers tired at the end of the year/no coaching during testing periods
- managing different groups of teachers: classroom vs. specialists

This list of challenges when working with teachers gives a window not only into the developing coaching identity and the challenges it faces, but into the work that universities can do to prepare coaches for their role and stakeholders for their supporting parts (Galloway & Lesaux, 2014; Hunt & Handsfield, 2013; Rainville & Jones, 2008; Selvaggi, 2018; Toll, 2018). The challenges listed in Table 5.4 and those in the tables that follow provide evidence that there

is work to do to help coaches contend with the cultural issues that go along with school change. Fosnot (2005) builds on the idea that the facilitator should know adult learners well—know what they currently understand and what they might need to know next. He suggests some general principles that might be applied when taking a constructivist stance: (1) learning *is* development; (2) disequilibrium facilitates learning; (3) reflective abstraction is the driving force of learning; and (4) dialogue within a community engenders further thinking (p. 33-34).

These principles are important to consider when thinking about how to prepare literacy coaches for their new roles, as well as for literacy coaches themselves to consider when working with their colleagues. As coaches or teachers take on new learning, they may feel a disequilibrium or as Mezirow (2000) refers to it, a "disorienting dilemma." Some people are more comfortable with this feeling than are others. Several of the participants in this study referred to these disorienting feelings themselves as they came to understand the many the aspects of their role as coach.

Belenky and Stanton (2000) in *Women's Ways of Knowing,* describe "midwife-teachers" who know their students well and see them as active constructors of their own learning. Novice coaches work hard at developing trusting relationships. Perhaps taking more time to know their colleagues as learners, consider what they understand about teaching, and acknowledge beliefs that might differ from those in the new approach might be helpful in developing trust and an openness to learning with teachers who are resistant. Talking openly about what in particular teachers are resistant to and having open discussions about the rationales for new approaches might foster a more accepting attitude in those who are reluctant to try new methods.

Looking at these two lists together (Tables 5.3 and 5.4), I am struck again by the fact that most of the items reflected that the coaches' feelings of success or challenge were based on *other*

people's reactions to what they were doing as part of their jobs. Coaches worked most closely and frequently with teachers in their buildings. It is no surprise that each coach worked hard to build trusting relationships with these colleagues, and felt successful when these relationships grew. Without trust, there can be no relationships, and possibly no learning (Belinky & Stanton, 2000). Coaches realized they had been successful when teachers sought them out, whether it was in formal coaching sessions or when passing in the hall. The teachers *saw* the coach as a resource, a collaborator, a trusted colleague, and this reinforced the coach's growing identity and her *becoming* a coach. The coaches observed shifts in teaching, both by teachers who were enthusiastic about change, and by those who might have been initially reluctant to change. This again, is an *outcome* of their work with colleagues (Galloway & Lesaux, 2014; Matsumura et al., 2010). Although many challenges became apparent when educators took on the role of coach, overcoming those challenges contributed to their feelings of success.

The coaches actively modeled being reflective practitioners. Teachers commented on how the coaches were open with their own journeys and they took risks under the coaches' guidance. This reinforced the novice coaches' behaviors and they continued to be open with their progress and challenges, they *normalized* the process of reflection and risk-taking, so that teachers felt more at ease engaging in risk-taking and reflection themselves. By discussing and planning professional learning sessions with adults while still teaching children part-time, the coaches became more knowledgeable about all of the the elements of the literacy model. As their confidence grew, they defended, advocated, or problem-solved when conflicting issues came up within the school or at the district level. They gradually took on leadership roles and interacted with a broader spectrum of stakeholders around implementation of the model. This growing confidence and expanding sphere of influence added to their developing identity as literacy

coaches (Collay, 2006; Day et al., 2013; Elish-Piper et al., 2009; Galloway & Lesaux, 2014; Isadinia, 2013).

Working with the School Principal

The principal was a key stakeholder and it was key that she be both knowledgeable and supportive if the coaching initiative was to succeed. If the principal was not knowledgeable or did not have time to meet regularly or support the implementation, the coach was often on her own to keep the initiative going. In some cases, lack of leadership from the principal created a culture in the school where resistance was possible and the coach's work became more challenging. If the principal was an active part of the team, it was more likely that the culture of the school would be accepting of the initiative and provide coaches with an environment that supported their work and growing identities (Bean & Ippolito, 2017; Ippolito & Bean, 2019; Matsumura et al., 2010).

Table 5.5: I Feel Like a Literacy Coach: Working with the Principal

Positive Actions	Challenges
• working with principal to support the implementation: schedules, materials, time • meeting with principal regularly to share successes and problem-solve challenges • principal giving feedback and support • principal reviewing data with coach/team • principal attending PD and giving coach feedback • coach and principal working to be "on the same page" at meetings • working with new principal to educate her about model	• principal challenging confidentiality norms • principal not developing teacher buy-in • change in administration • lacking follow-through by principal to support implementation • too many projects started • prioritizing work is challenging • scheduling regular meetings with principal is difficult

In some situations, such as when a new administrator who was not informed about the initiative was hired, it created special challenges, depending on the new principal's disposition toward the literacy model. It was on the coach's shoulders to help the principal understand all

aspects of the implementation. The principal might choose to be supportive or might think about moving to another literacy model. Although this did not happen during this particular study, it is sadly not unusual with administrative changes, and can be the source of much frustration on the part of the coach and teachers who invested time in learning and implementing the teaching model (Bean, et al., 2018; Bean & Ippolito, 2016; Ippolito, 2009; Matsumura et al., 2010; Robertson, et al., 2015). However, when the principal was knowledgeable about the literacy model, worked with the team and coach to support it with schedule adjustments, purchasing of materials, and respecting confidentiality with regard to the coach's work with teachers, there was a better chance of successful implementation. Bean and Ippolito (2016) and Ippolito and Bean (2019) indicated that this played out more generally in other coaching situations as well.

Each participant in this study worked in a different school, within different cultures, and with varying degrees of support for the implementation of the LC model and the coaching initiative. In the best cases there was support from administrators at the district and building level that went beyond verbal encouragement to administrators being quite knowledgeable about the standards of the model and the implications for taking it on in their district and school. These administrators worked hard to create schedules for coaching and professional development. They ordered student materials for classrooms and professional books for teachers. Some attended training sessions at the CRRLC, and some attended professional development sessions at their schools. This visible buy-in by administration fostered understanding and buy-in by teachers and staff members at the schools. In these situations, the job of the coach was supported from many angles—her job was not easy, but it was less challenging (Bean & Ippolito, 2016; Ippolito & Bean, 2019; Matsumura et al., 2010).

For the coaches who had sudden changes in administration, or administrators who were too involved, there were both personal and implementation challenges. In one case, the coach faced teachers who were resistant and problems with scheduling and follow-through. There was little administrative support and it was challenging to find time to meet with the principal. This put the coach in a position of vulnerability. In another case, the principal put the coach in an uncomfortable position by pushing to violate confidentiality norms. The principal was eager to support the model and do all that she could to facilitate professional development and coaching, but wanted to know how specific teachers were doing. From the coach's perspective, trust and confidentiality were key drivers of her work with teachers. She stood firm and defended this aspect of her work, but it sometimes led to uncomfortable interactions with her administrator. "Separating myself from administration in a way that people feel comfortable is an obstacle…but I have to work for that separation" (Personal Communication, Ms. Bronson).

Another aspect of the coaches' role included working at the district level. For three of the four coaches, it was a novel experience and they gained confidence and ownership of their role as they became the voice of the LC model at district meetings. They advocated for support and consistency when district leaders took on initiatives that potentially conflicted with LC. Although initially some coaches felt nervous participating actively at the district level, they found their voices as their understanding of the model grew and they observed the changes in their schools as teachers and students worked together. All of this positioned the coaches as knowledgeable leaders of the whole school initiative. Of course, this did not necessarily mean that there were no bumps in the road or that conflicting initiatives were eliminated. These kinds of challenges continued in some schools more than others.

Working with Other Stakeholders in the District

The coaches shared how their work with other stakeholders—the literacy team, principal, district personnel, children, and parents—contributed to their identity as coaches. Working with the school's literacy team put them in a position to make decisions about the implementation of the literacy model. This included working on issues like scheduling, ordering materials for classrooms or the school, looking at student data and interventions, or publicizing what was happening in the school. The coaches were consulted for ideas, information about the model, and help with problem-solving issues related to the implementation. They often facilitated team meetings or suggested agendas. In addition to the literacy team, other building stakeholders included parents, students, and other learning specialists with whom the coach collaborated. These people contributed to the coach's growing identity by participating actively where appropriate and by giving ongoing feedback to the coach. Children and parents sought the coaches out to share their excitement about learning or ask for information about the model.

Table 5.6: Working with the Literacy Team, Parents, and Students

Positive Actions	Challenges
• sharing responsibility with team • working with teams to look at data and make decisions about interventions • looking at connections between classroom teaching and interventions • being seen as part of the literacy team and collaborating • students seeking me out to share their work • parents stop and ask questions about the model • seeing how students respond to new approaches to teaching • collaborating with other learning specialists in the school, especially about students needing interventions	• difficult prioritizing team work • too many initiatives/projects for the team to do • seeing a disconnect between school's goals and LC model • having personal responsibility for success of implementation

Many of the coaches experienced positive working relationships with team members. Specific problems that arose included having too much to do, navigating conflicting district initiatives, and keeping the team focused on implementation of the LC model. In some cases, the literacy goals of the school took the team in a different direction and the coach had to keep people on track. Building a literacy team that is committed to supporting the whole-school literacy model is an important part of the coach's role, with the help of the principal.

Table 5.7: Working at the District Level

Positive Actions	Challenges
• developing a solid knowledge of the LC model and becoming proficient in talking about it • supporting a coherent literacy model across the school/district • attending district meetings • developing new relationships and a new role in the district • collaborating with district coaches and other personnel • helping stakeholders understand the role of the coach • looking at issues from different perspectives • aligning interventions with classroom teaching	• encountering the fear factor: being afraid to speak up against other district initiatives • defending the LC model with stakeholders • being the "voice of reason" in challenging situations • "throwing myself to the wolves" now and then • navigating conflicting interests • acting as the "messenger" for the LC model • managing the "top down" decision to take on LC • encountering conflict with other district initiatives

The participants described their work at the district level as challenging, but at the same time it added to their professional experiences because they now participated in making decisions or engaging in discussions that led to a broader impact on teaching and learning. This helped them to feel an expanded sense of influence when it came to supporting the big picture of literacy learning in the district. "As a coach, I've become more involved in the school and district and know more people now. I do a lot for the school and I enjoy doing it. I think it has changed the way people see me" (Personal Communication, Ms. Cranmore). Ms. Cranmore expresses

both how she sees herself and how she thinks *others* see her. This comment supports her view of herself as a professional in the district. She has expanded her circle of influence beyond the school.

Some coaches met with supportive superintendents or other district level literacy coordinators, others attended meetings with a variety of people representing different schools in the district. Some expressed a growing level of confidence in sharing their voice and ideas at these meetings, as Ms. Cranmore expressed above, while others remained more circumspect, still not ready to be publically vocal. This participation was challenging at times. “Sometimes I have to throw myself to the wolves” (Personal Communication, Ms. Bronson) was one expression used when conflicting district initiatives were introduced and the coach felt called upon to stand firm in her beliefs. Participants noted that as they developed deeper rationales about the benefits of the LC model it was easier for them to talk with others at district meetings.

The one group that was identified as the biggest support for all participants was other coaches and literacy personnel in the district. Novice coaches talked about meeting regularly with Literacy Collaborative coaches working in other schools to plan for professional development sessions, evaluate sessions after facilitating them, and share success stories and challenging situations. They problem-solved together and gave each other moral support. This group was cited by all participants as being the most positive source of support, especially when they encountered challenges in working with teachers, principals, teams, or when faced with implementation challenges. The novice coaches did not attach any challenges to working with the other LC coaches. Their comments were all positive.

Working with Literacy Collaborative Coaches in the District

Table 5.8: Working with Literacy Collaborative Coaches in the District

- Other coaches in the district incredibly important
- Working with coaches who are at different stages of their training to get different perspectives
- Being conscious that we don't want to be an "island" with this implementation. We work together
- Grounded in the same belief system
- Feeling that what we are doing is important
- Being a cohesive team with other coaches
- Being respectful of all parties involved
- Listening to how everyone is doing
- Planning and problem-solving all things related to the LC implementation
- Sharing PowerPoints and sharing notes
- Reviewing PD sessions and exit slips to think about revisions for next year
- Each school is different, but we send a coherent message with LC training that we plan together
- It's not "cookie cutter" implementation, it's about the big ideas
- When something great happens, everyone celebrates, and when something not so great happens people ask, "What can I do to help?"
- Walking away from a meeting thinking, not everything is perfect, but I can do this
- Putting things into perspective
- Every literacy coach should have a support team—one that is outside your school

The participants in this study were fortunate to work in districts where LC coaches were in many of the other schools. In fact, in addition to LC coaches some of them had a variety of content coaches working in the district. The participants met with other LC coaches regularly in order to share ideas and receive support. They became aware of different approaches to coaching that had been implemented by other non-Literacy Collaborative coaches before they arrived, or those that were being implemented simultaneously. This created challenges at times, but for the most part these challenges could be overcome or accommodated through discussions with teachers about the differences between other methods of coaching and the LC model.

The participants who met regularly with their fellow LC coaches saw this as a time to deepen their own understandings of the work and to hear that they were not alone. This sometimes kept them going when challenges became overwhelming.

> When something great happens, people celebrate and when something isn't going well, everybody is like, 'Well, what can I do to help?' And I feel like that's made me stick it out and if I didn't have that, I don't know if I would have made it to this point (Personal Communication, Ms. Cranmore).

All four participants mentioned the level of support provided by regular meetings with fellow coaches as being integral to their growth and well-being. Not all coaches in school districts are as fortunate. Some work in isolation, as the only coach in the district. In these cases, the coach must seek out or create a support system made up of other professionals in the district: administrators, other learning specialists, literacy team members. Regular meetings with these people can encourage and guide those just starting out in a new role.

The coaches' identities were socially constructed through their ongoing dialogues with teachers, principals, fellow LC coaches, and team members. Sometimes these conversations were productive and positive, while at other times they presented challenges. Either way, they contributed to the growing sense of self of novice coaches in their new roles (Colbeck, 2008; Gibson et al., 2010; Hall & Zacher, 2007; Watson, 2006, 2007). They were able to celebrate the successes and problem-solve situations that proved difficult. This journey was not easy or simple in any way. It called on the coaches to learn a new model of teaching and learning, while also expanding their work with adults in professional development and coaching. They taught children every day, planned and facilitated professional learning sessions, visited classrooms, engaged in coaching conversations, met with principals and leadership teams, and worked with district representatives. They "wore many hats while juggling several balls in the air" (Personal Communication, Ms. Ayers) and grew into new professional roles as they did it.

Summary

The successful implementation of a coaching model requires a school culture built on mutual respect, trust, and commitment to ongoing learning. It requires support at many levels and in many ways (Atteberry & Bryk, 2011; Biancarosa et al., 2010; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; Matsumura et al., 2010). The person at the center of this work is most often the literacy coach. In this study, the coaches discussed the many facets of their roles that contributed, not only to their daily routines, but to their evolving identity as a coach. Their short narratives revealed that they were both challenged by all that they had to do each day, and stimulated by the range of interactions and varied routines with colleagues at the school and district level. They felt a sense of satisfaction from knowing that they were theoretically grounded in a whole-school implementation that would eventually lead to a cohesive literacy model across the school. They expanded their influence by working in different ways with their school and district colleagues. They learned how to facilitate learning through professional development and coaching conversations. This was not easy, but each of them reported feeling rewarded after engaging in the work, mostly because of feedback they received from colleagues. They moved beyond the walls of their school to attend district meetings and interact with a variety of stakeholders.

Growing into the Role of the Coach

The participants received two years of training and courses focused on teaching literacy: reading, writing, and language/word-study within a classroom environment that fostered student independence and agency. In addition to implementing a new approach to teaching children they worked with adults as professional developers and coaches to create an adult learning community. Although all participants had been successful classroom teachers, none had experience teaching and coaching adult learners. This was a growing edge for them and they

talked about it in many ways during our conversations. Some themes that emerged across their conversations and seemed to strengthen their work included the following.

The Importance of Establishing Effective Communication and Trust

Communication was an overarching theme throughout this study. Learning how to communicate effectively: using coaching language to prompt for reflection or to extend people's thinking, modeling an open stance, listening respectfully, or facilitating conversations with open-ended questions were all aspects of the novice coaches' work with teachers. Coaches communicated with many other stakeholders as well. They were called upon to communicate with students, parents, administrators at both the school and district level, their school literacy leadership team, and their fellow coaches. The coaches' ability to develop effective methods of communication informed all of the categories discussed below. When they had productive interactions with teachers, when they prompted or listened carefully, they felt successful and listed these times as "feeling like a coach" (Bean & Ippolito, 2016; Chval et al., 2010; Collay, 2006; Elish-Piper et al., 2009; Heinke, 2013; Hunt & Handsfield, 2013; L'Allier et al., 2010; Lynch & Ferguson, 2010).

Participants felt trust and respect were the cornerstones to building relationships with teachers in their training classes. Without trust and respect, they felt unsure of their footing with certain teachers. With it, they felt buoyed and supported, and it helped them feel as though they were doing an effective job as a coach. One way they built trust and respect was to model both behaviors: demonstrating overtly that teachers could trust them to maintain confidentiality and that they could trust them to be prepared for professional development and coaching sessions. They treated teachers respectfully, presented information in PD sessions, waited patiently for teachers to take on new learning; prompted gently during coaching sessions, or listened closely

as teachers shared their new understandings. As they were quiet, listened, and observed behaviors, novice coaches felt rewarded as they saw shifts in teachers who tried things for the first time, dug deeper into things they had tried before, or shared revelations during debriefings. Allowing teachers to work at their growing edge (Bodrova & Leong, 2007; Fosnot, 2005; Merriam et al., 2007; Vygotsky, 1978) they used a socio-cultural approach to working with adults (Lyons, 2002; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001). The shifts they observed helped them "feel like coaches."

The Power of Reflection

Reflection was a huge part of the novice coaches' training program. They were asked to reflect on their learning during classes, in online work, when role-playing coaching scenarios, and when their faculty-liaison visited them at their schools to observe teaching, coaching, and professional development (Baumgartner, 2001; Fosnot, 2005; Kelchtermans, 2009; Merriam et al., 2007). Novice coaches went on to model reflective behaviors and build reflective time into their professional learning and coaching sessions. Taking time to reflect on new learning gave people time to consider it in relation to what they already knew and believed (Burke, 2006; Spigner-Littles & Anderson, 1999). In some cases, the new learning conflicted with previously held practices and beliefs. This created dissonance and sometimes made learning difficult, but when people were given time to implement practices and reflect on them, it could be transformational (Mezirow, 2000; Newman, 2010; Kegan, 2000). Giving people time to reflect and implement new practices slowly can dispel fear of change and allow educators to observe the effects of these teaching practices on their students' learning. Coaches frequently modeled new practices in their own classrooms so that teachers could observe and reflect together after the lesson. Modeling was a less threatening way to introduce new practices and allowed teachers to

consider trying them out in their own classrooms. It also allowed the coach to reflect on and understand how the new methods shifted her own teaching practice. Novice coaches reported that by modeling elements of the instructional framework in their own classrooms, encouraging teachers to try the new approaches in theirs, and taking time to reflect with them afterwards, they felt more successful working with both children and adults.

Taking risks

Each participant took a risk when she accepted the invitation to participate in training to become a coach. Some understood the potential role more than others, but all were surprised to some extent by what it entailed. They learned new approaches to teaching, dug into the content and theory of the reading and writing processes, learned how to work with adult colleagues and interact with other stakeholders to support the model. After being introduced to each of these topics, they then implemented them on-the-job in their classrooms, schools, and districts. The simultaneous application of a variety of responsibilities presented challenges on different levels, both personal and professional. They rose to the task, even though it was sometimes quite daunting. They explored unknown territory, sometimes alone, and sometimes with the support of fellow coaches or administrators. This characteristic of risk-taking and the desire to be of service to their school communities helped them all move forward in the role and supported their growing identity as coaches.

Supports and Challenges While Building a Coaching Identity

Other Literacy Collaborative Coaches. Participants were supported by a variety of people as they took on the role of coach. They all mentioned meeting with their fellow LC coaches in the district as a positive factor in their development. The LC coaches worked together to understand the requirements of the role and provide feedback and encouragement to one

another, whether they were at the same stage of their training or not. These regular meetings provided a venue for sharing successes and challenges, and for developing a cohesive professional development plan for the district. Being able to reflect on their work together, and plan for the future supported their growing identities as coaches. They were *being* literacy coaches together.

Principals. Participants indicated that principals were a source of support for the most part. All principals conveyed confidence that the novice coach could fulfil the role. They positioned them as coaches in the schools. Principals helped with implementation issues like coaching and professional development schedules, purchasing materials, and meeting with the schools' literacy leadership teams. Three out of four principals scheduled regular meetings with the coaches and worked together with them to problem-solve issues that arose. In one case, the principal was a challenge to work with because she pressed the coach to violate confidentiality norms by asking about individual teachers. Ms. Bronson stood her ground and repeatedly refused to cross that line. This took some fortitude and finesse on the coach's part and was considered by her to be a challenge. However, it reinforced her coaching identity during these interactions because she *did* stand her ground and advocated for both her position, and for the trusting relationships she had developed with her colleagues. She *was* the coach.

For Ms. Cranmore, her original principal brought the literacy initiative to the school, but did not build ownership of the project with the staff. This resulted in some teachers being resistant or unwilling to work with the coach. This principal did not meet regularly with the coach, and eventually left the school during the second year of the coach's training. The new principal hired during year three was not familiar with Literacy Collaborative, although she

wanted to be supportive. Principal support was a missing link for Ms. Cranmore's transition for the first three years of her work at the school.

The Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative. Participants mentioned support from the CRRLC in several ways. They cited their initial coursework and their coaching by as helping them understand their roles and their part in the whole-school literacy model. This was followed by ongoing professional development in year three along with the opportunity to meet again with their faculty liaisons. They received coaching on how to use language effectively, how to plan professional development sessions, and how to work with stakeholders. They indicated that faculty-liaisons modeled effective coaching language, encouraged reflection, and built respectful and trusting relationships with them. The faculty-liaisons treated novice coaches respectfully during their training time, and this helped them make the transition to their new roles. They gave space for novice coaches to take on new learning gradually so that they would feel more comfortable as they learned the many facets of the role. All coaches reported a desire for more coaching support after year two in order to scaffold them as they continued to grow into the role.

Teachers. Teachers were both a support and challenge to the coaches' transition and growing identity. Some teachers positioned the novice coaches as professionals from the outset. They looked to the novice coaches as leaders and gave them positive feedback overtly or through the shifts in teaching practices that they took on. Novice coaches looked at the outcomes of their work with teachers as evidence of their growing identities. This was an indication that they were fulfilling their roles and *becoming* coaches. Other times, teachers presented challenges. Each coach reported that a few teachers were resistant or reluctant to change teaching patterns. Ms. Cranmore had the most challenging situation, due in part to the lack of buy-in from some staff

members and lack of principal support. This affected her confidence to some degree, and she often avoided these teachers. Fortunately, there were some staff at her school who positioned her as the coach and engaged in work with her. Since coaches work primarily with teachers every day, either having coaching visits or facilitating professional development, this group of stakeholders was of great importance to the growing identity of each coach.

Chapter 6: Analysis and Synthesis

Professional Identity

Positioning

Harre and van Langenhove (1999) refer to positioning as the shifts people make to adjust to new roles and ways of working with people. Positioning includes the ways in which people relate to one another; how one sees oneself and how one is seen by others. In the case of the participants in this study, they each had experienced success within their teaching roles, and were transitioning to working with colleagues in different ways as coaches. This meant that their professional and in some cases, their social interactions with colleagues were different.

Two of the participants stayed in the same schools but shifted roles, while the other two joined new school communities. Ms. Durelle indicated a rather smooth transition to her new role within her existing school community. She was hired by the principal to be the coach, and had well-established working relationships with her colleagues, perhaps due to the fact that she had been both a learning specialist and a classroom teacher in the school prior to becoming the coach. She did not disclose any discomfort with relationships as a result of this change, but continued to work successfully with a variety of colleagues. This included teachers, literacy specialists, and district coaches and administrators. She did extend her work relationships to include other new Literacy Collaborative coaches in her district with whom she met on a weekly basis to plan, discuss implementation issues, and reflect on professional development and coaching. This group became a central support system for the novice coaches in her district. Each of them was relatively new to their roles, and could relate to one another's experiences.

Ms. Cranmore was on the other side of the continuum, also being hired within her school to transition to the role of coach, she experienced dissonance and resistance from her colleagues

as she began working with them as a coach. One of the younger members of the faculty, she felt that her age and fewer years as a teacher, relative to the rest of the staff, disadvantaged her to some degree. Some teachers positioned her as inexperienced and some openly resisted working with her. In addition, her principal, though showing faith in her, did not work actively to support teacher buy-in and left the school after the second year of Ms. Cranmore's training. This put her in the challenging position of working with a new administrator. All of these factors positioned her as vulnerable in this new role. She felt successful when providing professional development, but had mixed feelings with regard to coaching individuals. Some teachers valued her reflective nature, while others cancelled coaching sessions or did not schedule them at all. She expressed personal doubts and yet continued to make plans to improve her situation. Some teachers showed appreciation for her ability to reflect and be open with her own journey. They reinforced her own learning stance just as she modeled it for them.

The other two coaches were hired into their schools as the literacy coach. This positioned them with their new colleagues as *the literacy coach* from the outset and they both experienced fairly smooth transitions into their roles, in part because of their roles and also due to the level of teacher buy-in for the new literacy model that had been established by the principals prior to their arrival. It was not all smooth-sailing for them—they experienced successes and challenges in their initial journey into the role—but their principals had worked to develop knowledge and buy-in for the Literacy Collaborative model as they began their training. For the most part the teachers in their schools were interested in participating in professional development and coaching, and the challenges they experienced were handled through reflection, problem-solving, and discussion with their colleagues.

Identity Control Theory

Burke (2006) promotes an identity control theory, which is a "set of self-relevant meanings held as standards for the identity in question" (p. 81). These standards delineate the role, in this case, of the literacy coach. A novice coach's professional identity evolves as she (and others) comes to understand and integrate the standards of the role into her behaviors and attitudes. The participants in this study were hired as part of a coaching initiative that has defined standards. They and other stakeholders in their districts were aware of these standards at the start, but the standards were implemented to varying degrees in each of the cases. The complexities of the role, the number of stakeholders (novice coaches, principals, teachers, learning specialists, literacy teams, district leadership, university liaisons) who worked together, and the standards themselves created opportunities for both support and challenge as the coaches took on their roles. Burke notes that "discrepancies" exist between a person's perceptions of the standards and the standards themselves. Participants in this study shared that it took time for their own understandings of the role and standards to grow. In addition, the school communities worked to develop knowledge of the standards through their work with LC literacy team training and follow-up discussions with teachers in their schools. This was met with varying degrees of success, as can be seen from the the tables in Chapter 5.

Burke (2006) goes on to state that any discrepancy between a person's perceptions and the standards will affect behavior and emotional response. Examples of this emotional response occurred with coaches and with teachers. Some teachers were oppositional, perhaps threatened by change, or just wary of it. Others took small steps to understanding and seemed more open to the new literacy model. Coaches described a "roller coaster" of emotions as they went from feeling like failures to enjoying success. They mentioned being treated differently depending on whether their interactions with teachers were on a personal or professional level. Teachers

seemed to compartmentalize their behaviors in some cases, being friendly and open personally, while sometimes exhibiting negative behaviors or avoiding coaching interactions. Each coach did experience positive relationships and subsequent positive emotional responses from some or most of the teachers in their training cohorts.

Narrative Identity

Narrative identity theorists believe that people *are* the stories they tell and the stories they tell help shape them (Cohen, 2008; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Soreide, 2006; Watson, 2006, 2007). Novice coaches in this study shared their journeys toward becoming literacy coaches with me, and through the dialogues they had with colleagues: fellow coaches, principals, and teachers. They talked about the importance of engaging in dialogue with other LC literacy coaches on a regular basis in order to share the experiences they had, and how celebrating or problem-solving challenges as a team helped them realize they were not alone and they were on similar journeys toward becoming effective coaches. Krause (2006) maintains that narratives can be analyzed to reveal positioning and used to create social bonds. By analyzing the novice coaches' narratives, I noted their stance as learners, their position as advocates for the model, their interactions with teachers and principals, and their growing confidence in the role. They sometimes positioned themselves as the protagonist in the story, stating how they actively pursued their goals, while at other times they talked of listening or observing others, stopping to reflect on what they heard or saw. This can be interpreted as being more passive, but I would argue that listening, observing, and reflecting are active pursuits that lead to new learning.

Kraus (2006) goes on to state that people negotiate their affiliations through their interactions and that as they enact new identities, those identities must be accepted or rejected by those with whom they interact. Watson (2006, 2007) agrees that identities are constructed in the

ways people externalize themselves to others. These negotiations with others were evident from the narratives novice coaches shared. They spoke of meeting with principals on a regular basis, and feeling that they were supported in most cases by the principal's confidence that they could do this job. They interacted with teachers on a daily basis, and were affirmed or challenged through those interactions. When the interaction was positive, one coach expressed elation "I was the best literacy coach in the world!" And when more challenged, she "felt like I should throw in the towel" (Personal Communication, Ms. Ayers). Developing positive collegial relationships within the new role is key to supporting the coaches' growing identities.

Cohen (2008) and Soreide (2006) in separate studies of teachers entering the profession studied the negotiations between several identities during this transition. Cohen noticed how "identities were produced and reproduced through social negotiation" (p. 81) and how the teachers expressed their values and beliefs through the stories they told. The novice coaches in my study talked of their growing understandings of the learning theories that ground LC teaching and how their own beliefs were in line with those theories. When values and beliefs are aligned within the new position, professional identity development is fostered. They discussed how they came to see theory move into action as they practiced teaching approaches in their own classrooms and were able to model and share their reflections on this teaching with their colleagues. This positioned them as learners, risk-takers, and reflective practitioners. Positioning themselves in this way resulted in positive reactions from teachers who validated the coaches' ability to publically engage in this work. This in turn, confirmed for the coaches that they were working toward their own goals of becoming effective coaches. Soreide (2006) discussed the negotiation between several identities and noted that the construction and telling of a story results in reflection on the events. This reflection is what drives growth and change. All four

participants discussed their ability to reflect and how important it was to them personally and professionally, as well as how they actively modeled it for teachers so that their colleagues would engage in reflection as well (Fosnot, 2005). Being able to reflect over time supports new learning and the growing coaching identity. There were several instances when coaches noted that teacher change happened as a result of giving them time to reflect and slowly engage in new practices. Zembylas (2003) connects social interactions within changing work environments to the person's emotional response and a dynamic process of identity change. He maintains that the educator's sense of agency and growing identity are affected by positive and negative social interactions. Participants indicated their emotional response was directly connected to social interactions with stakeholders, as seen in the tables in Chapter 5. Taking time to share and reflect on these feelings within a safe and trusting environment is essential to supporting growth and are key elements of this particular literacy initiative.

Situated Identity

Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) and Gee (2001) discuss identity as situated and relational to the environment and people within that environment with whom one works. Sociocultural aspects of identity development underscore the importance of building common expectations of the role to foster more positive interactions and ultimately greater student achievement (Galloway & Lesaux, 2014). Because of the many ways in which coaches interact with colleagues across the day, situated identity can shift as coaches lead professional learning sessions, consult or plan with teachers, provide resources, meet with administrators, or engage in one-on-one coaching conversations. Rainville and Jones (2008) studied the adjustments coaches made as they interacted with stakeholders over time. The ways in which the coach positions herself within each of these situations may contribute to her identity in different ways as

participants in my study indicated. Ms. Cranmore was comfortable when providing professional development to her colleagues, but less at ease when engaging in individual coaching sessions, especially with resistant teachers. This varying comfort level affected her confidence in the role. Knowing that this is part of the transition and understanding that each coach's personal response may vary, taking time to discuss all aspects of the role and the potential interactions within each part would help coaches to anticipate and prepare for the shifts in identity that could occur across a day or week. Coaches-in-training could share how they would react to different scenarios, and potentially how this would affect their identity as a coach. University sites and schools should focus on delineating roles and giving novice coaches opportunities to discuss their developing comfort level with each one. Additionally, teachers and administrators within the school need to understand each part of the job and consider how they will interact with the coach across time. Clarifying the responsibilities of the coach and of each stakeholder might lead to a more positive experience for everyone. The university training site might invite LC coaches who are already working in the role to present their experiences to the new cohorts within small discussion groups. In this way novice coaches could learn about the role as it is being implemented in a variety of settings and listen to the experiences of other coaches who have been through the program and engage in discussions with these professionals.

Professional Identity

Day et al. (2006) discuss how beliefs and values, along with life experiences come into play when looking at professional identity. Participants in this study shared that their beliefs and educational philosophies aligned with those of Literacy Collaborative, and engaged in teaching and learning that was grounded in social constructivism. This foundation underpinned the way they organized their professional development sessions as well as coaching interactions. There

was some dissonance when other initiatives that did not align with the LC philosophy or approach were introduced by the district. In these cases, both coaches and teachers were challenged by conflicting demands, especially if teachers felt overburdened. Coaches were called upon to defend the LC model at district meetings, or be "the voice of reason" when conflicts arose. In most cases, the participants' inherent beliefs and values helped them to deal with these situations to the best of their abilities. They indicated a growing sense of responsibility for the success of the implementation and recognized their part in the "bigger picture" within the district. This contributed to their identity as literacy coaches who had a voice. Universities and districts should take time to discuss values and beliefs when initially developing a vision for the literacy program in the school. If stakeholders' values and beliefs are in opposition to the new model, conflicts will likely arise and challenge the coach's transition into her new role and her developing professional identity.

Kelchtermans (2009) discusses the evolution of professional identity and the themes of stability in the job and vulnerability. He talks about moments of "interactive sense-making" that occur during interactions with others that lead to self-understanding and identity development. The audience, in these cases, might acknowledge, confirm, question, or contradict the coach's perceptions. The ways in which others react to the coach play a big part in the coach's "interactive sense-making." As coaches engage in dialogue or talk with their support teams they build their identity through the feedback they receive from them. Providing opportunities to engage, reflect, and acknowledge their evolving self-understanding is an important component of training and ongoing support.

Spending time with others within a community of practice can promote the "professional socialization" that supports identity development, especially if there are more experienced others

for novices to observe and interact with (Stone et al., 2002). Novice coaches in this study met regularly with others in the LC coaching position within their districts. The participants universally shared that this group was most important to their support and developing identity. They revealed their successes and challenges, problem-solved, created professional development sessions, and reflected on future plans together. The ability to participate in this professional group allowed them to take on the role of coach within a supportive environment that nurtured and developed their identity. Although some coaches also had support groups of literacy specialists within their schools, no school had more than one LC coach on the staff at the time of this study.

Colbeck (2008) discusses the "cognitive framework" that helps novices interpret new experiences within their roles and integrate them into their identities. She indicates that this transition is fostered by others within the community of practice. Cohen (2008) affirms that educators must negotiate identity within the expectations of that community and its "normative beliefs." Providing opportunities for dialogue and interactions with colleagues will support the identity development of the coach as she and her colleagues understand those normative beliefs. "The teachers' [coaches'] active, critical engagement in theorizing professional identity suggests that ample opportunities to engage in identity talk should be an important part of teachers' [coaches'] professional environment" (Cohen, p. 92).

It is important for school districts to facilitate meetings with other coaches in similar positions within the district if possible. This will allow a cohesive approach to the professional development and coaching process associated with the literacy model as well as building coaching identity across the team and with novice coaches. Collay (2006) suggests three actions to address shifts in identity as coaches take on leadership roles within their schools: "Revisit

assumptions about how teachers lead; analyze patterns of professional socialization that support and hinder teacher leadership; and model a transformational pedagogy in our educational leadership programs" (p. 134).

These recommendations can be enacted for coaches in training at different levels: during training or ongoing professional development at the university site and within the school district even before a coaching initiative begins. The novice coaches in this study participated in a two-year training program, which included professional development for their administrator and literacy teams for short periods of time. There was a great deal of material to cover during this training: the content of literacy teaching and learning, planning and delivering effective professional development, developing coaching relationships with teachers, and working with other stakeholders to support the model. There is only so much that can be introduced during the initial training period. However, Collay's suggestions could be integrated as much as possible and then discussed during into ongoing professional development with coaches and principals. I have discussed the need to develop positive professional socialization opportunities, but investigating assumptions about how teachers lead and sharing that information with the district personnel would be an enormous help to teachers transitioning into coaching roles. During courses and ongoing professional development, faculty-liaisons at the CRRLC model taking a reflective stance along with engaging in constructive activities that allow for shared learning to occur. However, looking more deeply into transformational pedagogy and considering how to openly discuss the shifts in beliefs and practice that happen when transformational learning occurs would help coaches to work toward these shifts when they plan and provide professional development and coaching interactions.

Adult Learning and Professional Development: Assumptions, Theories, and Models

Andragogy

Malcolm Knowles' foundational ideas about andragogy, or the "art and science of helping adults learn" (Knowles, 1980, p. 43) are frequently cited in the adult learning literature. He and others (Kiely et al., 2004; Pletcher, 2015) maintain that those working with adult learners get to know them first because understanding their beliefs, experiences and prior knowledge can help the instructor to plan more strategically. Although novice coaches working in schools sometimes know their colleagues on different levels, personally or professionally, participants in this study shared that they learned much more as they worked together with them as coaches, especially in individual coaching conversations. It would be helpful to take time during the initial training year to engage in open conversations with groups of teachers in the school to determine where they are coming from: their values and beliefs, their perspectives on teaching, and their prior experiences. What do they bring to the table? Doing this before professional development and coaching begins in the school would allow the coach and teachers to have open conversations about teaching and learning that would help them get to know one another on a different level.

Ms. Bronson shared that several of her new colleagues had previous experience with training and implementation of teaching practices that were very much in line with those of LC. This facilitated her work with them greatly. Other coaches in the study did not share her good fortune. Some of their teachers had philosophies that differed greatly from LC. Ms. Ayers described one teacher who had a very difficult time understanding and implementing the new approach to teaching. Knowing this before professional development at the school begins could be very helpful. In fact, coaches might be proactive and initiate a book study or some other

professional learning experience during the first year of training that would allow for open discussion of the approach to literacy teaching and learning so that teachers would be able to reflect on it before being asked to implement it in their classrooms. This might soften the resistance found in some schools and give the coach information about her colleagues that would help her plan professional learning for the next year.

Constructivism and Transformative Learning

Constructivist learning occurs within social and cultural settings. Bedrova and Leong (2007) assert that "Because learning occurs in shared situations, language is an important tool for appropriating other mental tools. To share an activity, we must talk about that activity. Unless we talk we will never be able to know each other's meanings" (p. 14). The constructivist foundation of learning in the Literacy Collaborative model extends from teaching children in classrooms to engaging in professional learning and coaching conversations with teachers. Knowledge is co-constructed through dialogue, conversations, and interactions among participants. This is modeled and discussed during the initial training at the university, when faculty-liaisons visit schools to coach the novices, and at ongoing professional development. It is reflected in the assignments, online learning, and role-playing that are part of training. Participants in this study reported feeling successful when teachers reflected on their new learning, partook in productive discussions, and engaged in a gradual release of responsibility as coaches modeled, co-planned, and observed teachers take on new practices as a result. Fosnot states that "(1) Learning is development; (2) disequilibrium facilitates learning; (3) reflective abstraction is the driving force of learning; and (4) dialogue within a community engenders further thinking" (pp. 33-34). Novice coaches shared that both they and some of their colleagues experienced disequilibrium as they worked together and the key to moving forward was the reflective process they engaged in

during professional learning sessions or coaching conversations where colleagues shared their successes or struggles and were able to help one another consider next steps. Another situation where this growth occurred was during their regular meetings with other LC coaches in the district. These meetings provided the structure and opportunity to discuss their goals as coaches, the way they prepared professional development sessions and how they might revise them in the future to make them more effective. Being able to engage in constructive learning experiences with teachers in their own buildings and other coaches in the district provided different levels of support for their own growing expertise in how to work with adult learners and how to be more effective in their classrooms teaching children. This supported their growing confidence and identity as coaches as they became more adept at working with their colleagues.

Constructive learning experiences are facilitated through discourse and effective use of language. All four participants indicated the importance of learning new ways to use language to teach, prompt for and reinforce their colleague's learning. Coaching language is used strategically to question, prompt, facilitate discussions, and encourage reflection. It is a major part of the LC novice coaches' learning during the first two years of LC training and in ongoing professional development. Faculty-liaisons model its use during the classes, coaching visits, and role-play activities. Listening is part of the equation as well. Providing wait time and being active listeners allows coaches to hear how colleagues are taking on new learning and often indicates appropriate next steps for the teacher. Ms. Bronson pointed out that "When I am quiet and listen I think it is like those little moments…when I *hear* teachers" (Personal communication, Ms. Bronson). By carefully listening to colleagues during professional development sessions, coaches hear how they are taking on new practices or theoretical understandings. Ms. Cranmore shared that during a session she had planned, teachers were

engaged in active conversations, decision-making, and ways to apply their new learning to their teaching. “Seeing them all standing up and thinking about it and discussing where things would go and pushing back on certain things really made me feel like I was facilitating something important” (Personal Communication, Ms. Cranmore). Using language effectively and facilitating constructive interactions is foundational to new learning, as shared by these novice coaches (Bodrova & Leong, 2007; Forbes & Briggs, 2006; Lambert et al., 2002). Spigner-Littles and Anderson (1999) suggest that new learning should be connected to the goals identified by the adult learner. This ties back to the previous discussion on knowing the learners in the cohort. What is their previous experience? What do they value and believe about teaching and learning? What do they want to learn next that may shift their teaching approach? Can they connect the new learning to what they already understand, or will it involve shedding some previous understandings and engaging in transformative learning? Asking these questions of the novice coaches as they begin their own training would give the faculty liaisons valuable information about the cohort of learners. This information could help the faculty liaisons plan the training based on who is part of their cohort. Subsequently, once the novice coaches are trained and working in their own schools, posing these questions to their colleagues would do much the same thing: give them the information they need to adjust their professional development and coaching to the individuals who are part of their school community.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this research was to study the perceptions of professional identity of novice literacy coaches as they engaged in the role after completing a training program called Literacy Collaborative. The study's conclusions address the challenges novice coaches faced as they made this transition and recommend actions that university training sites can take to help novice coaches as they first undertake the role and begin to develop identities as literacy coaches. Professional identity is socially constructed through interactions with a variety of stakeholders as the coach engages in a range of complex tasks across the day. Taking time to discuss shifts in identity along with the responsibilities of the role would be beneficial to novice coaches during training. The instructional program for Literacy Collaborative, in particular, takes place on a variety of levels. It begins while trainees are still teaching full-time and are immersed in learning new instructional practices that are part of the literacy framework. During this initial year of their training the idea of working with adult learners is introduced, but their primary role is still that of a classroom teacher. They are working with the *idea* of becoming a coach, and begin to work with their principal and literacy team to discuss how they will build teacher buy-in across the school and plan for professional development and coaching in year two. This is the perfect time to build relationships with teachers, learn about their philosophies and theoretical grounding, visit their classrooms to discuss materials, and gently introduce the concept of literacy coaching.

Another layer is added to their training in year two as they learn more about how to work with their adult colleagues in professional development and coaching sessions. In addition, they extend their work with building principals, literacy leadership teams, and district personnel. Each part of the role calls on the literacy coach to adjust her stance and use a variety of approaches to position herself differently with a variety of stakeholders. As a result, the conclusions and

recommendations address this complexity and include recommendations for action at several levels: the university training site, the school district, and the novice-coach herself.

Even in this very supportive training program, coaches are faced with taking on an incredibly complex role. Indeed, much of that complexity arises from the standards of the Literacy Collaborative model itself. Coaches come into the LC training program at various stages of their careers and with different backgrounds. It is important for the training site to take their experiences into consideration during the training program. Supporting their professional identity development is an area that is currently missing from their training. I address the recommendations in two categories: professional identity development and adult learning and development, both couched within the literacy coaching environment.

Identity Development

It was clear from the narratives that each coach was building a professional identity through her work with colleagues and other stakeholders. There is currently little time spent during LC training discussing this transition and how it affects professional identity. There is a focus on the variety of tasks and on the standards, but not on how each one calls on the coach to position herself relative to colleagues.

I suggest taking time during initial training to discuss the coach-in-training's current identity as a teacher, her beliefs and values, her previous experiences, and her stance as a learner. This could be a starting point. Including time to discuss professional goals and a vision for who the trainee hopes to become and why she has chosen this direction would be important steps. In addition, taking time to talk about positioning and how it shifts across interactions with different stakeholders would be helpful. This would include the use of appropriate language to support the

conversations, dialogues, presentations, and other social interactions the coach has within her community.

Engaging in role-play scenarios is helpful, but I would add the recommendation that experienced coaches in the field be invited back to the training classes in order to engage in panel discussions or presentations about their work and their own journeys toward becoming literacy coaches. Beyond sharing the variety of tasks they engage in as part of their roles, it would be important for them to share their personal responses to the situations they encountered, and what was supportive or challenging about each one. How have they developed their own identities as coaches? By sharing their stories, they would model the reflective process and the steps along the way that "made them feel like coaches." Discussing the Literacy Collaborative standards and the coach's responsibility relative to each one could help novice coaches realize the far-reaching extent of their duties and the complexity of the professional identity they are working toward. These discussions about identity would begin during the first year of training, but extend to each year after that as coaches return for year two and ongoing professional development.

Along with the university's obligation relative to this recommendation, I would add that the school or district that is sending the coach to be trained also has a responsibility to introduce the model and its goals to the staff before training begins. Developing buy-in and understanding with all stakeholders is key to a successful implementation. Beyond looking at the coach's role in these discussions, each member of the school community has a duty to understand their own roles and level of commitment as well. This is a tall order, because many times schools do not have enough advance notice to engage in these discussions or have a facilitator who is knowledgeable enough about the model to lead the discussions. The university could insure this

work by visiting the school or district before the initiative begins to discuss the process and the program, review the standards, and talk about the variety of ways the coach will interface with the community. These visits might occur during year one of training when the faculty-liaison visits the coach, or perhaps before the training begins.

Finally, the coach herself should advocate for this kind of work with the principal at the school in order to make her transition easier. Coaches could use this first year to get to know their colleagues and think about how their relationships will change during the second year of training and beyond. If the principal and coach work together to facilitate discussions about these changes with colleagues before the coach begins to work with adult learners it demonstrates respect and commitment from the start. The coach can take the opportunity to begin her transition by leading discussions or book studies related to literacy teaching and learning while she is in transition and still on equal footing with the teachers, before she assumes her full role as coach. In doing this work in advance with colleagues she positions herself as a learner, facilitator, and coach-in-training, and begins to develop relationships with colleagues and her own identity as a leader without the stress of coaching.

Adult Learning and Development

The coaches need time to get to know their adult colleagues as learners before the implementation begins. This can happen if discussions with teachers begin in year one of their training. Taking this year to informally discuss values, beliefs, pedagogical approaches, and the content of literacy learning will give the coach valuable information about each teacher's stance. With this knowledge in hand, the coach will be better able to plan for her professional development and coaching sessions. Each teacher will come to the table with a variety of pedagogical and content background knowledge and their interactions with the coach will range

accordingly. One goal for introducing a new coaching initiative and supporting the coach on her journey is to insure that all stakeholders work together to understand the standards and expectations in order to facilitate change and minimize discrepancies until "perceptions match the new standard" (Burke, p. 84). This action will support both the coaches' growing identity and help teachers understand how they might participate in coaching interactions and enhance their own professional identities as well.

All participants in this study shared that their developing identities were socially constructed. They positioned themselves as coaches within their interactions with colleagues and their colleagues, in turn, saw the novice coaches as professionals, sometimes to varying degrees. When the culture of the school was positive and welcoming of the initiative, and when the novice coaches had supportive principals, the transition was easier, whether or not the coach had been previously employed at her school. However, when there was little principal support, and little teacher buy-in, the transition was more challenging. Even though Ms. Cranmore performed her roles to the best of her ability at the time, she experienced some push-back from a handful of teachers. She continued her work despite resistant teachers, shifting administration, and a culture that was overwhelmed by district initiatives. She expressed self-doubt and frustration, but was committed to doing the work, and continued to plan for the future. She was still in transition, but because of her nature, she persevered. The other three coaches also shared a range of emotions and challenges, but were overall working in receptive cultures that accepted them as coaches and for the most part, they faced what might be seen as the normal challenges of everyday work within the literacy initiative.

Although school districts commit to a partnership with the Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative, one can see from this study that commitment does not mean the same

thing in every school. There are many factors that can influence success, the most important two being principal knowledge and support and teacher buy-in and commitment to professional learning and coaching. The coaches in this study committed themselves fully to a rigorous program of study, learning on the job, undertaking a multi-faceted role, and taking the risk to advance their career and shift their professional identity. They all experienced successes and challenges on the way and their personal commitment sustained them on their journeys to *becoming* literacy coaches.

Limitations

This study looked at a small number of literacy coaches who were part of the same training program. Including a larger number of Literacy Collaborative coaches might have shown a broader spectrum of experiences and included more variability in implementation at the school sites. In addition, there are many coaches working in schools who have not had the advantage of formal training. They have taken on the job of literacy coach and have to negotiate the terrain on their own while on the job. Including some of these coaches in the study would have provided another lens, possibly constructed as a control group, with additional perspectives from a different population of coaches.

Future Research

There are few studies on the professional identity development of literacy coaches. Training programs generally focus on the role rather than the identity. Why is identity an important topic? It is my belief that including discussions focused around identity would help novice coaches wrestle with the potential issues they might encounter while working with stakeholders. It would give them the opportunity to reflect on their stance as a learner, their beliefs and values, and their past experiences in the classroom before making the transition to

another professional role in education. Future research might look at how identity development supports effective coaching interactions with teachers. Universities that currently have training programs for literacy coaches include formal degree programs and informal courses, certificates, or workshops. Another topic for future research would be to examine the curricula currently in use at these institutions to evaluate how the topics covered support both the role and the identity development of educators seeking to be literacy coaches, or those who are already coaches, but have had little training prior to enrolling. Literacy coaches are placed in a non-evaluative leadership position in their schools. They are often asked to facilitate the implementation of the school's literacy initiative and support the school's vision for teaching and learning. The role brings with it many responsibilities and in order to be successful coaches deserve training and support for their developing professional identities as they engage in this new role. This training will not only support the coaches' understanding of the standards that delineate the role and identity of literacy coach, but it will arm the coaches with the knowledge of how to interact with their colleagues and develop trusting and respectful relationships. Teachers will be more willing to engage in professional learning and coaching conversations that will lead to a more cohesive approach to literacy teaching and learning and improved student achievement.

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Appendix A: IRB Application

Application for Review of Human Subjects Research

Date Submitted: September 21, 2015

Application for:
Lead Researcher *
Antoinette Czekanski
P.O. Box 400159, Cambridge, MA
c: 508-662-6783 o: 617-349-8813 tczekans@lesley.edu

Faculty Supervisor* (only if student researcher): Name, Address, Phone, E-mail Doctoral Study Committee Chair
Dr. Eva Konstantellou
29 Everett St. Lesley University, Cambridge, MA 02138
617-349-8136 ekonstan@lesley.edu

**Faculty Supervisor is the official Principal Investigator under Federal Regulations*
Investigator(s) status – indicate all that apply:

Title of the Project: Perceptions of Professional Identities of Literacy Coaches

Proposed Project Dates: October, 2015 - September 2016

Type of Project:

1.1 Briefly describe the purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to discover how literacy coaches perceive their professional identities as they begin to engage in this role within their schools. The role of the literacy coach is a complex one, which requires the coach to work with administrators, teachers, and other school district stakeholders to support their school's literacy programs. Looking carefully at how literacy coaches perceive these interactions, and their success or failure to negotiate the complexities of this role could provide insights that might be helpful to those in higher education who develop programs of study for literacy coaches. This study might also help literacy coaches, administrators, teachers, or other district stakeholders to consider ways in which they might work together to support people in the role of literacy coach.

1.2 Provide the number of adults, and the number and ages of minors

I will work with between three and seven adult educators working in the role of literacy coach in elementary schools. There will be no minors involved in the study.

1.3 Briefly describe the project design (e.g., experimental, ethnographic, etc.):

I propose to engage in a phenomenological narrative inquiry into the perceptions of professional identity of literacy coaches. A narrative (Colbeck, 2008, Gee, 2001, Kraus, 2006, Watson, 2006), phenomenological (Creswell, 1998, Giorgi, 1997, Groenewald, 2004, Kleiman, 2004) approach will be used to understand the participants' experiences as they take on this role, and how those experiences contribute to their perceived identity as coaches. Experiences will be shared through the narratives they tell in response to semi- structured interview questions. Since I will be asking them to describe their perceptions of themselves as literacy coaches, and consider what experiences they have had that support their vision of themselves as coaches, the phenomenological method will be well suited to this study. "The phenomenological study describes the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or phenomenon" (Cresswell, 1998, p. 51).

The concept I am investigating is professional identity, specifically professional identity of literacy coaches in transition. My research question is, "What are the perceptions of professional identity of literacy coaches as they first engage in the role?"

I propose to work with three to seven participants, who are at the same level of experience as literacy coaches. They will have engaged in coursework and coaching for two years at the Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative at Lesley University, and will have been practicing in the role of literacy coach for one year. In order to be relevant participants, they should each have experienced the phenomenon, developing an identity as a literacy coach. These are the procedures I will follow:

1. Reach out to members of the target population through letters of inquiry explaining the research project, and asking for interested parties to contact me. If interested, participants will sign informed consent forms indicating their agreement to participate in the study, and indicating that they may withdraw from the study at any time by notifying me, and that there will be no repercussions if they withdraw. Participants' identities will be kept confidential (see attached letter and consent form).

2. Once the participants have agreed to be part of the study, I will conduct semi-structured interviews using a short list of open-ended questions. Although the questions will frame the interview, there will also be room for the participants to volunteer information that goes beyond the questions. I will collect a written narrative from each participant that describes memorable experiences related to their work as literacy coaches, and their reflections on those experiences (see attached questionnaire for specific protocol).
3. Once the narratives have been gathered, I will read through each one several times. According to Giorgi (1997), it is important to bracket, or suspend past knowledge about the phenomenon being studied in order to be "fully present" when both gathering and analyzing the data. It is also important to describe the phenomenon globally, rather than interpret or explain it, so that there will be an "intrinsic account of the phenomenon" (Giorgi, 1997, p. 238). After the initial reading and description, I will read the narratives again and mine them for relevant meaning units.
4. Next the data will be reviewed and the meaning units described with regard to their relationship to coaching and professional identity in the field of education. This will prepare the data to be analyzed again to determine which ideas are most relevant to the essence of the phenomenon, the perceived identity of literacy coaches. Giorgi (1997) cautions that "once the structure has been delineated, one has to go back to the raw data and render intelligible the clusters of variation that are also contained in the data" (p. 241). This insures that individual variations in the data are not lost in the general description.

To summarize this process (Giorgi, 2012), once data are collected the researcher will:

1. read the descriptions in order to get a sense of the whole
2. reread, and be aware of transitions in meaning, identifying "meaning units"
3. transform the data into expressions that are relevant to coaching and professional identity
4. review these expressions and use "imaginative variation" to write an "essential structure" of how the perception of professional identity as a literacy coach was experienced
5. use this "essential structure" to clarify and interpret the raw data, creating a description of the perception of professional identity of the literacy coach

1.4 Indicate whether the study involves any of the following:

X Written narratives

1.5 How will subjects be recruited?

I will send out at least twenty recruitment letters to literacy coaches who have been part of a cohort that has completed two years of coursework and coaching at the Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative, and are at the beginning of their second year working as literacy coaches at their school. If I receive more than ten positive responses, I hope to be able to choose the participants so as to get some varied representation of gender, ethnic, and social background. The total number of participants will be between three and seven coaches.

1.6 Do subjects risk *any* stress or harm by participating in this research? If so, why are they necessary. How will they be assessed? What safeguards minimize the risks? [*It is not necessary to eliminate all risks, only to be clear and explicit about what the risks may be. The IRB is alert to any tendency to suggest that risks are lower than they may actually be.*]

I do not believe that subjects will risk any harm or stress by participating, but some may feel nervous sharing their perceptions of their roles. They may feel reluctant to share details that may paint them in a way that indicates they are not successful in their role. They may worry that they might be able to be identified. I hope to assuage any fears they may have by being open and clear in my descriptions of the project, and in my assurances of anonymity and confidentiality as expressed in the consent form. There is no pressure for them to take part in this study, as it will be totally voluntary.

There is a very slight risk that the identity of participants might inadvertently be revealed. Every effort will be made to keep this from happening. The principal investigator is the only one who will know this information, and data will be coded with numerical identifiers from the start to prevent identities from being revealed. Data will be stored in a secure location on the researcher's personal computer or external hard drive, and identifying information will be stored in a separate secure location not available to school district or Lesley personnel.

Participating in the study may be a positive experience for them as they will be asked to reflect on their practice, and this could help them to have a deeper understanding of their

professional role and the ways in which they interact with their colleagues.

I will make it clear that if at any time they wish to withdraw from the study for any reason, that they may do so. I will also assure them that I will keep their identities confidential, and will not share data with others affiliated with their workplace or with personnel at Lesley University. I will inform them that when the research is published in any form, either as part of the dissertation or in subsequent publications, that pseudonyms and generic descriptions will be used for people and places described in the document.

1.7 Describe the data that will be collected:

Personal interviews will prompt the participants to narrate their perceptions and experiences. I will record these interviews with an electronic recording device, and will transcribe the interviews at a later time into a word document. I will request each participant to write a short narrative on a particularly memorable moment that occurred while in their roles as a literacy coach, and add a reflection on those events. They will send this written reflection to me, and I will add it to the data for analysis.

1.8 Describe the steps to be taken to respect subject's rights and expectations of privacy, confidentiality and anonymity:

I have developed a confidentiality agreement stipulating that I will not reveal personal information that could be associated with the person's identity, and will hold any data that I collect as confidential. Once participants agree to be part of the study, I will assign a numerical code to each participant so that any data I collect will be stored under the code number on my personal computer and backup external hard drive. I will use an email address that is not connected to Lesley University for any electronic communications with participants, and I will advise them to do the same. The name and numerical code information will not be stored on my computer, but will be saved as a hard copy document in my personal files.

The use of pseudonyms for each participant and any other specific references to school districts or other personnel in any publications, either within the dissertation or in later publication will insure the privacy of the participants. I will not reveal their identity to anyone associated with Lesley University or with their school district. If at any time subjects wish to withdraw from the study, they may do so without repercussions (see attached document).

Participation is strictly voluntary, and I will not coerce people to participate.

1.9 Will subjects' identities or private information be revealed if this study be reported through publication or public presentation?

No. Every effort will be made to keep the identities of the participants protected. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants, their locations, colleagues, and specific schools in any and all publications that result from this study.

If this application is seeking an **exemption from IRB Review**, please check the policy in the Faculty Handbook. Please see the worksheet on the criteria for an exemption. If you believe that the proposed research qualifies for an exemption, you may end the application here and submit these two pages to irb@lesley.edu . You will be notified whether your application for exemption has been approved. If it is not approved, you will be asked to complete the remaining sections of this application.

Applicants seeking either expedited or full IRB review are required to complete the remainder of this form.

2.1 Identify the institutional affiliation of the Principal Investigator (including School, Division, Center or Office). Also identify the affiliation and status of the co- investigator who is a student.

Dr. Eva Konstantellou is a professor in the School of Education at Lesley University, working specifically at the Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative. Dr. Konstantellou is acting as the doctoral committee chair for A. Czekanski, replacing Dr. Caroline Heller, who is on sabbatical leave this year.

Antoinette Czekanski, Ph.D. candidate and co-investigator is submitting this request for review. Ms. Czekanski is currently Asst. Director for Grants, Contracts, and Special Projects in the Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative at Lesley University. This study is being done as part of the completion of the dissertation process.

2.2 Identify the institutional affiliation of other participants on the project who are not members of the Lesley University community.

Other than Dr. Konstantellou, and Ms. Czekanski, the only other participants will be the volunteers who will be interview subjects in the study. They currently work as literacy coaches

within public schools in the United States. Their schools are affiliated with the Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative, and they continue to attend professional development annually at the CRRLC. They are not currently students at Lesley, nor are they presently evaluated by Lesley CRRLC faculty, since they have completed their program of study.

2.3 If the principal investigator is not a member of the Lesley community, then a Lesley faculty or staff must be a co-sponsor of the research project. Please identify that person.
N.A.

2.4 Identify the funding source and any relevant restrictions on the research, if applicable.
N.A.

2.5 If the proposed project involves collaboration with another institution, please identify and indicate if IRB review from that institution and been sought and granted. Include the IRB review number. Include relevant contact information.
N.A.

2.6 Location(s) of the research activity:

The location of the research activity will be determined once participants are identified. Since the data collected will be interviews, locations will vary to suit the convenience of the participants. I will meet the participants at a location that they select. If there are geographic obstacles, we may use online communication methods such as Skype to conduct interviews. I will not be visiting schools at which the coaches work, nor will I be completing these interviews at Lesley University. Since the study focuses on perceptions of identity, no on-site visits are necessary. All data will be gathered from interviews and written narratives, not through observations at school sites.

3.1 Provide further details on the characteristics of the human subjects. Please describe in greater detail the numbers of subjects, the range of ages, gender, and other relevant demographic characteristics that may define the sample being studied.

The subjects will be adult educators in the position of literacy coaches working with grades K – 8 teachers in public school settings. These participants will have completed a course of study at the Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative (CRRLC) at Lesley University. This course of study is a two-year process during which teachers who have been selected by their schools to take on the role of literacy coach take three graduate courses at the CRRLC that are

part of the Literacy Collaborative program of study. The first year they focus on teaching in their own classrooms and organizing a school literacy team. The second year they begin to provide professional development and coaching to their colleagues. These coaches-in-training also receive coaching at their school sites from the CRRLC faculty, who visit the schools four to six times over the course of two years as the participants engage in teaching and coaching within their schools. After the two-year course of study and coaching support, the new literacy coaches are certified by the CRRLC and their schools are part of the Literacy Collaborative network. It is this specific cohort of coaches that I will focus on in this study, as they begin their second year of providing professional development and coaching for their colleagues.

Most coaches currently working in elementary schools are female, and as such I am expecting that most of my participants will be female. There is a small possibility of having male participants as well. I am hoping that my participants reflect diversity in ethnic and economic background. The usual age range of people who participate in this course of study ranges from mid-twenties to sixty years of age. Teachers may have three years' experience teaching, or thirty.

The geographic locations of their schools are within the United States, mostly in the northeast, although there may be participants from the Midwest or South as well. Schools in which they teach may be urban or rural. All of the coaches will hold graduate degrees in education due to the nature of their roles in the schools, and will have studied to be literacy coaches as part of the Literacy Collaborative program of study at the Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative at Lesley University.

3.2 How are subjects to be chosen or recruited? Describe sampling procedures.

I will send a letter of inquiry to a specific cohort of literacy coaches who have gone through the Literacy Collaborative coaching program of study, asking for volunteers who would like to participate in this study. I plan to send out at least twenty letters, and am hoping for three to seven positive responses. If I receive more than seven positive responses, I will choose the participants so as to get some varied representation of gender, ethnic, and social background. At that time, I will determine whether to add one or two participants, increasing the number to a maximum of ten.

3.3 What will subjects be asked to do, what will be done to them, or what information will be gathered? (Append copies of interview guides, instructions, tests, or questionnaires.)

After the pool of subjects is selected, I will talk with each of them in person or on the phone about the nature of the study, and answer any questions they may have about participating. I will schedule interviews with those participants who agree to be part of the study in locations that are convenient to them and during a time that does not interfere with their professional commitments. The interviews will likely take one to two hours. Follow up interviews may be scheduled if needed.

During this meeting we will engage in a semi-structured interview during which I will ask several open-ended questions about their perceptions of their roles as literacy coaches, and examples of experiences they have had as coaches in their schools. I will prompt for more details if needed. Our conversations will be recorded using a digital recording device. In addition to these face-to-face interviews, I will ask them to write a brief narrative relating particularly memorable experiences in their roles as coaches that were not discussed in our conversation. The data that will be collected is the coaches' narratives (both oral and written) describing their experiences, reflections, and their perceptions of their professional identities as literacy coaches.

Once the interviews and narratives are submitted and analyzed, I will share my transcriptions and analysis with them in order to insure that I have understood their meaning. This will conclude their participation. I anticipate that the total time commitment for each person would be two–five hours, depending on the need for follow-up or clarification.

I will be the only interviewer.

3.5 If an intervention is planned, please describe and include the number of times intervention will be made and over what period of time (see policy guidelines for the definition of 'intervention'):

N.A.

4.1 How do you explain the research to subjects and obtain their informed consent to participate? (It is essential to allow participants to ask questions at any point. Be sure to append your Informed Consent Form.

I will send each potential participant a letter of inquiry and informed consent form that describes the focus of research and includes my contact information in case any of the coaches have further questions before volunteering to participate. In the letter I will encourage the

coaches to email or phone me if they have any further questions. If I do not hear from them, I will attempt to contact them by phone or email to offer further information that might help them make a decision. Once people show interest in participating, I will schedule a follow up phone call that will allow for further clarification of the project. We will communicate to set up interview dates, times, and locations after I receive signed consent forms (see attached letter and consent form).

4.2 If subjects are minors or not competent to provide consent, how will parent or guardian permission be obtained? How will verbal assent of the participants be obtained?

N.A.

4.3 How will subjects be informed that they can refuse to participate in aspects of the study or may terminate participation whenever they please?

The recruitment letter and consent forms state clearly that participants may withdraw from the study at any time by notifying the researcher, without any ramifications. All data collected from them will be destroyed and not used as part of the study or in future writing. I will reiterate this in the follow up phone calls.

4.4 If subjects are students or clients, how will you protect them against feeling coerced into participation?

Participation is totally voluntary. I will make clear to the coaches that I am engaging in this study in order to learn more about their perceptions and experiences in the field, and that it may be very helpful to developing programs of study for other coaches in the future. That being said, they are in no way obligated to participate, and neither their participation nor non-participation will affect their relationship with the CRRLC at Lesley. Due to the confidentiality and anonymity practices built into the study, no one will know their identity, so it will not be able to be held against them if they decline to participate. I will not pressure people into participating.

Potential participants are no longer students at Lesley University, and so are not in jeopardy of having grades or reputation affected at the CRRLC or through Lesley University. The schools they teach at are affiliated with the Center for Literacy Collaborative and Reading

Recovery, but I will assure participants that no information that they share in accepting or declining will be revealed in any way that will identify them or their schools to the Center or to their school district personnel. No communications related to this study that will identify them will occur between me and any of the schools they currently teach in, or between the faculty members with whom they worked at the CRRLC.

I will make clear to potential participants that I formally worked as a faculty member at the CRRLC, teaching literacy coaches in the capacity of faculty liaison for thirteen years. This gives me insider knowledge of the process in which they have been involved. I will state that I am no longer in that role, but am in an administrative role at the CRRLC, and that I have not had interactions with their cohort as a faculty member. I will reiterate the confidential nature of our relationship should they decide to be part of the study. I will indicate that although I believe participating in this study might be beneficial to people who go through the process of becoming literacy coaches in the future, that they are under no obligation to participate.

4.5 Are subjects deliberately deceived in *any* way? If so, provide rationale. Describe the deception, its likely impact on participants, and how they will be debriefed upon completion of the research.

No, there will be no deception.

4.6 How might participation in this study benefit subjects?

Subjects may benefit through the reflection on the process of learning and growth they have gone through in taking on the new professional role of literacy coach after having been successful teachers for several years. Engaging in reflection can help adult learners come to new understandings about their learning process, and themselves as learners. Since these participants work as literacy coaches, going through the process of reflection themselves may help them understand how this process can be helpful to the adults with whom they work. It may also help them critically examine their roles as coaches within their schools, the relationships they have with their colleagues and administrators, and to reflect on their effectiveness in that role.

4.7 Will participants receive a summary of results? If yes, please describe.

Yes, I will give participants a copy of my summary of their own narrative, and interviews, and a list of the identified meaning units to check for clarity and accuracy of interpretation, so as not to

misrepresent what they have shared. They will also receive a copy of the final document (dissertation) that results from this study if they wish. If any other publications result from this work, I would be sure to send them notification of publication in advance, and links to any publications that result.

5.1 How will the following be protected?

Privacy: Protecting *information* about participants.

1. Since I still work at the Center for Reading Recovery in an administrative position, I will be diligent not to share names, schools, districts, or any other identifying information with colleagues at the CRRLC. I will also refrain from discussing this study or the identity of the participants with anyone connected to the school districts in which these coaches work. When describing demographic information relating to the participants I will use generic descriptions that will further protect their identity and that of their school districts.

Anonymity: Protecting *names* and other *unique identifiers* of participants. Names should not be attached to the data, unless subjects choose to be identified, and the identification of subjects is essential to the proposed project.

2. Participants will be assigned a number from the time they enter the study to its end, so that any data collected will be stored under this number rather than their name. The number and name codes will not be stored on an electronic device, but will be in a file folder kept at my home. This coding will not be shared with anyone. Pseudonyms will be used for people and places involved in the study in order to preserve anonymity, when the data are written up.

Confidentiality: Protecting *data* about participants. How is access to data limited? Consider how coding will be kept separate from information obtained; how data will be stored and when will it be destroyed; whether data will be used in the future and, if so, how permission for further use will be obtained?

3. Data collected will be stored on the researcher's private computer or external hard drive files and in the researcher's electronic recording devices. Data will not be stored on other computers used at Lesley University. Hard copy files will be kept in folders labeled with numbers, not participants' names. Documents identifying the coding system for

participant identification will be kept separately from all other files in a secure location. The researcher will use an email address not associated with Lesley University for all electronic communications with participants. They will be encouraged to do the same.

4. If there is the opportunity to publish data outside of the dissertation, the researcher will return to the participants to assure that they give permission to do so.

5.2 Are there any other procedures or details of the study the Human Subjects Committee should use to assess how your study protects human subjects?

Not to my knowledge.

Attachments, as appropriate (Please include all attachments in one file labeled by the author's last name, as shown below):

1. Written Informed Consent Form. The consent form must include contact information for the applicant, the faculty supervisor (if the applicant is a student), and the IRB co-chairs, either Robyn Cruz (rcruz@lesley.edu) or Terry Keeney (tkeeney@lesley.edu).
2. Recruitment letters or flyers
3. Instructions to informants
4. Interview Guide
5. Compensation information
6. Data collection instrument, e.g., test NA
7. List of all co-investigators (including contact information) NA
8. Description of any experimental manipulation NA
9. Information sheets or debriefing method NA
10. Letters of IRB approval from cooperating institution(s) NA

Send the completed form as an email attachment to irb@lesley.edu.
Applicants are requested to send the application electronically, with all accompanying documents, in **one file**, with the following format for the file: Last Name of Applicant IRB Application Date Submitted.
The email that accompanies the application will serve as an electronic signature.

Appendix B

Recruitment Letter

October 1, 2015

Dear _____,

My name is Antoinette Czekanski, and I have worked at the Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative for fifteen years. I previously worked with the intermediate-middle school level team as faculty-liaison, but am now in an administrative position as Assistant Director of Grants, Contracts, and Special Projects at the Center. For the past several years I have been engaged in work towards my Ph.D. in Educational Studies. My interests have been centered on literacy teaching and learning, and more recently have focused on the work of literacy coaches.

My dissertation will focus on the perceptions of professional identity of literacy coaches as they first engage in the role. To that end, I would like to interview literacy coaches who have completed their two-year course of study (in-training and field year) at the Center for Reading Recovery and Literacy Collaborative, and are beginning their third year of work as literacy coaches in their schools. I hope that by taking time to gather and analyze information from coaches who are beginning their work, it may give insights into what contributes to the successful preparation of literacy coaches for their roles in schools.

Participants in the study will be asked to engage in interviews with me focused on their role as literacy coach. These interviews will probably take between one and two hours. It is possible that we will want to have a follow up interview to discuss any questions that went unanswered during the first interview, or to communicate any further thinking on the subject. I may also ask participants to write brief narratives describing specific events that relate to their role as literacy coaches. I anticipate that the time commitment for you might be around two-five hours at the most over the course of about a month.

I assure you that any information you share during these interviews will be kept confidential. When interviews are conducted, I will record our conversations and later transcribe the information. When it is transcribed, the data will be identified with a code number. No identifying names will be used during the data collection or analysis phase. All names used in the written reporting of the data during the presenting of my dissertation and in any further publications will be pseudonyms. I will give each participant the opportunity to review the summary of data for accuracy of recording.

If you decide you would like to participate in this study or have any questions about it, I will set up a time to talk in more detail about the specific details. If you agree to participate, we would then set up a schedule for the interview at a time and place

outside of your school that is convenient to you sometime before the end of the 2016 school year.

If you decide at any time to withdraw from the study, you may notify me in writing, by letter or email, stating your intent to withdraw, and all information collected from you will be destroyed and will not be used in this study or in any future work.

Please be assured that I will not share any information about your agreement *or* non-agreement to participate in this study with anyone at Lesley University or with anyone connected to your school district. Participation is totally voluntary and confidential. From the moment you express interest one way or another, your identity will not be revealed to anyone. The risk of your identity being accidentally revealed is very low, and all efforts will be made to avoid this. There is no pressure to participate in the study, but I am hoping that you will find that taking the time to reflect on your practice will be helpful to you in some way.

If you have questions about what your participation would involve, or would like to talk further about this project, please let me know by phone or email before October 31, 2015.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and I look forward to hearing from you. If after further consideration, you are interested in participating, please sign the attached consent form, and mail it to me at the address listed on the bottom of the form.

Sincerely,

Antoinette Czekanski
tczekans@gmail.com
508-662-6783

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

I, _____ (please print your name) give permission to Antoinette Czekanski to use data collected from recorded interviews and written narratives in her doctoral dissertation or in subsequent publications. I understand that every effort will be made to assure privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity, and that no names will be used in any publication that would identify me, my school, district, or other personnel who may work with me. No information that could in any way incriminate me will be communicated to administrators or others connected with my school or school district, or with Lesley University personnel. The possible risk of my identity being revealed is very small and all efforts will be made to avoid this.

There is no pressure to participate in this study, and participation in voluntary. If I agree to participate, the process for gathering data will include:

1. An initial interview to gather information about perceptions of yourself as a literacy coach and examples of coaching experiences that contribute to those perceptions. This conversation will be recorded on an electronic recording device for future transcription.
2. Writing a short narrative describing specific experiences you have had as a literacy coach, and your thoughts about those experiences.
3. Possible follow up interview if more details are needed or come to mind.
4. The opportunity to read the transcribed notes and initial analysis of the narratives that are acquired to assure that the researcher has interpreted them as intended.

I understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time, and that any data collected from me prior to this would be destroyed and not used in any publication at any time.

By signing this form, I agree to participate in all steps described above, and to agree to the use of any data collected for the writing and publication of the dissertation or included in other publications in the future. I know that every effort will be taken to insure that my identity will be continue to be protected, and anonymity preserved.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

email: _____

phone:

_____

If you agree to participate, please sign and mail a copy of the above form to:

Antoinette Czekanski
P.0. Box 400159
Cambridge, MA 02140

Please keep a duplicate copy of this signed document for your records in the event you have to contact me or the people listed below with questions in the future.

****

Note: If you have any questions or concerns now, during, or after your participation please feel free to contact me, my doctoral committee chair, or either of the co-chairs of Lesley University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Contact information for all these are provided below.

Antoinette Czekanski
tczekans@gmail.com
508-662-6783

Doctoral Study Committee Chair
Dr. Eva Konstantellou
617-349-8136
ekonstan@lesley.edu

Institutional Review Board Chairs
Dr. Robyn Cruz (rcruz@lesley.edu)
Dr. Terry Keeney (tkeeney@lesley.edu).

Appendix D

Interview Protocol

You have been working in your school as a literacy coach for a little two years now. I'd like to take some time to talk with you about some of your experiences as a coach, and about what it means to you to be a literacy coach. During our conversation we might discuss how you made the decision to take on this role, how you perceive yourself now that you are in the role of coach, how your work with colleagues contributes to those perceptions, and anything else you think might be helpful to me to understand your current perceptions about identity as a literacy coach.

1. Describe what you think the term "literacy coach" means in terms of your own experiences.

2. Talk about how you see yourself fulfilling the role of literacy coach in your school.

3. How is your role as literacy coach different from your prior role in education?

4. What has contributed to your thinking about yourself as a literacy coach?

5. How do others in your school contribute to your identity as a literacy coach?

6. Describe an incident that might have prompted you to think to yourself, "I feel like a literacy coach today."

7. What effect did this experience have on your perception of yourself as a literacy coach?"

8. What other experiences have you had that contribute to your perceptions of yourself as a literacy coach?

9. What else do you think would help me to understand how you see yourself in your role as a literacy coach in this school?

Written narrative: During our interview, you shared with me some experiences that contributed to your growing identity as a literacy coach. Please reflect again on this new role that you have taken on. You work with many people across the day, and complete a variety of tasks related to your position.

What else can you add to our conversation that would help me understand how you see yourself as a coach? What experiences either contribute or take away from your perceptions of yourself as a literacy coach?

Please take some time to write about this, and then send me your narrative once you have finished.