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Literacy Leadership in Secondary Schools: a Case Study of Teaching and Learning in Two School Districts

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LITERACY LEADERSHIP IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS:
A CASE STUDY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN TWO SCHOOL
DISTRICTS

by

GREGORY BERRY

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
in
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Portland State University
2009

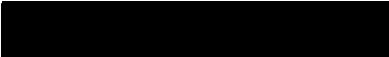
DISSERTATION APPROVAL

The abstract and dissertation of Gregory Berry for the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership: Curriculum and Instruction were presented January 13, 2009, and accepted by the dissertation committee and the doctoral program.


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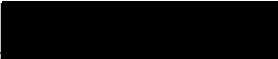


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ABSTRACT

An abstract of the dissertation of Gregory Berry for the Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership: Curriculum and Instruction presented January 13, 2009.

Title: Literacy Leadership in Secondary Schools: A Case Study of Teaching and Learning in Two School Districts

Improvement in literacy learning in secondary schools requires a dual focus: a district and school organizational leadership approach, and a classroom- and instruction-focused approach. To help close the achievement gap and improve learning for all students, whole school reform efforts must be focused on literacy. Elements of whole school reform may include professional development programs such as professional learning communities, peer coaching, and literacy coaching. The sociocultural contexts that these approaches incorporate can help improve the learning of both teachers and students and can bring about significant secondary school reform and academic improvement.

This dissertation study is a *qualitative, collective, case study* of two school districts and their approaches to promoting secondary literacy. The study describes and analyzes forms of literacy leadership at both the district and school level, explores professional development methods used for promoting literacy and assesses their

effectiveness, analyzes the incorporation of sociocultural structures in professional development, and describes and analyzes the roles of literacy coaches and leaders. The study made use of several data collection methods, including audiotaped interviews, document analysis, and field observations and also includes elements of program evaluation to assess the effectiveness of each district's approach to secondary literacy. Data analysis included coding of all data followed by identification of major emerging themes.

Results indicated that both districts have made significant progress in focusing attention on and allocating resources to secondary school literacy. The data analysis resulted in several major themes emerging for both districts related to literacy leadership and coaching, instructional strategies, writing, leadership and change, collaboration, best practices, resources, goals, challenges, assessment and evaluation, student literacy skills, professional development, intervention, reading incentives, and district and school level support. Comparative observations are made based on the results in each district, and recommendations are offered for both school districts.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Research Topic and Problem

School reform efforts in secondary schools nationwide, which seek to improve the academic performance of all students, have led teachers, school leaders, and policymakers to focus greater attention on literacy as a key component of increased achievement. National Association of Educational Progress data from 2002 shows that twenty-five percent of high school students lack basic reading skills, forty percent lack the skill necessary to understand grade-level text, and another thirty percent cannot critically examine ideas and elaborate upon their reading (Covey, 2004). One quarter of adolescents do not read well enough to understand informational text or identify the main idea in a reading passage (Kamil, 2003). Pressure for more rigorous standards, mandated testing, and increasing accountability are influencing districts to rethink their secondary school literacy programs, and many of them are adopting instructional materials or programs in very reactionary ways (Vogt and Shearer, 2003). While some progress has been made at secondary levels with more intensive intervention to teach basic reading skills across content areas, few districts and schools have implemented a comprehensive approach to schoolwide literacy (Covey, 2004).

A comprehensive literacy leadership program requires a dual approach: schoolwide leadership efforts and processes combined with strategies for student literacy acquisition and development. Many reform projects focus on one or the other, but not on both (Taylor & Collins, 2003). Focus on both administrative leadership and reform efforts as well as methods of professional development that improve classroom

teaching and learning may have a significant impact on teaching and learning.

Leadership for school literacy comes in many different forms: building and administrative leadership, teacher leadership, and professional development programs for staff, which may include peer coaching, professional learning communities, and literacy coaching.

To lay the groundwork for what follows, it is important to first define the concept of literacy as used in this study. Literacy, defined from a functionalist perspective, refers to the ability to read and write. However, literacy has been defined in many different ways, and numerous types of literacy, or multi-literacies, have been explored (Luke & Elkins, 2002). Wray (2001) suggests moving beyond psycholinguistic and cognitive concepts of literacy development to a view of literacy as a socially constructed practice. Schools have typically defined literacy very narrowly and have privileged some forms of literacy above others. For purposes of this study, literacy is defined in the broader sense to reflect “numerous ways in which humans convey meaning, for example, symbolically, through pop culture, story, song, and ritual” (Vogt & Shearer, 2003, p. xvi). According to Wray (2001),

Literacy is the ability to read and use written information and to write appropriately for a range of purposes. It also involves the integration of speaking, listening and critical thinking with reading and writing and includes the knowledge which enables a speaker, writer or reader to recognize and use language appropriate to different social situations. (p. 12)

Major Issues in Secondary School Literacy

Sturtevant (2003) notes that the overall reading achievement of adolescents is not keeping pace with the increasing demands of today’s highly-technological society,

and many students remain several grade levels behind in reading ability. Secondary students often have difficulty making meaning from text, and secondary teachers have little or no training in how to give students the skills they need for reading comprehension. Even many English teachers, who may be excellent literature teachers, do not know basic elements of reading comprehension (Symonds, 2002). Students today also need a more comprehensive education, including a strong base of knowledge across content areas as well as advanced reading and communicating skills in a variety of types of texts and technologies (Sturtevant, 2003). According to Vogt and Shearer (2003), today's students need instruction in literacy strategies, need to develop critical media literacy skills to understand increasingly complex information, and need to read and comprehend a number of symbol systems associated with technology and other genres of communication. In addition, students need to develop strategies for independent learning.

The Need for Content Area Literacy

Inadequate literacy skills result in frustration and poor academic performance for many secondary students (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Rose (2000) reports that survey data from students reveal many to be frustrated and under-prepared readers who own few books, do not use libraries, cannot name a favorite book, possibly have never finished reading a book, and in general, despise reading. These students are also struggling in most of their classes, both core courses and electives. Rose (2000) argues that all content area teachers must incorporate the teaching of reading comprehension strategies into their curriculum. Many content teachers avoid engaging students in

making meaning from textual material and instead try to teach the content by other means. But students need explicit instruction in reading comprehension in order to understand reasoning processes and strategies in addition to the disciplinary discourses that readers use to comprehend (Donahue, 2003). Teachers who try to avoid the problem of students' reading skills by retreating from print further reduce literacy demands made on students, which is not helping to solve the problem (Lewis & Wray, 1999). Teachers can learn to develop strategies to help students comprehend textual material, rather than reducing students' engagement with the text (Lewis & Wray, 1999).

Can student literacy in secondary schools can be improved with a concentrated focus on reading and writing in all content areas? Many high schools and middle schools have implemented sustained silent reading, daily writing, and a variety of strategy approaches across the curriculum. Wray (2001) argues that content area teachers need to understand their responsibility for the development of literacy in their subject areas, and they need training and support in effectively using content area teaching strategies. As students move into secondary levels of schooling, they encounter greater separation of knowledge into different subject areas, each one having its own literacy demands. Teaching in these subject areas needs to be planned and implemented with a clear understanding of the particular types of literacy skills needed, including forms of text and specialized language (Wray, 2001). Content area teachers need to provide instruction in skills and strategies that are especially effective in the particular subject area (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

The Need to Increase Achievement and Close the Achievement Gap

Many, although by no means all, culturally and linguistically diverse students and students from poverty, have lower levels of academic performance than do mainstream students, a trend referred to as the “achievement gap.” Content area literacy instruction and other programs could possibly have significant impact on the achievement gap between white and minority students. State and national standards, high-stakes tests, and increased accountability have brought greater attention to these larger numbers of struggling students. Low socioeconomic status, minority membership, family mobility, and language differences describe many students with poor literacy skills (Denti & Guerin, 2004). Some scholars, however, have argued that the term “achievement gap” is an unfair label placed on some students. Nieto and Bode (2008) assert that a more appropriate term might be “resource gap” or “expectations gap” because student achievement is directly affected by the conditions in which students learn. Because some schools have more resources, students have a greater chance of success, and schools with large numbers of students from poverty generally have fewer resources and opportunities.

It is our responsibility as educators to do everything possible to more effectively work with struggling students and break down the barriers to achievement that stand in their way. Samuels, Rodenburg, Frey, and Fisher (2001) argue that teachers are better prepared to work in diverse schools when they have solid background in instructional strategies that address the needs of multi-cultural, multi-

leveled, inner-city classrooms and that they also need to be adequately supported through their initial years of teaching in terms of applying those strategies.

Several factors have created roadblocks to success for minority students including “factors endemic to systemic processes and institutional culture” which impede efforts to address such students’ needs (Grant & Wong, 2003, p. 387). Sociocultural differences have contributed to the achievement gap for minority students, because their cultures and learning styles may not align with the print-based literacy privileged in schools. When literacy is defined only by Western culture’s standards, we lose a deeper understanding of the complexities of literacy and do a disservice to minority students and English-language learners. When educators view cultural backgrounds and linguistic diversity of students as deficits, the result for both teachers and students is lower expectation of achievement; however, an increasing body of literature on readers from different cultures can bring us to a better understanding of differences and how they affect students’ ability to learn to read (Grant & Wong, 2003). Two of the barriers to improved literacy for language-minority students are the failure of teacher education programs to prepare reading specialists to work with language minority learners, and the failure of researchers to do more substantive research on English development for these students: “Often neither course work nor clinical experience is designed to prepare reading specialists to meet the distinct needs of language-minority students” (Grant & Wong, 2003, p. 388).

Some have recommended culturally-relevant teaching as a way to address the problem. Ladson-Billings (1992) argues for improving minority student learning with a culturally-relevant approach to teaching that will help foster and sustain students and encourage them to achieve success in spite of so many obstacles and barriers. Such an approach requires using students' cultures to help them understand themselves and others, structure their social interactions, and conceptualize knowledge. Culturally-relevant teaching is needed for students of diverse backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 1992). In order to help close the achievement gap, a sociocultural educational approach, including preparation of teachers to utilize sociocultural theories to help diverse students reach academic success may be useful.

Research Questions and Goals

The purpose of this multi-site, comparative, qualitative case study is to understand and describe the approach to secondary school literacy learning in two different school districts, including the roles of literacy leaders and coaches at the district and school levels. The research involved studying the organizational leadership and professional development methods, including literacy leadership and coaching, used in the two districts' secondary schools. While the general approach of this study is case study methodology, elements of grounded theory are also incorporated, in that systematic procedures for collecting and analyzing data (Travers, 2001) were followed in order to develop a theory about the subject of study. Cresswell (1998) defines grounded theory as an attempt to "generate or discover a theory" relating to a particular situation in which the "actions, interactions, and social processes of people"

are studied in order to develop the theory about the topic of study (p. 56). The study also incorporated ethnomethodology, which examines “how people understand and interpret the world around them, and the practical content of their day-to-day activities” (Travers, 2001, p. 62). The approach and methodology are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

While some qualitative researchers don't develop research questions until they have done some initial data collection and analysis, every study begins with some goals and provisional questions to frame the study and guide decisions about methodology (Maxwell, 2005). Considerations in the proposal stage included why the study is needed, how it is connected to research paradigms, what is already known, and what will be studied. Maxwell (2005) suggests five intellectual goals are well-suited to qualitative research: understanding the meaning for participants; understanding the context in which participants act; identifying unanticipated phenomena and influences, or generating theory; understanding processes; and developing causal explanations. The more practical goals may include generating results that are understandable and credible, conducting formative evaluation intended to improve practice, and engaging in collaborative or action-oriented research (Maxwell, 2005). For this study the practical goals included contributing to the knowledge base in adolescent literacy learning as well as providing useful information for the two districts through elements of program evaluation in the final chapter.

Considering the recommendations and goals above, the research questions that guided this dissertation study include the following:

1. What district-wide programs and practices are used in the two districts to promote literacy in the secondary schools?
2. What roles do literacy leaders and coaches play in promoting literacy?
3. What practices have had the greatest impact on teacher instruction and student achievement?

Researcher's Background

My background and the expertise gained from twenty years of teaching English in secondary schools, as well as my leadership roles in school improvement and staff development, provided me with a solid basis for doing the necessary qualitative data collection and analysis. My first several years of teaching were spent in a small school district in Eastern Oregon, where I taught both English and drama. I then moved to a larger school district in a more urban area in Western Oregon, teaching at a school with approximately 2,000 students. In the last twenty-two years, I have taught all levels of secondary students, including struggling readers in remedial programs, mainstream students, and honors level, advanced placement, and college students. The diverse number of students I have worked with has given me a broad perspective on literacy and learning, and I have become passionate about the critical importance of improving the literacy skills of secondary students, especially second language learners and minority students, as well as better equipping teachers to effectively work with struggling students.

In the fall of 2000, I became Teacher Leader and Literacy Leader for my school, leadership positions which gave me responsibility for staff development,

writing and implementing the school improvement plan, and the chance to work cooperatively with the school leadership team. As Literacy Leader, I have focused my attention on working directly with teachers in all content areas to incorporate literacy learning into the curriculum. When our school received a federal grant in the fall of 2005, I was hired as Instructional Coach for a three-year period, which relieved me of half of my teaching responsibilities in order to further focus on school reform issues and school improvement. This work, combined with my doctoral study, has allowed me to focus on building my leadership skills by working directly with teachers, doing research, and gaining expertise in a number of areas. I have also worked with other leaders in my school to develop smaller learning communities, improve instruction for all students, and implement professional learning communities for teachers. I have also completed graduate level coursework and research in content area literacy, reading and writing assessment, second-language literacy acquisition, and adult learning theory. Over the last few years, I have gained expertise in a number of areas critical to school improvement: small learning communities, critical thinking, differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, multicultural learning, strategies for teaching struggling readers, writing assessment, content area literacy, literacy coaching, adult learning, organizational theory, and high school reform. The expertise that I have gained made me uniquely suited to conduct a qualitative study that involved data collection and analysis of literacy leadership, literacy coaching, and professional development in secondary schools.

Chapter Two provides a review of the major issues and problems with literacy learning in secondary schools, discussing specifically the achievement gap and inadequate attention to content area literacy. The chapter also discusses sociocultural theory, the theoretical framework of the study, as it relates to learning for teachers and students. The final sections of the chapter review research on specific methods for impacting schoolwide literacy, including professional development programs such as professional learning communities, peer coaching, and literacy coaching.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework: Sociocultural Theory

The research conducted in this study has been guided by the conviction that literacy improvement must be a central component of school reform, and that it is desperately needed in secondary schools of the 21st century. The theoretical framework is sociocultural theory, which provides a lens with which to examine literacy learning, because learning for both students and teachers happens in sociocultural contexts, through collaboration and interaction. Sociocultural theory is most commonly associated with the work of Vygotsky, and scholars working with sociocultural perspectives have stressed the link between literacy learning and participation in a group or community. For example, children learn to communicate in writing in social situations, by borrowing adults' language and language uses (Dyson, 2000). Speech and other methods of communication are also vehicles for learning. As students interact, they are learning not only how to learn but are also mastering the content. Learning is thus both individual and collective. The individual not only acquires cultural knowledge but also contributes to it.

A sociocultural perspective acknowledges the importance of classroom, school, community, and family contexts in which literacy occurs, and can provide us a means to use this knowledge to enhance literacy instruction (Vogt and Shearer, 2003). We all live in families and in communities, which provide the sociocultural context for our lives and our work, what Vogt and Shearer (2003) refer to as "sociocultural

complexity” (p. 35). Our literacy practices are embedded in social contexts and shaped by cultural values, which define the cultures of our schools and communities. However, some literacies and cultures are more highly valued than others in school settings. Vygotsky (1978) recognized that learning is a complex cognitive process dependent on social interaction and cultural context. A sociocultural view of literacy suggests that literacy learning is best facilitated through participation in social groups. While reading and writing may seem to be solitary, individual tasks, they are actually learned and developed through social interaction (Lenski & Nierstheimer, 2002). Biancarosa and Snow (2006) also recommend using text-based collaborative learning, where students interact with each to draw meaning from a text or multiple texts.

John-Steiner and Meehan (2000) argue that Vygotskian notions of synthesis and human inter-dependence, important aspects of sociocultural theory, make an important contribution to creativity and the creation of new meaning. Communication tools such as signs, symbol systems, and language are constructed socially. Knowledge is mutually constructed and learned. Sociocultural processes and individual functions create a dynamic tension which leads to the construction of new knowledge. Classroom activities that capitalize on this concept include cooperative learning, imaginative uses of technology, dialogue journals and other creative activities which allow for knowledge to be re-constructed and co-constructed “in the course of dialogic interaction” (John-Steiner & Meehan, 2000, p. 35).

Sociocultural theories have also been applied to professional development because adults also best learn new skills and strategies in sociocultural contexts

working with their peers. Ball (2000) notes that Vygotskian sociocultural perspectives of internalization allow for teacher reflection and growth in social contexts, especially in terms of the development of personal philosophies related to literacy for poor, urban, and diverse students. Teacher knowledge is constructed in collaboration with other teachers, students, texts, and other adults. When teachers participate in professional development that is socioculturally designed, they construct meaning about the function of language and develop their own philosophies about literacy in their classrooms. Sociocultural contexts provide for transformative development, and much like students, this process occurs in their zone of proximal development, with the assistance of other more knowledgeable adults. Ball (2000) comments that “interpersonal encounters with advanced theory and principles that undergird effective literacy teaching can lead to intrapersonal transformation in how prospective teachers envision, plan and perhaps eventually implement teaching strategies for students” (p. 253) especially those students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Ball’s (2000) study showed that interactive discussion, questioning, reflective writing, teacher research projects, and planning of activities allowed teachers to engage at an interpersonal level, challenge their beliefs and assumptions, and lead them to increased involvement and metacognitive awareness. Their discourse practices within sociocultural contexts motivated them to become agents of change. They experienced increased personal involvement in educational issues through mediation of the internal and external, individual and social.

Sociocultural theory is important in the context of teacher learning because the role of classroom teachers in schoolwide literacy is significant. Teachers can impact literacy and learning by building their repertoire of teaching skills and developing greater sensitivity to sociocultural contexts in their classrooms. They can improve their performance through collaboration with their colleagues and mastery of new teaching strategies and techniques. In the context of a supportive group, teachers can be influenced to move out of their comfort zones and apply new knowledge in their classrooms. Teacher learning provides the most significant impetus for improvement in student learning. Both literacy coaching and professional learning communities, small groups of teachers who work together to bring about school reform and impact student achievement (DuFour, 2005), can be sociocultural vehicles for teacher learning and capacity building and can provide the supportive scaffolding that teachers need to grow professionally. Sociocultural theories as applied to adult learning allow for increasing the capacity and skill of secondary teachers so critically necessary to the literacy improvement for students.

Teachers in all content areas need time to collaborate, talk, share, and discuss ideas within diverse groups of other teachers. Professional learning communities can facilitate this collaboration and help build a learning culture in the school and a vision for generating significant reform, which requires that schools become learning organizations for both students and teachers. Barth (2002) articulates the philosophy of the school as a community where everyone learns: "Schools exist to promote learning in all their inhabitants. Whether we are teachers, principals, professors, or

parents, our primary responsibility is to promote learning in others and in ourselves” (p. 9). Sociocultural theories applied to professional development can also help to break down the barriers that prevent change. The current culture and climate of most large schools is not conducive to reform and change. Secondary schools, in many cases, are too large and impersonal, and the curriculum too fragmented, departmentalized, and irrelevant for students, who remain unengaged and uninterested in school learning. Sturtevant (2003) notes that most students today receive the same lectures, tests, and assignments their parents and grandparents did. In many ways, our secondary schools still reflect the factory-model of schooling of the Industrial Era. Teachers too often work in isolation and seldom communicate with anyone outside of their departments. Developing a collaborative learning culture in schools is the way to insure that all individuals, students and teachers, in the school community are active learners. A collaborative learning culture in schools, built upon sociocultural contexts, can help all individuals, students and staff in the school community, become actively engaged learners.

Organizational Leadership

A determined focus on improving schoolwide literacy in secondary schools should incorporate a variety of elements. School administrators and teacher leaders need to develop a systematic plan and provide leadership for all staff. Teachers need to develop confidence and competence in using content area literacy strategies to improve student learning. In addition, effective professional development must be put into place to address the needs of adult learners. This professional development could

include professional learning communities, peer coaching, and literacy coaching programs.

Since addressing schoolwide literacy requires content area focus as well as schoolwide organizational and administrative leadership, as noted by Taylor and Collins (2003), how can school leaders plan, promote, and sustain a focus on literacy? Pierce and Hunsaker (1996) believe that long-term, effective school change is possible by establishing a common vision among teachers and administrators, and that teachers must become the agents of this change. Rather than providing students direct instruction in skills or teaching rote memorization of a body of knowledge, schools need to better engage students using sociocultural contexts for learning, offer choices to students, use inquiry learning, make use of real-world contexts for learning, and teach cooperative learning strategies.

Schoolwide literacy can be defined as the creation of a school where every student can read and write in order to learn and where the school culture values reading and writing as important aspects of language and communication. Developing these schools is not an easy task. In many schools, socioeconomic inequities and lack of adequate academic preparation have led to low levels of literacy where many students struggle with English as a second language, and numerous students suffer from learning disabilities that prevent them from being successful. Paynter (2000) argues that long-term literacy, language, and communication development for students occurs through a strong core curriculum, classroom literacy emphasis, and focused school experiences. School leaders need to insure all students have equal access to

high-quality curriculum, and that there is daily, schoolwide incorporation of literacy processes and strategies that help students learn (Taylor & Collins, 2003). The challenge of building schoolwide literacy is especially daunting in secondary schools, particularly high schools, where the fragmented, specialized nature of the curriculum and departmental structures result in teachers from different departments unlikely to talk to each other at all, especially about their shared role as reading teachers. The department walls must be broken down (Donahue, 2003). One way to do this is through the use of professional learning communities, which are discussed further in a later section.

Improving literacy involves first creating classrooms for literacy learning. Teachers must follow three essential components in order to impact student achievement: consistently incorporate literacy processes of reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and thinking; explicitly teach and incorporate literacy strategies; and require independent reading every day for which students are accountable (Taylor & Collins, 2003). DeLaney (2004) observed literacy improvements through the inclusion of such elements in a six-month study of an urban high school implementing reform with a focus on literacy. The school focused mainly on schoolwide writing, but a secondary element was the inclusion of more reading and the use of reading strategies. Despite the challenges the school faced, strong leadership, unity of purpose among the staff, and the concern of staff for students helped to build literacy and positively impact students.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach; since every school's staff is different and unique, each school needs to determine what programs and methods will work best. Lewis and Wray (1999) report the results of multi-site survey research which shows that while most secondary teachers acknowledge their responsibility for helping students with literacy and reading, they often do not know how to go about it. The research indicates the need for support and sharing of best practices inside of and between schools in order to support literacy across the curriculum. Teachers must be guided and supported in continuous learning about ways to combine teaching of literacy with content. Many secondary schools are beginning to implement programs to improve adolescent literacy, and key players are often literacy coaches, "master teachers who provide essential leadership for the school's overall literacy program" (Sturtevant, 2003).

Some schools have discovered the need to address the organizational structures and barriers that exist. Covey (2004) suggests that implementing comprehensive schoolwide literacy means that school leaders must "challenge every aspect of the existing system" (p. 35). Most schools still operate in an outdated mode with an inflexible schedule and traditional beliefs about instruction. Covey (2004) calls these "systems barriers" that are stumbling blocks to school leaders. Leadership for literacy requires that school leaders demonstrate their commitment through action, which includes allocating financial resources to literacy, allocating personnel, providing professional development, providing the best available learning tools for students and teachers, arranging space and infrastructure necessary to support literacy, and

maximizing the use of learning time (Taylor & Collins, 2003). Similarly, Biancarosa and Snow (2006) recommend both instructional improvements and infrastructure improvements as key elements in programs to improve literacy achievement.

Instructional improvements include direct comprehension instruction embedded in content areas, addressing motivation, text-based collaborative learning, strategic tutoring, diverse texts, intensive writing, use of technology, and ongoing formative assessment. The infrastructure improvements include extended time for literacy, professional development, ongoing summative assessment, teacher teams, effective leadership, and a comprehensive and coordinated literacy program.

Paynter (2000) suggests that schoolwide literacy improvement begin with a comprehensive needs assessment in order to gain an accurate, thorough picture of strengths and weaknesses of a school community. This can include collecting and analyzing achievement test scores and other performance indicators, and gathering information about teachers' opinions, parental input, and student status indicators. Schoolwide reform must include a whole-school focus on changing teaching and learning, providing highly-qualified staff and excellent professional development that includes training and hands-on demonstration (Paynter, 2000). McEwan (2001) presents principals with seven steps to effective instructional leadership in literacy: 1) establish clear instructional goals, 2) be there for your staff, 3) create a school culture and climate conducive to learning, 4) communicate the vision and mission of your school, 5) set high expectations for your staff, 6) develop teacher leaders, and 7) maintain positive attitudes toward students, staff, and parents. However, Taylor and

Collins (2003) add a significant element to school leadership for literacy. They recommend the formation of a collaborative literacy leadership team made up of administrators and teachers from all grades and content areas. This team must then identify needed data and evidence, gather and analyze the data, identify, prioritize and target individual students and groups, and identify individual teachers for literacy-related coaching.

While some districts have taken a top-down, district-mandated approach to secondary literacy, real reform takes place at the building level and happens through the efforts of teachers and staff, with strong leadership provided by the building principal and leadership team: “School improvement initiatives must be rooted in the school’s culture and climate and are better framed by a team of teachers in response to the challenges posed by the community and its students” (McEwan, 2001, p. xiii). Supportive leadership and teacher involvement are necessary, as well as the creation of an environment that accepts diversity and supports schoolwide literacy, which can be promoted through appropriate staff development (Denti & Guerin, 2004). Effective staff development involves a team-oriented approach to promoting literacy (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

In applying his theory of learning organizations to schools, Senge (1990) in his book *The Fifth Discipline* suggests that schools address these five disciplines:

1. Systems thinking (understanding patterns of thinking and how they can prevent change)
2. Personal mastery (individual capacity)

3. Mental models (ingrained assumptions and generalizations about the world)
4. A shared vision of the future
5. Team learning (teams who engage in dialogue and interaction to find new solutions).

Senge (1990) argues that schools must become learning organizations, places where people are continually expanding their capacity to create the results they desire, developing new patterns of thinking, and pursuing goals through learning together. The sociocultural structure of professional learning communities may help schools transform themselves into learning organizations. They have contributed to a new understanding that schools should be about adult learning as well as student learning (Thompson, Gregg, & Niska, 2004).

We can assume that, throughout the process of building schoolwide literacy and becoming learning organizations, shared-decision making is an appropriate approach. Leaders can work together to establish a professional environment, facilitate training, and emphasize collaboration. As lead teacher and lead learner in learning organizations, principals must move away from traditional, top-down leadership styles and create professional learning teams with the goal of developing people (Thompson, Gregg, & Niska, 2004). Sociocultural theory is important again here because each individual staff member has his or her own mental models and beliefs about teaching and learning. Teachers' diversity and the value of their lived experiences must be acknowledged, but in order for people to learn together, they need to be comfortable in challenging their own and other people's assumptions and beliefs (Thompson, Gregg,

& Niska, 2004). Professional learning communities can provide a safe place for this to happen.

Kezar (2000) cites research on participatory leadership models, which involve everyone being included and informed. The framework of positionality theory states, “positioned individuals possessing multifaceted identities within a particular context influenced by conditions of power construct leadership in unique (individual level) and collective (group level) ways simultaneously” (p. 727). The “positioned” individuals who allow for participatory leadership can be administrators, other school leaders, and individual staff members who bring diverse identities, viewpoints, and ideas to bear on the problem (Kezar, 2000). A comprehensive, qualitative study by Anderson (2004) showed that increasing shared decision making with teachers and greater teacher leadership were fundamental in the school improvement process, and become a means for coping with change more successfully. The study showed that, whereas formal leadership roles sometimes impeded the reform process, informal teacher leadership roles were more effective.

Content Area Literacy

Another primary method of impacting secondary literacy is through a schoolwide focus on content area literacy. Secondary content teachers are sometimes unaware of their own strategies as discipline-expert readers and feel unprepared to help students comprehend texts. These teachers are most likely to think that reading instruction or use of reading strategies takes time away from teaching the content, which is the most common argument against content area reading (Donahue, 2003).

Vogt and Shearer (2003) also acknowledge many content teachers' unwillingness to focus on literacy and suggest that approaching adolescent literacy from a sociocultural perspective can help content teachers. It is also necessary to explore certain teaching styles which are compatible with best practices in literacy instruction. Teachers need to reconceptualize their notions of teaching in their subject areas, to recognize that they are teaching reading and writing specific to a subject area (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Reading specialists or literacy coaches may need to carefully consider the overall culture of the school and norms followed in certain content areas in order to help teachers address literacy effectively in their content areas (Vogt & Shearer, 2003).

Cooperative learning strategies and contextualized learning experiences are ways to build upon the sociocultural nature of learning in the classroom and increase student motivation (Donahue, 2003). Boyd (2002) reports findings showing that participation in cross-aged literacy discussion groups contributes to key aspects of motivation for struggling students including perceived self-competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Struggling high school students often need more contextualized learning experiences. Donahue (2003) also suggests the transactional approach which posits that meaning comes through the interaction between reader and text within a particular context. This approach helps students not only to develop metacognitive skills, but also make connections to themselves, other texts, and their knowledge of the world. Biancarosa and Snow (2006) also recommend text-based collaborative learning for students in secondary schools.

Sociocultural theory emphasizes language and social interaction and provides a framework to explore the principles that guide motivation and literacy learning among struggling students (Boyd, 2002). Vygotskian sociocultural theory is guided by three principles: 1) higher psychological functions are social and cultural in nature, 2) knowledge is constructed through interactions among individuals in a social context, and 3) learning is fostered with the assistance of more knowledgeable members of the community (Vygotsky, 1978). Classroom activities and projects can be designed to include these elements. Students need to feel a sense of competence and autonomy and to make connections between literacy activities and the real world. Options and choices as well as multiple opportunities to read, write, and talk about texts can help improve students' literacy. All these can be accomplished in a sociocultural context (Boyd, 2002).

Lenski and Nierstheimer (2002) point out that reading and writing strategies are sometimes developed intuitively by students or learned through direct instruction, but comprehension strategy instruction for struggling students should make use of best practices, grounded in sociocognitive theory, which also capitalizes upon the social context to promote learning. Sociocognitive strategies are the tools that readers and writers use to process and produce text. Good instructional strategies include whole group, small group, and individual instruction that provides supportive scaffolding. Shared reading and whole-group mini-lessons in a workshop setting are examples, in addition to cueing systems, strategies for self-monitoring reading, and before-, during- and after-reading strategies (Lenski & Nierstheimer, 2002). Social interactions

influence students' thinking as they develop skills in their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Teachers' use of strategy instruction, in the role of the more knowledgeable adult, and consideration of the sociocultural context and social interaction in the classroom, can help students develop strategy usage and improve their learning (Lenski & Nierstheimer, 2002). Just as students need scaffolding and support in learning literacy, teachers need to engage with their colleagues in a sociocultural context to learn new skills themselves. A sociocultural group can provide scaffolding for their new content area literacy teaching skills, until they are capable of demonstrating independence and helping others become independent (Sanacore, 2000; Biancarosa & Snow, 2006).

Schoenbach, Braunger, Greenleaf, and Litman (2003), through their work with middle and high school teachers in WestEd's Strategic Literacy Initiative, have helped teachers recognize the need to teach discipline-specific approaches to reading with an approach called Reading Apprenticeship. (Reading Apprenticeship is the secondary literacy program used by District One in this study.) The goals of the program are to make discipline-specific reading processes clear to students, help students gain insight into their own reading processes, and help students acquire problem-solving strategies for deepening comprehension. The instructional framework of Reading Apprenticeship involves raising awareness of the social, personal, cognitive, and knowledge-building dimensions of reading in the content areas (Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko, & Hurwitz, 1999).

Many teachers and scholars have also wisely observed that literacy in the modern world means much more than learning how to read and write. Content area literacy has been defined too narrowly. Students today must be able to effectively use oral language, phones, pagers, computers, e-mail, the internet, and develop literacy in art, music, drama, film, video games, and other digital forms. Bean, Bean, and Bean (1999) argue that content area teachers, through careful lesson design, can bridge students' school, peer, and home cultures. For example, one science teacher engages students by connecting science topics to student interests outside of school. Content teachers must "move away from a dependence on didactic, text-bound models of teaching that place adolescents in passive roles" (p. 447) and better bridge the gap between students' lives outside and inside of school. A sociocultural perspective can help us to view literacy as a social and not merely a cognitive process. Sociocultural factors such as gender, race, class, and family background influence how literacy is used by students, and also affect their academic achievement and identity development (Bean, Bean, & Bean, 1999). Teachers who broaden their notions of literacy will recognize that all students have and use multiliteracies. This can, in turn, help content teachers tap into students' ways of learning by widening the range of instructional methods.

Taylor and Collins (2003) note that literacy behaviors are processes students use in reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and thinking: "High performing teachers regularly incorporate each of these literacy processes in their instructional plans to help students develop both the vocabulary related to a particular unit of study

and an overall comprehension of that curriculum” (p. 42). What strategies and methods can teachers learn in order to help improve student literacy? Direct instruction in comprehension strategies can improve literacy and help students make significant improvement. Most students with poor reading skills need in-class learning strategies and accommodations to improve their academic performance (Denti & Guerin, 2004), and there are a number of proven-effective comprehension strategies teachers can use as appropriate to their content area.

Teachers need a repertoire of usable and practical strategies, opportunities to experience the strategies in use, and ongoing support and encouragement in actually putting them into practice (Rose, 2000). A good place for teachers to start is by building on their own metacognitive awareness of their reading. Next, teachers need to explicitly model for students the strategies they use in reading content material. According to Brozo and Simpson (1999) teachers must demonstrate comprehension processes to all students, but especially minority and second-language students; however, teachers must first become aware of and be able to describe their own thinking and understanding so that students can understand and imitate. Metacognitive awareness is necessary in comprehension and must be modeled for students. Teachers can make explicit to themselves and their students the strategies they use to make meaning from text in their particular disciplines, which includes the multiple dimensions of sociocultural contexts for reading: social, personal, cognitive, and knowledge-building (Donahue, 2003).

One of the most important comprehension strategies teachers can use is tapping into and building upon students' prior knowledge about the subject matter (Braunger & Lewis, 2006). If students do have prior knowledge, they often don't know how to access it. Reciprocal strategies help students learn to question, predict, summarize, and clarify their understanding (Rose, 2000). But content teachers often need training and support in order to develop the necessary expertise to use this strategy. Research clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of strategy instruction in reading. Alfassi (2004) conducted two sequential and interrelated studies to examine the usefulness of combining two different models of reading strategy instruction: reciprocal teaching and direct explanation. Her findings suggest that use of multiple or combined strategy instruction is beneficial to students by providing them with tools that help them engage in higher-order thinking processes while they are learning from textual material, even for heterogeneous groups of students.

Ridgeway (2004) reports on her unique experience as a high school science teacher who, through a staff development program in content area reading, learned to use content area strategies with her students, thus improving both her own teaching and her students' learning. She notes the gradual nature of change for teachers, remarking that it took her several months to abandon the lecture and notetaking methods she previously used in favor of more interactive strategies. In addition, it took her several years to develop the knowledge necessary to choose appropriate strategies for specific courses and material. Her conclusion is that it takes time and requires ongoing support to change teachers' teaching strategies. Like many teachers, she came

to realize that semantic mapping, feature analysis, graphic organizers, and think-writes, among other strategies are “powerful tools for engaging students in learning” (Ridgeway, 2004, p. 368).

Guided reading and reading recovery programs are other types of supportive reading instruction that provide students with scaffolding consistent with sociocultural theory. Lenski and Nierstheimer (2002) recommend that teachers teach students how, when, and why to use a variety of strategies with an emphasis on learning a whole repertoire of strategies. Further, all teachers need to learn to teach students supportive and appropriate strategies for comprehension so that students can learn through “purposeful literacy experiences” (p. 141).

Adult Learning Theory and Professional Development

Adult Learning

Effecting organizational change in promoting schoolwide literacy suggests that schools must become learning organizations where not just students, but everyone, adult and adolescent, is a learner; therefore, adult learning theory is an important area of focus in this study. Tennant and Pogson (1995) note that there are two domains of theory in adult development: development of intellectual and cognitive functions; and the development of personality and social roles. Initial theories assumed a “stability model” in which adult development remained the same once adulthood was reached, or a “decrement model” which assumed that cognition gradually decreases in adults. However, contemporary theory rejects both these models and proposes a model of intellectual and cognitive growth during the adult years, suggesting that adults are not

incapable of change, nor do they experience cognitive decline as they grow older. In fact, adults continue to develop intellectually and gain new knowledge and skills (Tennant & Pogson, 1995).

Development for adults is based upon their expertise in dealing with concrete problems and work situations. New forms of thinking and reasoning come in the course of adult life tasks, so the capacity to utilize experience for learning and gaining new expertise is a major focus of adult learning (Tennant & Pogson, 1995). Bean (2004) notes that working with adults requires understanding the nature of adult learners and how to make learning accessible to them. This includes minimizing anxiety and respecting their knowledge and experience. Teachers need to be respected as self-directed learners and professionals who draw upon their life experiences and diversity. School leaders can facilitate sharing of ideas and strategies in collaborative, sociocultural contexts, in order to help teachers recognize and cope with their changing roles in today's society. In order for teachers to continue to grow and experience fulfillment in their work, they must build their capacity and learn new ways of teaching, new strategies and methods.

Adult learners also seek moral autonomy. Partridge (1979) asserts that autonomy means freedom of choice (the absence of coercion), rational reflection, and strength of will. Adult educators will want to approach their teaching in a way that promotes situated autonomy among students. Tennant and Pogson (1995) cite research showing that experience is a distinguishing characteristic of adult learning. Teachers can capitalize on this by linking explanation and illustrations to prior learning

experiences, current life experience, or community roles. Active participation works equally well with adult learners as with younger students. The following processes trigger adult development: reflection upon experience, working with peer groups on issues or problems, exposing learners to ambiguity or conflict, recognizing learner achievement, placing students in situations requiring new responses and action, and providing freedom from internal and external constraints and anxiety (Tennant & Pogson, 1995).

Cheren (2002) identifies five important assumptions about adult learners: 1) They have an independent self-concept and are self-directed, 2) They have a reservoir of life experiences which is a rich resource, 3) Their learning needs are closely related to changing social roles, 4) They are problem-oriented and interested in immediate application, and 5) They are motivated by internal rather than external factors. The teacher-learner relationship is especially important; because they are adult peers, general consensus is that adult learning should be participative and democratic, characterized by openness and respect. Also, adults who are learners in one context are teachers in another. Thus, issues of dominance, dependency, and control are applicable to adult learning. There are also political, philosophical, and psychological dimensions in the teacher-learner relationship. The teacher as the ultimate source of knowledge is destructive in adult learning, as is the teacher as authority figure. Teachers of adults should be neither too malleable nor too rigid and nonnegotiable (Tennant & Pogson, 1995). Boreham and Morgan (2004) propose a sociocultural model which views dialogue as the fundamental process through which organizational learning takes

place. This happens through “relational practices” that sustain the dialogue even in potentially conflictual situations. When adults learn collectively, as happens in the context of professional learning communities, in order to work toward organizational goals, they achieve autonomy and build relationships with others.

Vygotskian theories of learning and development stress that learning happens in a social context, which is central to the social construction of meaning. Sociocultural theories view learning from an interactionist perspective. The social community influences how we think, produce knowledge, and develop shared understanding (Alfred, 2002). Alfred (2002) notes that early cognitive theories assumed “a cognitive core of knowledge and skills [that] exists in the mind of the individual, independent of context and intention” (p. 4). However, in recent years, learning theories have shown that learning is much more complex than just individual engagement. The interactionist perspective challenges the Eurocentric, individualist view that has been dominant in adult learning theory (Alfred, 2002). Teaching is an individualistic profession, where teachers have complete control and autonomy in the classroom context of their work, especially at the secondary level. Building a collaborative context in which teachers can work together to learn and improve their practice is a difficult change, but is vitally important. Secondary schools can encourage school improvement by building upon these social contexts to facilitate adult learning.

Packer and Goicoechea (2000) also propose that learning involves becoming a member of a community, constructing levels of knowledge as a participant, taking a

stand on the culture of the community, and overcoming estrangement and division: “learning entails both personal and social transformation” (p. 228). Adult learning involves “enculturation” including learning the jargon, behaviors and norms of a social group and adopting its belief system in order to be a member. Identity is closely linked to participation and learning in a community, for both children and adults (Packer & Goicoechea, 2000).

Packer and Goicoechea (2000) present several themes of sociocultural theory as they relate to adult learning:

1. The human individual is not a natural entity but is a social and historical product
2. Formation and transformation occurs only in social contexts
3. The relation between context, people, and things is sustained through practical activity
4. The person is formed in the human relationships that practical activity sustains
5. The person engaged in activity in a social context is split from him or herself
6. The person strives to achieve identity by transcending division.

Learning is only sustained through ongoing social interaction with a larger group. In terms of professional development and teacher learning, the research clearly indicates that real change and growth can best be achieved in collaborative contexts such as professional learning communities.

In order to promote schoolwide literacy, effective professional development programs that meet the needs of adult learners must be put into place in secondary schools. Vogt and Shearer (2003) argue that teachers must be expected to adopt new

methods and implement new approaches. This involves influencing not only teachers' knowledge, but their attitudes, biases, and even the culture of the school. Swafford (1998) notes that "many teachers recognize that the skills they developed in the past are no longer sufficient to meet their students' diverse needs. They see a need for change and seek opportunities to develop their knowledge and repertoire of effective instructional practices" (p. 54). Professional development programs need to provide ongoing and on-site support for teachers to help them implement new teaching methods: "Even content teachers who have fully accepted the concept that helping students develop better reading and communication skills is their responsibility may have only a very limited idea about how to put this type of instruction into practice" (Sturtevant, 2003, p. 10). Taylor and Collins (2003) present a five-step model for literacy-focused professional development: 1) Identify desired results, 2) Determine who will participate in professional development, 3) Identify components necessary to achieve the desired results, 4) Plan for implementation of the school literacy plan, and 5) Determine how success will be recognized.

Staff development is most commonly done through the inservice method, where teachers are presented information during one-time workshops and inservices often with guest presenters. Usually, there is little or no follow up or any expectation of implementation. Vogt and Shearer (2003) refer to these one-time professional development activities as "drive-in inservices." They suggest applying social constructivism to professional development. If we are expecting students to develop and learn constructivist practices, these same practices must be modeled for teachers.

Rather than professional development conveying knowledge, teachers and administrators should collaborate with each other to make sense of teaching and learning; they must be involved in the curriculum and organization of the school as full stakeholders (Vogt & Shearer, 2003).

Teachers, as adults, also need to have the freedom to make choices in their professional growth. Taylor and Collins (2003) recommend follow-up sessions for all staff development, including study groups, action research, peer coaching, and sharing sessions. These elements can all be effectively organized through professional learning communities. Vaca and Vaca (1989) describe staff development programs in literacy that involve teachers in “planned change.” When staff members understand the critical importance of new learning, they will want information, and will be willing to question their own beliefs and come to a better understanding of themselves. They may sometimes need to rely on the experience of expert practitioners, but a community of learners who rely on each other can be developed. It is also important to promote collegiality and focus staff development on personal goals (Vaca & Vaca, 1989).

The National Center for Research on Teacher Learning also states several conditions necessary for teachers to learn new teaching techniques. Teachers need opportunities to work with colleagues, the support and advice of the principal, and observation in their classrooms by those other than administrators. They also need to be part of a larger learning community, to develop new understandings of the subjects they teach and their roles in the school, to critically assess their own practice, and the

time and space to become involved in long-term process of change (What Makes for Good Staff Development, 1999).

Joyce and Showers (1988) are well-known for their many years of research and work with professional development. They have analyzed the characteristics of good staff development programs and found that good programs are focused on student learning, they are comprehensive, they demand collaborative relationships between teachers and school leaders, they change the beliefs and practices of teachers, and they include cycles of theory, demonstration, practice, and feedback. Several conditions must also exist for teachers to experience new learning, including adequate training, opportunities for collegial problem solving, building norms that support experimentation, and organizational structures that support learning (Joyce & Showers, 1988). Pierce and Hunsaker (1996) present several similar axioms about professional development: it should be generated on an individual school basis, it requires a school culture supportive of informed practice, it takes considerable time and long-term effort, it must involve teacher ownership, it must be focused on student outcomes, and it must be designed so that program goals can be clearly stated and measured.

The research clearly shows that good professional development builds a vision of teaching as collaborative and directly related to teachers' everyday work in their content areas (Hirsch & Sparks, 2000; Joyce & Showers, 1988; Vogt & Shearer, 2003). Effective staff development is not an independent act accomplished on the teacher's part, but a collaborative one, in which individuals are connected to and

become an integral part of the whole school community, participants in the change process (Hirsch & Sparks, 2003). The benefits of collaboration are that teachers respond to each other, respect each other, and collaboratively solve problems (Walpole & McKenna, 2004). Again, professional learning communities can be used to accomplish this goal.

One common barrier to effective staff development is the often-frantic pace of secondary schools and lack of time. Regular time for collaboration, discussion, and decision-making on a regular basis is needed. It is important for staff members to have time for collaboration and collective decision making. The development of study groups is one means of implementing change. Coaching partnerships also validate that teachers can learn from other teachers and share the process of learning new techniques in a sociocultural context. Staff development must be a “collaborative, growth-producing activity” (Joyce & Showers, 1988, p. 25) for which adequate time on a regular basis must be provided.

Professional Learning Communities

Many schools, K – 12, are developing professional learning communities (usually referred to as PLC’s) as a way to improve student learning through adults committing themselves to collaborative discussion about teaching and learning, and then taking action to improve student achievement (Thompson, Gregg, & Niska, 2004). PLC’s are programs of continuous, structured teacher collaboration groups in which members focus on improving the quality of their teaching and the academic performance of their students (DuFour, 2005). Much of the research reviewed thus far

has demonstrated the importance of collaboration and teacher participation in school improvement and literacy programs. Professional learning communities are a promising method of achieving this goal. PLC's are in some contexts called Critical Friends Groups, which help those "involved with schools to work collaboratively in democratic, reflective communities" (Bambino, 2002, p. 25). Critical Friends Groups usually receive training in team building, peer observation, and techniques for analyzing student work. Group activities include setting learning goals, sharing lesson plans, analyzing student work, watching videotapes of their classrooms, and discussing outside readings (Olson, 1998).

DuFour (2005) states that "the professional learning community model flows from the assumption that the core mission of formal education is not simply to ensure that students are taught but to ensure that they learn" (p. 12). Professional learning communities analyze data, discuss, collaborate, and find ways to improve student performance and ensure that all students in the school are learning. *Breaking Ranks II* makes recommendations regarding collaborative leadership and PLC's, one of which states: "A high school will regard itself as a community in which members of the staff collaborate to develop and implement the school's learning goals" (NASSP, 2004, p. 62). They recommend interdisciplinary teams which meet at least once a week.

Teamwork is foreign to most secondary teachers, who are used to working alone and who are, to some degree, evaluated by their success at working alone in their classrooms. Despite research in cooperative learning and its benefits for students, such collaboration is seldom ever considered among teachers (Vogt & Shearer, 2003).

Yet teamwork and the sociocultural context it provides can help schools solve long and short term problems and bring about change. It can enhance teachers' knowledge, ownership of their work, and empowerment through the collaborative context that helps everyone improve their knowledge and capacity. These groups also provide structures for teachers to improve their own teaching and that of members of the group. This may include study of particular lessons and assignments, asking questions, making observations, and brainstorming solutions to problems (Bambino, 2002). Teachers facing the pressure of incorporating literacy strategies into their teaching may be, as Vygotsky (1978) would likely have noted, outside of their zone of proximal development. The support of the professional learning community and the sociocultural context it provides can provide scaffolding for teachers to build on their previous knowledge about teaching and learning and their content areas and help them learn new skills and techniques.

Moll (2000) conducted ethnographic research on teacher study groups, similar to professional learning communities, which served as "mediating structures" to help teachers think about classrooms and their work. Teachers reported that the study groups were central to their development and also their understanding of the relationship between teaching and research. Moll (2000) points out that these settings serve as Vygotskian "cultural devices" for thinking and learning that have a huge potential impact on teacher learning and development.

In a sociocultural context, relationships are vitally important to the well-being of every person in the school community. A mixed method study by Thompson,

Gregg, and Niska (2004) showed that relationships and trust were vital components of PLC's. The study also showed that Senge's (1990) five disciplines, among other components, all contributed to student learning. Educators in PLC's will come to recognize the importance of the collaborative context and come to view their work as collaborative. They are likely to recognize that their goal is to achieve the collective purpose of learning for all. PLC's create structures that promote this collaborative culture (DuFour, 2005). In line with sociocultural theory, educators in PLC's become part of a diverse learning team whose goals and results come through the interaction among members working toward a common purpose. *Breaking Ranks II* states that the goals of PLC's include learning from one another, collectively studying student work, sharing articles and other professional resources, providing moral support and encouragement, exploring problems, analyzing data, using collective decision making (NASSP, 2004).

Riley and Stoll (2004) note that PLC's involve growing "a learning culture which nurtures trust and relationships and encourages collaboration and teamwork and in which staff take responsibility for their own learning, both formal and informal" (p. 35). Thompson, Gregg, and Niska (2004) observe that reciprocity is the foundation of PLC's. Purposes and goals grow from the dialogue of the participants, based on the values, beliefs, and experiences of both individuals and the collective group. PLC's are based on research showing that teachers learn best from other teachers in settings where they teach each other, not from outside experts, attending conferences, or programs put in place by outsiders (Schmoker, 2005). Many PLC's involve their

members in reading articles and books and functioning as study groups. They encourage reflection, inquiry, sharing, and dialogue. Teams must be given a lot of leeway to establish their own rules, norms, and procedures (Thompson, Gregg & Niska, 2004), and the process should not be negative or threatening (Bambino, 2002). Most teachers who have worked in these teams find the process useful and note that the groups provide a feeling of community which is rare in large schools (Olson, 1998). Most importantly, PLC's judge their effectiveness on results and the recognition that improving student achievement is the work of everyone in the school (DuFour, 2005).

Peer Coaching

An older but highly effective approach to professional development is peer coaching. Peer coaching originated in national movements to improve education and teaching in the 1950's, yet many of the early efforts focused on academic quality were ineffective in transferring into teaching practice (Showers & Joyce, 1996). Peer coaching was further refined and developed in the early 1980's by Joyce and Showers (1988) and has been commonly used in many schools to help teachers gain new skills and provide them with supportive feedback. Teachers who participated in peer coaching incorporated new strategies more frequently as well as retaining them long term (Showers & Joyce, 1996). Peer coaching still holds promise for schoolwide literacy through providing collaborative partnerships in which teachers can practice new techniques and strategies, and can both receive and provide feedback. Swafford (1998) states that peer coaching involves teachers supporting other teachers as they

practice and reflect on new teaching methods in order to meet the needs of today's more diverse learners. Professional learning communities can also be used to facilitate peer coaching programs.

Joyce and Showers (1988) explain peer coaching and its key principles:

The coaching relationship is simply a partnership in which two or more people work together to achieve a goal. Visiting one another as they practice, they learn from observing the other person and particularly by watching the students' responses to the cognitive and social tasks that are presented to them. They discuss how to help the students respond more powerfully and how and where to apply their new skills. (p. 94)

In coaching, each teacher learns by watching and teaches by demonstration. Coaching must always be a partnership, rather than criticizing or evaluating the other person's teaching (Joyce & Showers, 1988). Peer coaching programs should also build on the sociocultural context of the school environment. Personal experiences and peer interactions were reported in survey research as the most effective source of personal growth and development. These supportive communities require transformations in the structure of the school environment. They meet the need for reducing teacher isolation in school work environments by providing opportunities for teachers to work and learn together (Hall & McKeen, 1991).

Pierce and Hunsaker (1996) also recommend peer coaching programs and describe the necessary elements in order for effectiveness. Peer coaching programs must: train teachers in observation and feedback skills, build team cohesiveness, develop action plans for each team member, establish peer observation cycles, provide formative feedback after each observation, and evaluate performance against previously set goals. All teachers in the school are usually assigned to teams with three

or four members. Observations sessions are conducted during which data is collected which can help individual teachers evaluate their success (Pierce & Hunsaker, 1996). These peer coaching methods can provide support for teachers when they are implementing new instructional practices such as literacy and reading strategies. Coaches can provide three kinds of support: procedural or technical, affective or emotional, and reflective. The affective support is important to reassure teachers when they have doubts about their effectiveness. Overall, the process can successfully bring about change in teachers' practice (Swafford, 1998). Schools that have reading specialists are fortunate because the specialists can offer much to the peer coaching partnerships, including expertise, ideas, and instructional approaches for teaching reading. They can also provide invaluable help to new teachers (Vogt and Shearer, 2003).

According to Pierce and Hunsaker (1996) peer coaching "increases collegiality, enhances each teacher's understanding of the concepts and strategies, and sustains the restructuring effort by strengthening ownership of the changes" (p. 104). Effective peer coaching is based on sensitivity and caring as well as good skills in listening and responding (Vogt & Shearer, 2003). Based on their research, Joyce and Showers (1988) advocate the use of peer coaching in order to implement school reform and impact student learning. They note that coaches help teachers transfer content from training into practice in several ways and that coached teachers practice new strategies more frequently and develop greater skill, use their new strategies more appropriately, show greater long-term retention of knowledge and skill with strategies,

are much more likely to specifically and deliberately teach new models to their students, and show a higher level of cognition of the purposes and uses of the new strategies.

A study by Swafford (1998) shows that in order for peer coaching to be effective, both administrators and teachers must be committed to the peer coaching process, participation must be voluntary, training in observation and conferencing must be in place, time must be provided during the school day for teachers to observe and conference with each other, the coaching must be non-evaluative and non-judgmental, and peer coaching must happen in an atmosphere of trust, respect, and collegiality. Swafford 's (1998) study indicates that post-observation conferences should occur soon after the observation, that conferences with more experienced peers were most useful, and that frequent observations, at least once a month, are needed. She also recommends that observations should begin early in the school year. Hall and McKeen (1991) report on two peer coaching program models that were part of an organizational development intervention. They found that with both models, peer coaching had a positive influence on the working environment of the school. They offer no data suggesting, however, positive influence on student academic performance.

Overall, peer coaching is a strategy which, if continued and further implemented in secondary schools, may help to improve the knowledge base and increase the repertoire of strategies for content area teachers. Literacy leaders and coaches can also serve as resources in the peer coaching process, and professional

learning communities might also be used to facilitate programs of peer coaching for teachers.

Literacy Coaching

A more recent and promising approach to literacy leadership and content area reading and writing is known as literacy coaching. Literacy coaching at the secondary school level is just beginning to gain widespread attention (Toll, 2005). Literacy coaching has been defined by several different practitioners. The term refers to instructional improvement positions held by classroom teachers who have expertise in content area literacy and who are relieved from teaching in order to promote and support literacy instruction through work with other teachers (Symonds, 2002). The International Reading Association (IRA) (2006) defines literacy coaches as master teachers who provide leadership for the school's literacy program with the main goal of assisting content area teachers "in addressing the reading comprehension, writing, and communication skills that are particular to their disciplines," including promoting changes in instruction, improving staff capacity in using data, and directly supporting teachers with demonstrations, observations, conferencing, and small group learning (p. 7).

Poglinco and Bach (2004) identify literacy coaches as experienced teachers who provide instructional support, professional development, feedback, and materials to classroom teachers in order to improve instruction and build the capacity of teachers. Blachowicz, Obrochta, and Fogelberg (2005) state "the coach's major role is to provide professional development and support to teachers to improve classroom

instruction” (p. 55) which may include school-wide professional development and in-classroom training, demonstrations, modeling, support for new methods, and coaching feedback. Likewise, Toll (2005) defines the literacy coach as “one who helps teachers to recognize what they know and can do, assists teachers as they strengthen their ability to make more effective use of what they know and do, and supports teachers as they learn more and do more” (p. 4). Symonds (2002) notes that coaches help teachers transfer new knowledge into instructional practice; in addition, they help promote equity by providing expertise to teachers of struggling students, who are often inexperienced or less-skilled teachers.

Because teachers must make solid professional decisions based on their students’ needs and ability levels, as well as curriculum requirements, they need support and guidance to learn ways to combine teaching of their content and literacy. Literacy coaches can provide this help (Sturtevant, 2003). Symonds observes that “coaching breaks through the isolation that traditionally characterizes teaching and gives teachers the structured support they need to change their practice” (p. 4). According to Rainville and Jones (2008), literacy coaching means bringing out the best in individual teachers, inspiring them to change both their thinking and their teaching. Bean (2008) identifies several important assumptions about literacy coaching in secondary schools: 1) it is job-embedded, ongoing, and related to specific teacher needs; 2) it is an interactive process involving inquiry; 3) it occurs in cultural contexts; 4) it is an effort to build school capacity to promote change; and 5) it is cooperative, collaborative, and collegial.

For many years, reading specialists have played an important role in schools, most commonly elementary schools, but also to some extent in secondary schools. In their position statement on the role of the reading specialists, the IRA (2004) stresses that the reading specialist has a dual role of working with struggling readers and helping teachers improve instruction. Darwin (2003) also studied the role of high school reading specialists, finding that the role, although complex, focuses primarily on helping teachers. Some use the terms “reading specialist” and “literacy coach” interchangeably, and there is some overlap in their responsibilities, but literacy coaching goes beyond the traditional role of the reading specialist and focuses attention on changing instructional practice. Dole (2004) observes that whereas reading specialists traditionally work with students, literacy coaches work directly with teachers as coaches and mentors. They support teachers in their daily teaching by providing help with planning, modeling, team teaching and providing feedback. The overlap exists in that they both serve as building literacy leaders and support improved student achievement. The difference is that reading specialists work primarily with students, literacy coaches primarily with teachers (Toll, 2005; Sturtevant, 2003).

It is not easy to clearly describe the role of the literacy coach, and the roles and responsibilities are often tailored to the needs of the particular school. Vogt and Shearer (2003) note that the specialists or coaches themselves often have difficulty defining their roles. They are in a position where they are expected to implement changes, yet do not have administrative authority; they discover that coercion does not work but shared leadership and collaboration do; they must inspire teachers to buy into

the vision of schoolwide literacy and help them discover their potential, yet they often face resistance. Despite the confusion, there are several commonalities in literacy coaching programs across the country, as identified by Sturtevant (2003): coaching is often part of a larger system of professional development and support for teachers; coaches are selected based on their knowledge, skills, and ability to gain the respect and trust of colleagues; support for coaches is ongoing; coaches support but do not displace teacher knowledge; and funding is provided. The IRA (2006) recommends that coaches function primarily as vehicles for professional development, focusing on increasing the skills and knowledge of teachers and administrators.

A few districts have literacy coaches working in all district secondary schools. In some they hold full time positions and in others part-time. The role of coaches also varies from school to school, including coaching of individual teachers and groups of teachers, observing classrooms, and locating resources and information for teachers. They commonly work with teachers in all disciplines and, in some schools, work mainly with teachers who have the most struggling students (Symonds, 2002). In San Jose, a large California district, high school literacy coaches' roles in building leadership vary from school to school. One coach describes her role as that of an intermediary between administration and teachers. One principal released a teacher needing support for one period a week to work with the literacy coach. Some coaches keep logs of their activities. Each school turns in literacy reports to the superintendent (Symonds, 2002). This particular district has ten high schools, four of them labeled as under-performing. The district has large percentages of minority students and seven of

the schools are Title I funded. All ten schools have literacy coaches to support teachers in implementing effective literacy strategies across the curriculum. Most of the coaches are former high school English teachers, and some are reading specialists and ELL teachers. All have more than ten years of teaching experience (Symonds, 2002).

Based on her work with the Bay Area School Reform Collaborative, Symonds (2002) makes several recommendations for implementing literacy coaching program: prioritize and align funding; develop a clear job definition; communicate the rationale behind coaching; structure coordination with principals; focus on literacy coaching in the strategic plan; provide professional development in research-based strategies to coaches; structure collaborative time during the school day; keep coaches closely connected to the classroom; and continually assess and communicate effectiveness.

Dole (2004) observes that the lack of research on literacy coaching makes it more difficult for administrators and specialists to make decisions about how to use literacy coaches. Many decisions must be made, including who is qualified to be a literacy coach, how their time should be spent, whether they should do professional development with groups of teachers or work only with individual teachers, and how much demonstration they should do as opposed to team teaching and direct observation.

Based on their research of the coaching model, Poglinco and Bach (2004) isolate several important themes and insights:

1. Teachers respond well to in-class coaches if coaches are proficient in a variety of techniques.

2. Although teachers may receive regular professional development, it does not usually result in changes in instructional practice.
3. Some teachers cannot use instructional guides provided because they don't understand how to change instructional practice.
4. There is a need to forge stronger connections between professional development activities such as coaching and performance standards.
5. Principals must enter into a partnership with coaches if the coaching model is to be successful.
6. There is often ambiguity about the coaching role and the relationship of the coach to teachers and school leadership, which can hinder their effectiveness.
7. The most important role coaches play is helping teachers change their instructional practice.
8. Being an effective teacher is no guarantee that one will be an effective coach.

Part of the ambiguity of the role of literacy coach and its particulars is due to lack of agreement on what role the literacy coach should play, but perhaps even more important, disparity in their qualifications from state to state (Coaches, 2004). Bean (2004) states that coaches will need to make conscious decisions about how to function in their positions based upon teachers' skills, the coach's skills and knowledge, and the context. The International Reading Association published a position statement on the role and qualifications of reading coaches in 2004. It notes that although reading specialists take on many roles, the balance of their activities has moved away from direct teaching and toward leadership and professional development

roles. Darwin (2003), however, argues in favor of the open-ended job description of the reading specialist, which often enhances the role. She also observes that personal preferences of each specialist or coach define the role, standards influence their work, and the culture of each school impacts the role of the specialist.

The IRA (2004) identifies three major functions of the reading coach: instruction, assessment, and leadership. The IRA's five minimum qualifications are: coaches are excellent teachers of reading at the level of their coaching; they have in-depth knowledge of reading processes, acquisition, assessment, and instruction; they have expertise working with teachers to improve their practice; they are excellent presenters and group leaders; and they have experience and preparation that enables them to model, observe, and provide feedback about instruction. Bean (2004) also notes that coaches frequently help teachers administer, interpret and use assessment data, in addition to conducting professional development. The IRA (2004) recommends that coaches have several years of outstanding teaching, substantial graduate level coursework in reading, and training in presentation, facilitation, and adult learning: "Reading coaching is a powerful intervention with great potential; however, that potential will be unfulfilled if reading coaches do not have sufficient depth of knowledge and range of skills to perform adequately in the coaching role" (p. 8). Teacher education programs also do not yet have programs in place to adequately train coaches and specialists in the skills necessary for their work (Coaches, 2004).

In 2006, the IRA published *Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches*, which was intended to complement the 2004 *Standards for Reading*

Professionals. It was published in partnership with the National Council of Teachers of English, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, National Science Teachers Association, and the National Council for the Social Studies. The document addresses both literacy and content area knowledge and skills necessary for literacy coaches. The leadership standards specify that content area literacy coaches are skillful collaborators, skillful job-embedded coaches, and skillful evaluators of literacy needs. The content standard is that literacy coaches are skillful instructional strategists who can develop and implement instructional strategies to improve academic literacy in specific content areas. The core content standard is then followed by specific performance indicators for each of the four core disciplines of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Some agreement on the qualifications of an effective literacy or reading coach does exist. Coaches need to have a solid repertoire of techniques to call upon, a requirement that should be stipulated in their job description (Poglinco and Bach, 2004; Bean, 2008). Effective coaches must have more reading expertise than the teachers they are coaching, must be effective teachers themselves, must be reflective about their instructional practice, must be able to articulate what they see in the classroom, must both support and nudge without placing too much stress on teachers, must be able to plan and organize quickly, and must have a sense of humor (Dole, 2004). Similarly, Bean (2004) and Toll (2005) list the coach's qualifications as an in-depth understanding of literacy, effective teaching ability, ability to work with adults, and excellent interpersonal communication skills. However, the range and subtlety of

skills necessary in coaching are greater than merely a set of credentials; coaches must have a strong content base in literacy theory and practice, lots of teaching experience, must know how to teach both adults and students, and must be good team leaders (Coaches, 2004).

Literacy coaching is also a highly-collaborative role: “Successful coaches must be viewed by teachers as advisors/mentors who understand their goals, frustrations and vision—not as supervisors who evaluate their performance” (Sturtevant, 2003, p 12). Teachers need to be able to view the reading coach as someone who is supporting and guiding, but not evaluating them (Dole, 2004; Bean, 2008). At Santa Teresa High School in San Jose, literacy coaches call their observations “visitations” in order to prevent any suggestion of the coach’s role being an evaluative one (Symonds, 2002). In many schools, literacy coaches are also expected to have the knowledge and skills necessary to provide professional development in their schools, which is often difficult for literacy coaches, usually former teachers, who suddenly have a new role and relationship with their colleagues and peer group (Walpole & McKenna, 2004). Successful literacy coaches must also be willing to make “a substantial and permanent commitment to their own learning” (Walpole & McKenna, 2004, p. 3). It has also been noted that literacy coaches must have an understanding of the dynamics of change processes including change focused on behavior, attitude, cognition, inquiry, systems, and culture, because they may work with colleagues who have a number of different perspectives (Toll, 2005).

The range of specific roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches is definitely wide. Walpole and McKenna's book, *The Literacy Coach's Handbook: A Guide to Research-Based Practice* (2004), although written from an elementary school perspective, offers useful information applicable to secondary literacy coaches as well. They note that the literacy coach may be a grant writer, a school-level planner, a curriculum expert, a researcher and a teacher. Reading or literacy coaches often observe teachers in their classrooms and give them feedback about their teaching. This requires building positive rapport with teachers so they are comfortable inviting the coach into their classrooms. Some coaches implement a single program or initiative in the school, some are assigned to coach new teachers or those on plans of assistance, some work with individual teachers, some work with the entire school staff, and some do all of the above. The role of the coach is dictated by what changes are desired (Toll, 2005). Bean (2008) identified several common coaching activities: co-planning, co-teaching, meetings with groups, modeling/demonstrations, planning and organizing, assessing students, instructing students, outreach work, visiting classrooms, conducting professional development, participating in professional growth activities, and performing administrative tasks.

Teachers may be more likely to change their practices when coaches come into their classrooms and model instructional techniques. This requires the coaches to be proficient in a variety of techniques: modeling, joint lesson planning, co-teaching, observation and feedback, one-on-one conversations, and mentoring of new teacher (Poglinco & Bach, 2004). The feedbacking and networking that coaches provide must

also go on over time, as coaches help teachers to think and reflect on their practice (Coaches, 2004). Sturtevant (2003) notes that literacy coaches recognize the need for effective, continuous, ongoing staff development and contribute to it by leading literacy teams, guiding teachers in strategy use, serving as a liaison between teachers and administrators, and providing expertise. Which teachers receive coaching may also vary: some focus on the teachers of at-risk students, some work with individual teachers as recommended by the principal, and most offer their services to the entire staff, adding to their coaching loads as the year continues. They also most frequently work with teachers in the core areas of English, social studies, math and science, and one-on-one coaching is more common than coaching in a collaborative group (Symonds, 2002). Literacy coaching at the middle and high school level is also much different from elementary models because the focus is on content area knowledge. Secondary coaching should involve helping teachers develop an understanding of the teaching and learning cycle, learning to assess students, and using the assessment data to plan appropriate instruction (Buly, Coskie, Robinson, & Egawa, 2006).

In many schools, literacy coaches run into the difficult challenge of trying to change a school's culture. Toll (2005) notes that coaches can't change school culture by themselves; the entire staff must be committed to change, and the principal must provide leadership for change. In approaching individual teachers, literacy coaches need to frame the work in terms of what teachers want to accomplish with their students. This goal-oriented approach avoids teachers feeling singled out and in need of being "fixed" by the literacy coach (Toll, 2005). One possible discussion starter is

the following, recommended by Toll (2005): “When you think about the kind of reading and writing you want your students to do, the kind of literate lives you want students to have, the kind of classroom you want to have, the kind of teaching you want to be able to do, what gets in your way?” (p. 46). Based on their experiences in a Chicago-area school district, Blachowicz, Obrochta, and Fogelberg (2005) suggest six coaching process strategies: connect to current practice of teachers, choose generative practices such as flexible grouping or fluency instruction, establish your credentials by locating and organizing literacy materials, make student learning the focus, use a repertoire of coaching strategies, and use videotaping of strategies as a teaching tool.

Garcia-Guerra (2001) studied the coach-teacher relationship involved in “content coaching” as used to describe those coaches who work directly with teachers to implement activities to improve teaching and learning of content material. The study found that the coaching relationship was influenced by internal factors such as the knowledge, skills, and personal characteristics of each individual, and external factors such as the specific context and culture of each school. Toll (2005) stresses that in the beginning of the coach-team relationship, the process is more important than the content. The objective is to establish processes and relationships for working positively together and to help the group identify and agree to some core values: listening, focusing, taking, action, and problem solving. Toll (2005) also recommends that the coach take a middle-ground approach and honor the range of perspectives and practices that exist among school staff. They need to meet all staff members with interest and enthusiasm. Getting a good start is essential in order for coaches to work

successfully with individuals and small groups. Many coaches are asked to work with small groups of teachers or facilitate team meetings, which necessitates being able to honor various levels of participation, address disagreements positively, address competing claims or sources of disagreement by sharing research, and address issues of conflict between group members (Toll, 2005). This type of group facilitation might also occur in the context of professional learning communities. Some coaches have team meetings with grade level groups, unit groups, or groups based on interest or need. They encourage collaboration and make good use of time by sharing information with several teachers at once (Toll, 2005).

Coaches may also be asked to establish leadership teams to review assessment data and develop literacy goals for the school. They attend professional development trainings and bring ideas back to their schools. They conduct and facilitate in-service trainings, assist teachers in overcoming problems that arise in selecting and implementing strategies, provide a link between teachers and administrators, and help to solve conflicts (Sturtevant, 2003).

Literacy coaches may need to first establish a positive climate for observation in order to successfully work with teachers. Walpole and McKenna (2004) make the following suggestions: never link professional development to evaluation, never make documentation public, make sure prior to an observation that the teacher understands confidentiality; give the teacher an opportunity to tell you what he or she wants you to see; and tell the teacher exactly how the observation will be conducted and how they will receive feedback. Toll (2005) encourages literacy coaches to have individual

conferences with teachers on a regular basis. These discussions should be conversational in nature and involve the use of a conference record sheet to take notes as well as remind the coach of the contents of the conference. Literacy coaches also make use of modeling in two major ways: they model outside the classroom in small group and large group sessions; and they model in the classroom, teaching students while individual teachers or groups of teachers observe (Walpole & McKenna, 2004).

It is obvious that the role of the literacy coach is a challenging one due to the many facets of the job and the number of obstacles that can stand in the way of success. Bean (2008) presents several guidelines for coaching based on her work with secondary school coaches: identify what is non-negotiable, develop relationships built on trust, offer opportunities for choice, maintain confidentiality, provide support not evaluation, work with all teachers, begin with the willing, differentiate based on individual needs, and know yourself (your own beliefs about teaching, learning, and instruction). Toll (2005) notes that the goal of literacy coaching should be to promote change focused on inquiry, which takes time and commitment. However, most coaches find their work highly rewarding because “inquiry is a catalyst for teacher reflection and because inquiry guides teachers to make instructional decisions based on a range of data” (Toll, 2005, p. 21). In addition, it promotes collaborative problem solving in a sociocultural context.

According to Poglinco and Bach, (2004) adopting coaching models without considering their complexities may not provide positive results. Literacy coaches face a great challenge when they were previously a staff member at the school where they

are coaching, because their relationships with their peers may change, and their prior knowledge of some staff members may stand in the way of productive efforts (Toll, 2005). In addition, teachers' attitudes and the obstacles they face may become roadblocks to effective work with the literacy coach. One of the most difficult aspects of coaching may be working with teachers who are ineffective or struggling. Walpole and McKenna (2004) note that coaches must first acknowledge and capitalize on what teachers already know and do well. Coaches should start with teachers' assets rather than their deficits, and they must communicate to the teachers in "authentic and sincere ways" (p. 227). Another challenge is dealing with teachers who are resistant to working with the coach. Toll (2005) suggests that coaches should willingly tackle this challenge because we can learn the most from those resistant teachers. Understanding why some dislike the literacy coaching model will help the coach better explore new approaches, learn other perspectives, and learn about the values of others. In other words, coaching helps all types of educators to better understand each other and find shared values. Bean (2008) recommends working first only with willing teachers and waiting for those who are resistant to become more comfortable with collaboration.

Despite its many challenges, literacy coaching shows a great deal of potential for schoolwide literacy improvement. Literacy coaching has an effect on school culture through encouraging collaboration and growth, it supports significant change unlike many staff development models, it promotes reflection and decision making for teachers, it honors adult learning and supports it in a variety of ways, and it leads to increased student achievement (Toll, 2005). Symonds (2002) also notes the growth of

collaborative teacher culture in which teachers are willing to go outside of their comfort zones and become receptive to change. In addition, literacy coaching serves to increase equity through support of teachers of at-risk students, improve communication between teachers and district leaders, and increase teacher leadership capacity (Symonds, 2002). The Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse was recently established as an online source of information, networking, and resources for literacy coaches across the nation (www.literacycoachingonline.org).

One of the problems with literacy coaching is that, despite its current promise and large amounts of money being invested by school districts in coaching programs, there is little research that demonstrates a correlation between coaching and student achievement. Rainville and Jones (2008) note that while there is a growing interest in research in literacy coaching, it “does not sufficiently explore the complexities that people in such positions must negotiate” (p. 440). Only a handful of research studies, qualitative or quantitative, in literacy coaching have been conducted. Qualitative information from the San Jose high schools indicates that teachers, coaches, administrators, and district personnel all reported noticeable changes in instructional practice and better engagement of students as a result of literacy coaching (Symonds, 2002). Schuster (2004) conducted a quantitative program evaluation in a large Midwestern school district to analyze balanced professional development opportunities and teachers’ participation in literacy coaching. The study found that literacy coaching made a positive difference in student achievement on both criterion-referenced and norm-referenced measures, which was more significant for writing

than for reading. Also, this difference was not affected by school and student demographic factors. Participants' reactions were positive, and new learning was implemented in the classroom. The study concludes that literacy coaching holds great promise for improving student literacy achievement regardless of demographic factors.

Smith (2007) conducted an observational study of three middle school literacy coaches in order to study how the work of coaches may change depending upon the particular middle school context. The researcher found that several factors impact a coach's work including being assigned to multiple schools which limits a coach's time, block scheduling which limits the coach's ability to visit classrooms, and negative school climate which undermines the coaching process. Smith (2007) also found that principals have a great deal of power in determining a literacy coach's role. Despite factors that may limit the coach's work, Smith (2007) suggests that coaching can be highly effective if focused on teachers' instructional needs.

Rainville and Jones (2008) conducted a study to investigate how literacy coaches work to "negotiate their varied identities in ways they felt were most beneficial to the relationships they were cultivating as well as for their long term goals" (p. 441). They found that literacy coaches must wield power in several ways, positioning themselves variously as experts and as co-learners. They conclude that literacy coaches benefit from maintaining informal relationships with teachers, and that if the coach can skillfully shift identities, they can effectively influence teachers to change their practices.

Despite a minimal amount of research to date, literacy coaching is still one of the most promising recent models for increasing teacher learning, improving teachers' instructional practice, and improving students' academic performance. Literacy coaching can contribute to:

a vibrant school culture, in which teachers are actively motivated to work together to pursue new knowledge, take risks with their practice by learning about, trying and sharing new research-based strategies, ask questions regarding their effectiveness and adjust practice based on student performance, [which] will both attract and foster excellent teachers. (Symonds, 2002, p. 7)

Rationale for Further Research

Change does not happen easily in schools, particularly secondary schools. However, one element that may have the most significant impact on school change and reform is a deliberate, schoolwide focus on literacy (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). Roadblocks that impede change are systems barriers, largely related to teachers' experience, philosophies, and behaviors. The lack of time, large class sizes, and large total numbers of students make teachers' work challenging. Added to these challenges is the traditional nature of school curriculum, where lecture is needed to convey large amounts of knowledge, where success is measured by results on high-stakes testing, and where both teachers' and administrators' long-held beliefs impede reform (Sturtevant, 2003). Professional learning communities, peer coaching, and literacy coaching programs demonstrate significant promise for effecting substantial reform in secondary schools.

While professional learning communities and literacy coaching appear to be promising innovations in professional development, further research is needed.

Darwin (2003) calls for further research to examine the role of reading specialists in order to understand the extent of the influence of school culture on the role, and to further explore the role of these specialists or coaches at the middle school level.

Other areas of research needed include studies of the benefits to students: does student academic achievement increase due to professional development in literacy for content area teachers? (Sturtevant, 2003). Evaluative studies of literacy coaching programs and professional development programs involving administrators, teachers, students, parents and the community are also needed. In addition, our knowledge base can be expanded by studies with research designs that explore different coaching models, the multiple aspects of coaching, and the results of schoolwide literacy reform in traditionally resistant secondary school cultures (Sturtevant, 2003).

The IRA (2006) notes that in light of No Child Left Behind policies and the achievement gap among secondary students, it is not prudent to wait for a body of empirical research on literacy coaching to be completed. They suggest that research begin with studies of the practice of coaching as it exists today and with questions that are most important to the current practitioners. The following are some of the types of research in literacy coaching recommended by the IRA (2006): experimental studies to assess the effectiveness of coaching on school performance with a number of variables; observational studies of coaching activities that would provide descriptive data; teacher and administrator survey research before and after the implementation of coaching models; case studies of coaches who are successful as well as those who face resistance; systematic study of variation across schools in the implementation of

coaching programs; studies to assess the impact of coaching on student learning, teacher learning, and school climate; and research on particular coaching strategies, which content areas they are most useful for, as well as what types of students they are most useful for.

The Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse Advisory Board (2006) identified several important research questions focused on literacy coaching: 1) what types of professional development are most effective for literacy coaches and the teams they serve? 2) what supports need to be in place for literacy coaches to be successful? 3) what are the characteristics of highly effective literacy coaches? 4) what professional qualifications, prior experiences, and training are related to success in the coaching role? 5) how can we better define what it means to be a literacy coach through the experiences of teachers being coached? 6) in what domains is the impact of literacy coaches the greatest: student learning, teacher learning, or school climate? 7) what are the characteristics of successful literacy coaching programs?

(www.literacycoachingonline.org)

More empirical evidence is obviously needed to demonstrate that coaching leads to specific desired outcomes, including the improved reading performance of students, as are descriptive studies to identify the characteristics of effective literacy coaching (Bean, 2004). Sturtevant (2003) believes that the future of literacy coaching is promising, yet the task of placing literacy coaches in all middle and high schools is an enormous one. First of all, the number of coaches needed would be in the tens of thousands in order for one coach to work with every twenty classroom teachers.

Second, quality must not be sacrificed in the desire to hire a large number of coaches, because these individuals must have a very strong knowledge base in literacy theories and teaching strategies in order to be provide leadership. There is also considerable concern about the expense of hiring large numbers of literacy coaches, and the potential impact of large numbers of outstanding teachers leaving the classroom to serve as literacy coaches. However, for the sake of adolescents most at risk of dropping out of school or not seeking a college education due to poor literacy skills, and their potential impact on the economic and social future of the nation, literacy coaching programs must be expanded nationwide (Sturtevant, 2003).

Conclusion

Improvement in schoolwide literacy can come as a result of a dual focus: a whole-school organizational leadership approach, and a classroom- and teacher-focused approach. Whole school reform efforts focused on literacy may help close the achievement gap and improve learning for all of our students. Elements of this whole school reform might include professional development programs such as professional learning communities, peer coaching, and literacy coaching. The sociocultural contexts that these approaches incorporate and engender can help improve the learning of both teachers and students and can bring about significant secondary school reform and improvement. Guided by the rationale presented here, this study includes analysis of programs of professional development and literacy leadership in secondary schools, particularly the roles of literacy leaders and coaches.

CHAPTER THREE: APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative, multi-site, comparative case study of two medium-sized school districts in Western Oregon and their approaches to promoting secondary school literacy. The study describes and analyzes forms of literacy leadership at both the district and school level, explores professional development methods used, analyzes the incorporation of sociocultural structures in professional development, and analyzes and describes the roles of literacy leaders and coaches. The study made use of a variety of methods of data collection and analysis, including interviews, document analysis, and field observations, and also incorporated elements of program evaluation in order to assess the effectiveness of each district's approach to secondary literacy.

This study gave me the opportunity to describe, analyze, and compare two different school districts' approaches to literacy learning in secondary schools, to explore elements of district and building leadership, literacy leadership and coaching, and to consider how adult learning theory and sociocultural theory play a role in school reform. The research questions addressed include: 1. What district-wide programs and practices are used to promote literacy in secondary schools? 2. What roles do literacy leaders and coaches play in promoting literacy? 3. What practices have had the greatest impact on teacher instruction and student achievement?

Data collected include interview data, documents related to school and district literacy leadership programs, and field notes from observations at a number of school sites, three in each district. Data was analyzed by segmenting and coding of data, using both open coding and axial coding, in order to identify major themes.

A Qualitative Approach

This section articulates the reasons for choosing a qualitative approach for this study. Cresswell (1998) notes that the strongest rationale for a qualitative study is “a documented need in the literature for increased understanding and dialogue about an issue” (p. 94). As indicated in the previous chapter, further understanding of how literacy leadership happens in secondary schools and its level of effectiveness is needed. Two specific definitions of qualitative research guided the study. Cresswell (1998) defines qualitative research as “an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (p. 15). Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2003) state:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. (p. 4-5)

Because qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings and attempt to interpret some phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them, this approach was an appropriate means of understanding how literacy leadership happens in schools. The study provided me with the opportunity to go into schools to observe and explore the work of literacy leaders and coaches. I was able to see how professional development for literacy is implemented at the individual school sites.

Qualitative studies address the interpretive process, based on the view that meaning is shared by members of a particular group or society, rather than reducing meaning to a set of statistical relationships among variables (Travers, 2001). Qualitative inquiry is a legitimate means of social and human scientific exploration “without apology or comparisons to quantitative research” (Cresswell, 1998, p. 9). Qualitative methods are associated with interpretive intellectual traditions such as phenomenology, symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology, which stress the dynamic nature of social reality, rejecting the positivist notion of reality grounded in the objective or tangible. They seek to understand social reality through the eyes of those being studied (Devine & Heath, 1999). Schwandt (2003) notes that qualitative researchers share a set of commitments: they are highly critical of scientism or positivism as the source of all knowledge, and they believe that cognitive elements in understanding others cannot be achieved through logical empiricism. Because the focus of this study was on process and meaning, a qualitative approach was preferable to a quantitative one.

Several features of qualitative research make it a challenging approach that requires careful consideration by the researcher, which was proven true by this study. Schwandt (2003) notes that since qualitative research is based on a profound concern with understanding what other human beings are doing or saying, it requires defining what understanding actually means, determining how to frame the project, and attending to ethical issues in terms of the researcher’s role and responsibilities. Janesick (2004) recommends a simple approach of asking two questions: What do I

want to know? What set of techniques do I need to find out what I want to know? I attempted to answer these two questions at the outset of the study and allowed them to guide my planning and research. Qualitative research also requires the researcher to be willing to commit to extensive field research, engage in the complex nature of data analysis, write lengthy passages to show multiple perspectives, and in general, commit to the ambiguous nature of research that does not always have specific guidelines and procedures (Cresswell, 1998).

Qualitative research also requires personal involvement in the context because the researcher is also the research instrument. The researcher works in a natural setting where he gathers words and pictures, uses inductive analysis, focuses on meaning, and describes a process expressively and persuasively (Cresswell, 1998; Meloy, 2002). Because I was studying literacy leadership processes in schools, those individual schools provided the natural setting to gather data in order to analyze processes of literacy leadership. During the data collection period, I spent time in several different school settings, interacting with literacy leaders, teachers, and principals, and had the opportunity to reflect on my observations. Gubrium and Holstein (2003) note the importance of paying attention to naturally occurring talk and social interaction as constitutive elements in the particular settings studies. Interviews and observations conducted in this study allowed for recording of conversation and interaction, and they are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Another challenge in this qualitative study was the writing, which became itself a means of discovery and analysis during the research. Richardson (2003) notes

that the researcher discovers new aspects of the research topic and his or her relationship to it in the process of the writing, which I found to be accurate. My researcher's notebook provided not only a log of my activities and important catalogues and lists, but also allowed for constant analysis and reflection during the course of the data collection. Perhaps Meloy (2002) best sums up the unpredictable and challenging nature of qualitative research:

Unlike the systematic progression of selecting a particular design and following the formulas for generating significance, the image of progress in qualitative research is more like one of those crazy clocks, the hour and minute hands of which revolve sometimes clockwise, sometimes counterclockwise, sometimes together, and most often in opposition, so that movement forward is not comfortingly, logically visible. (p. 145)

A Case Study Approach

The general methodological approach followed in this study is case study method. Case study is defined as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context, "especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2003, p. 13). The case study explores a bounded system or systems over time, using multiple sources of information (Cresswell, 1998). It can involve several programs or a single program. This study can best be described as an *instrumental case study*, the study of an issue or issues with the cases used to illustrate the issue. When more than one case is studied it is called a *collective or multi-site case study* (Cresswell, 1998). Therefore, this study can be referred to as a *collective, instrumental case study*. The issue of study here is

secondary school literacy leadership, and the districts and schools as units of study provided the specific sites.

While the general approach is case study approach, Creswell (1998) notes that an overlap exists between ethnography and case study. Ethnography examines a cultural system, whereas a case study examines a bounded system. While the methods may be ethnographic, in the case study, focus is on a smaller unit such as a program, event, activity, or individual. Case studies are used extensively in social science research, both the traditional disciplines and practice-oriented fields. They are also increasingly common in evaluation research. It is the preferred method when “how” or “why” questions drive the study, when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon in a real-world context (Yin, 2003). Stake (2003) also notes that the case study is defined more by the interest in the individual case or cases, a bounded, integrated system, not the methods of inquiry used. In this study, the contemporary phenomenon of literacy leadership was examined in the individual districts and schools studied, each with its own organizational culture.

Case studies are typically organized around a small number of research questions that address issues or themes. Stake (2003) recommends that if evaluation is included, the questions must address issues that reveal strengths and shortcomings. Case studies are beneficial when we want to understand an individual, group, organization, context, or phenomenon (Yin, 2003). In this case, the goals were to understand particular phenomena in particular contexts and also to incorporate some elements of evaluation.

Stake (2003) identifies three types of case studies:

1. *Intrinsic case*—where the researcher wants to better understand the particular case.
2. *Instrumental case*—where the case is studied to provide insight into an issue or to draw a generalization.
3. *Collective case*—a study of a number of cases in order to investigate phenomena.

Considering these definitions, this study is both collective and instrumental, the purpose being to understand how literacy leadership happens in different districts and schools.

For case studies, theory development is an essential part of the design. These theories may involve individual development, group theories, organizational theories, or societal theories (Yin, 2003). Case studies are generalizable to theoretical propositions, not to populations or universes. The goal is to expand and generalize theories. They do not necessarily, like other forms of research, depend solely on ethnographic or observational data (Yin, 2003). “Case studies are of value for refining theory and suggesting complexities for further investigation, as well as helping to establish the limits of generalizability” (Stake, 2003, p. 156). In this study, both individual development and organizational theories came into play with the focus on both individual learning and organizational structures.

Stake (2003) notes that when there are multiple cases of interest, it can be useful to compare them, although the main focus of the study may not be the comparison. This study involved multiple cases in two separate school districts, not necessarily for the purpose of comparison, but more for what could be learned from

two different approaches to secondary literacy. While it is difficult to trust conclusions drawn about differences between cases, how a phenomena occurs in several different exemplary cases can provide valuable knowledge, which was the goal of this study. Yin (2003) also notes that evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling and robust. Some researchers choose a case as a revelatory case, when there exists the opportunity to observe and analyze a phenomena previously inaccessible (Yin, 2003). Since both districts in this study make use of literacy coaches or literacy leaders at all secondary schools, the opportunity to study their roles and their work presented itself.

Since the study is multi-case, the report contains multiple narratives for individual cases followed by a separate section for cross-case analysis (Yin, 2003). Cresswell (1998) notes that case studies require the widest range of data collection methods in order to create a detailed, in-depth picture of the case. Case study researchers, according to Yin (2003), must be able to ask good questions and interpret the answers, be good listeners, be adaptive and flexible, have a firm grasp on the issues being studied, and remain unbiased or free of preconceived notions. Data collection is complex and difficult and must be done well if the study is to be a valid one. Case studies rely on multiple sources of evidence triangulated, with the theoretical propositions of the study guiding the collection and analysis of the data (Yin, 2003). Yin (2003) identifies six sources of evidence: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observation, and physical artifacts. This study involved use of a variety of documents, interviews, and direct observation.

Data collection procedures for this study are further detailed in a later section of this chapter.

This study was challenging and time consuming, requiring me to spend extended time on site and in contact with the individuals and operations of the case, as recommended by Stake (2003). The study design was modified in minor ways by new discoveries during data collection, which Yin (2003) notes can be enormously important, “leading to your altering or modifying your original design” (p. 55). In general, the preliminary approach laid out in the proposal was followed and provided adequate, rich data that allowed for thorough analysis.

Study Sites and Cases

Stake (2003) observes that nothing is more important than choosing appropriate cases to study. The cases should represent some population of cases and represent some phenomenon at large. The cases provide opportunity to study the phenomenon. Drawing a purposive sample and building in variety is also important. In this study, the cases were two medium-sized school districts which represent fairly typical secondary school populations, and the phenomenon was literacy leadership at the district and school level. The researcher should select typical cases, but favor those that offer some particular opportunity to learn. In some cases this may mean the case that is most accessible and with which we can spend the most time (Stake, 2003). My rationale for the selection of cases is presented in the next section.

Two medium-sized school districts

The cases studied included two medium-sized school districts, with layered units of study within each district. One district is larger than the other, although they are both similar in student population, and the communities each serves have similar population and demographics. District One serves approximately 11,000 students in 25 schools. There are 1,400 employees. Twenty-two percent of students are minority students, primarily Latino, and 18 percent of the total enrollment receives special education services. There are 750 students who are English-language learners. Fifty-six percent of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch, with some schools as high as 91 percent. SAT scores in District One are lower than state and national averages in reading and writing, with 34 percent of students tested. For 2006-07, Statewide Assessment scores in reading indicate 59 percent of grade 8 and 61 percent of grade 10 students meet or exceeded the standard. In writing, 43 percent of grade 7 students and 48 percent of grade 10 students met or exceeded the standard.

District Two serves 39,000 students in 66 schools. There are 3,500 employees. Fifty-six percent of students are white, 27 percent are Hispanic or Latino. Sixteen percent of students are limited English proficient and speak 29 different languages. Twelve percent of students receive special education services, and 10 percent are talented and gifted. Thirty schools receive Title I funding, and 43 percent of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch. In 2006-07, Statewide Assessment scores in reading indicate 63 percent of grade 8 and 63 percent of grade 10 students met or exceeded the standard. In writing, 50 percent of grade 7 and 55 percent of grade 10

students met or exceeded the standard. Three high schools in District Two have received a large federal grant to implement school reform. Both districts have similar numbers of high schools and middle schools, and both have programs in place targeting literacy instruction in secondary schools.

In both districts, the district approach to literacy was studied, one unit of analysis being assistant superintendents or other personnel in central administration who oversee literacy programs. Three schools in each district were then selected, the second unit of analysis. The individual school approaches to literacy allowed for studying a variety of school-based approaches to literacy learning and professional development. The individual school literacy leaders or coaches were the final unit of analysis. The two districts selected for this study were purposefully chosen because they are comparable in terms of size and student population, and they both have in place secondary literacy programs. They represent typical cases, but also offered particular opportunities for research because both district have literacy coaches or leaders who work in each secondary school. They are also both easily accessible to me as the researcher, which was also a factor in the selection of the districts.

Purposeful Sampling and Maximal Variation Sampling

Purposeful sampling, or criterion-based selection, refers to particular settings being deliberately selected to provide information that cannot be gotten from other settings. The researcher should try to achieve representativeness of the settings, capture heterogeneity in the population, examine critical or extreme cases, or choose cases to establish comparisons (Maxwell, 2005). The selection of school sites for this

study was based primarily on representativeness and heterogeneity of student population. Maximal variation is a sampling strategy to represent diverse cases and multiple perspectives, in order to observe common patterns (Cresswell, 1998). Individual schools and literacy leaders were chosen in order to capture a variety of types of programs, methods, and schools. In this study, the widest possible variety of schools and individuals was used in order to learn as much as possible about how literacy leadership operates in the two districts. The criteria for the selection of individual schools were that school sites must reflect different areas of the city, must reflect various socioeconomic levels so as to include schools with culturally and linguistically diverse students, and they must include both high schools and middle schools. These selection criteria allowed for study of how schools with various student populations make use of literacy coaching and other literacy resources provided by the districts. They also allowed for exploration of questions such as: Is literacy coaching more useful for teachers with large numbers of particular student populations? District officials were informed of these criteria and asked to provide suggestions for appropriate school sites. They were also asked to assess their knowledge of the work of the literacy leaders or coaches in the individual schools. For example, some school sites were chosen because the particular literacy leaders were known to have particular methods of working with staff members in their respective schools. This strategy helped add to the richness of the data collected.

I currently work as Teacher Leader and Literacy Leader in one of the districts to be studied. Although I did not select my own school as a study site or study my

own role as literacy leader, my knowledge of the different schools and literacy leaders and my positive working relationships with them helped provide valuable information for making decisions about school site selection. My lesser knowledge of schools and school cultures in the other district necessitated spending some additional time in this district.

Once the particular schools in each district were identified, I began working with the literacy leaders or coaches in the particular schools. They were asked to identify one teacher in the school for me to interview according to the following criteria: 1) They must be someone whom the literacy coach has worked with directly through coaching, classroom observation, modeling, or conferencing, and preferably some combination of all of these, and 2) The experience of the teacher in working with the coach may have been either positive or negative. Teachers whose experiences were negative may have provided valuable discrepant evidence to add to the meaningfulness of the data; however, no literacy leaders recommended teachers with whom they had not had positive experiences. The two principals interviewed, one in each district, were chosen based on my identification of the particular school where the literacy coach had worked most closely with the principal.

Obtaining Permissions from Gatekeepers

Prior to beginning this study, I secured permission from the research gatekeepers in each district. Research gatekeepers are those district administrators who approve and oversee any research study done in the district. Usually, these individuals control access to all data, and in some cases serve as testing and assessment

coordinators. The gatekeepers approve any research project conducted in the district, whether internal or external. In District One, the research gatekeeper was a district-level research committee made up of administrators and teachers. In District Two, the research gatekeeper was the district Testing and Assessment Coordinator. Maxwell (2005) notes that the relationships developed with the participants in the study are an essential part of the methods, since it is necessary to gain access and negotiate entry. It was important for me to establish a positive, working relationship with the research gatekeepers and a number of district and school leaders in each district. I began this process by contacting appropriate district officials in each district: the curriculum director in District One and the district literacy specialists in District Two. These individuals referred me to the research gatekeepers in each district and also assisted in identifying individual schools in which to collect data. My involvement in each district was participatory and collaborative, which ultimately generated knowledge useful to both the participants and myself.

Receiving Institutional Review

Institutional review was completed prior to undertaking the study. Permission was obtained from the research gatekeepers at each school district prior to any data being collected. In addition, the Human Subjects Research Review was completed and submitted to the Graduate Studies Office at Portland State University for review by the Human Subjects Research Review Committee and the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects. Approval was received in early 2007 and the one-year data collection period began in March of 2007 and was renewed in March of 2008.

Study Design

The study design is as follows. The study began in April of 2007 in both districts with information collected from the assistant superintendent, curriculum director, or district literacy specialist in the form of interview data and relevant documents. Three schools in each district were selected to serve as specific study sites. The purposeful sampling of school study sites was done with the goal of achieving as much variety as possible in types of schools and programs. Interviews and observations of building leaders, literacy leaders, and teachers in the respective schools followed in order to gather rich data about their work. The data collection continued into the 2007-08 school year and was completed in May of 2008. Data analysis began shortly after data collection had begun. Figure 1 visually represents the study design.

Data Collection Procedures

Yin (2003) identifies six sources of evidence for case studies: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts. This study used the following sources of evidence: documents, interviews, and direct observation. *Documents* refers to letters, memoranda, communiques, agendas, announcements, meeting minutes, written reports, administrative documents, studies and evaluations, and media articles (Yin, 2003). *Interviews*, either open ended or focused, are discussions with informants who provide critical information related to the study (Yin, 2003). *Direct observations* can range from formal to casual

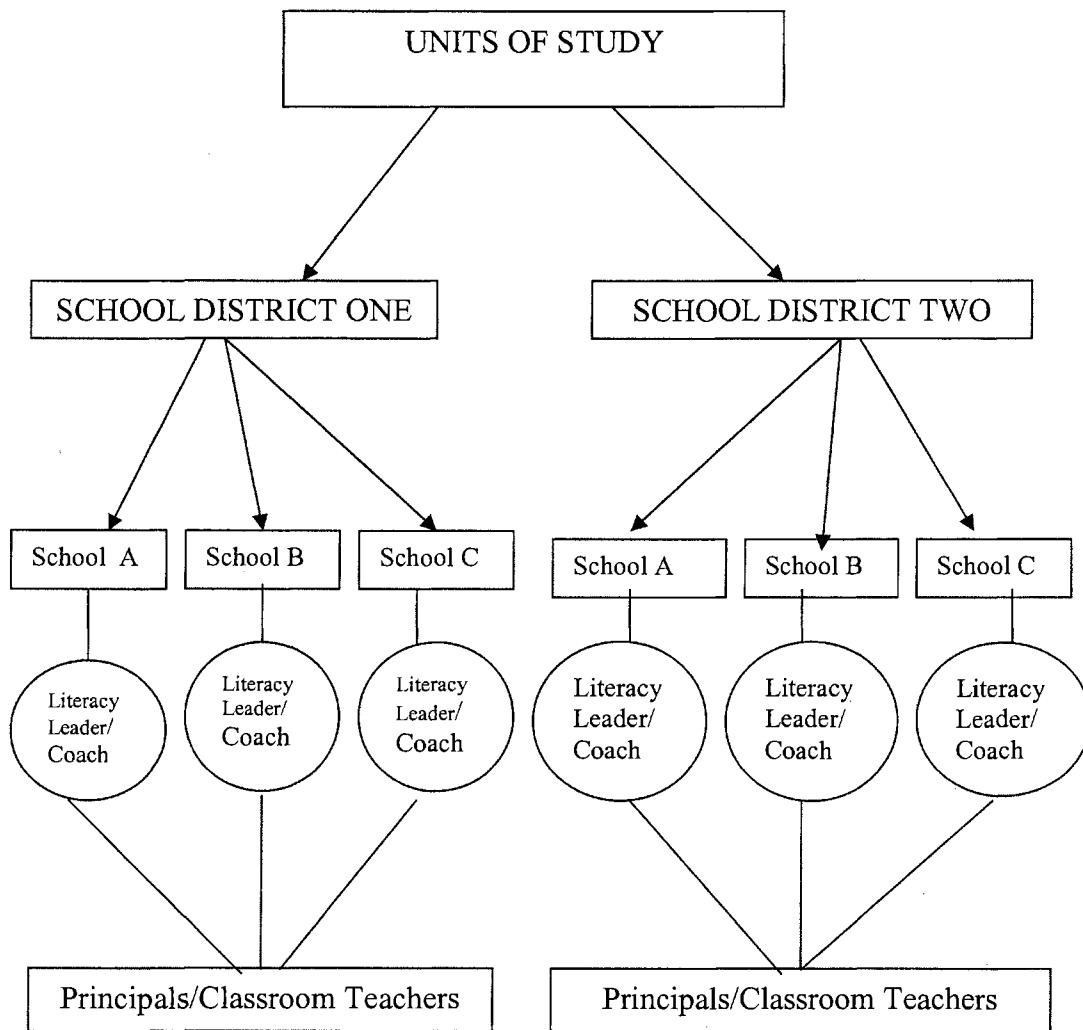


Figure 1: Study Design

activities in which data is collected; they can include observations of meetings, work groups, training sessions, or classrooms (Yin, 2003). As the primary research instrument, I was conscious of the need to be reflective and thoughtful about collection of the data and what it means, with a focus on local meaning, as recommended by Stake (2003). Having copies of the data and transcripts allowed me

to read and re-read them, reflecting on and analyzing the content, and considering them in light of actual school practices observed.

Classroom, meeting and conference observations

Maxwell (2005) notes that observation can enable the researcher to draw inferences about perspectives one could not gain by relying only on interview data. They can range from formal to casual. Observational protocols can also be developed to measure the evidence of certain types of behaviors during a period of time (Yin, 2003). This study included observations in a variety of settings including all of the following: observations of the daily work of literacy leaders or coaches, observations in meetings and/or training sessions, and a few observations in classrooms. Observation protocols were not used in this study because of the various nature of events and settings observed.

Angrosino and Mays de Perez (2003) suggest that there are different types of observations in naturalistic settings: descriptive observation, focused observation, and selective observation. *Descriptive* observation is a detailed observation of everything one sees; *focused* observation deliberately ignores some things and focuses on others; and *selective* observation concentrates on certain elements or activities. In this study, I depended largely on descriptive observation to generate rich data and some selective observation to focus on specific literacy-related elements.

It has long been recognized that the observer may have an affect upon the observed setting; therefore, it is important to follow rigorous standards of objective reporting in order to overcome possible bias (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2003).

Also, each observer brings his or her talents and limitations to the observation. The quality of what is recorded is the measure of usable data, rather than the quality of the observation itself. Recently, observers have had a greater degree of involvement and immersion in the setting or culture under study (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2003). Yin (2003) distinguishes between direct observations and participant observations. Direct observations are ones in which the researcher tries to remain a passive observer, as opposed to participating in the setting and activity. Yin (2003) notes that there are several potential problems with participant observations, including potential bias produced. The participant may end up manipulating the data and may not have time to take sufficient notes. Because of these issues, my general approach in conducting observations for this study was as a non-participant observer, engaged in carefully taking objective, detailed, descriptive field notes but participating in the setting and interacting with others as little as possible.

Descriptive and reflective field notes

Field notes were collected during meetings, conferences, training sessions, and observations. Field notes are defined as the descriptive and reflective notes and information collected in narrative form as a means of collecting data during direct observations. The descriptive and reflective notes provided detailed information about events and activities taking place, physical aspects of the setting, and the researcher's own reactions and learning (Cresswell, 1998). Several different types of field notes were collected during observations, as defined by Richardson (2003):

1. Observation notes: concrete and detailed

2. Methodological notes: notes about the processes
3. Theoretical notes: hunches, hypotheses, critiques, and possible alternative interpretations
4. Personal notes: uncensored feeling-statements about the research setting and purpose

Richardson (2003) also recommends the writing up of field notes as a means of expanding one's writing and thinking, fine tuning of the senses, and as "a bulwark against the censorious voice of science" (p. 529). For this research, the field notes taken by the researcher during observations were transcribed in narrative form to serve as a source of rich and detailed data for the study.

Semi-structured, audiotaped, fully-transcribed, one-on-one interviews

Case study interviews are often open-ended with key informants as interviewees, which are critical to the success of the case study. Key informants are defined as individuals who provide insights into the group and can steer the researcher to information needed (Cresswell, 1998). In this study, key informants were the district curriculum directors and literacy specialists who assisted in securing permission to conduct the research and providing contact information for other interview subjects. These informants often provide insights and suggest corroboratory or contrary evidence (Yin, 2003). Unstructured interviews are an open-ended form of interview, commonly used in ethnography. They are used to understand the behaviors of members in a society or group without imposing any categories or structure (Fontana & Frey, 2003). Another type of interview, as defined by Yin (2003) and

Fontana and Frey (2003), is the focused interview, where the respondent is interviewed following a certain set of questions or a protocol. In some cases the response categories may be limited and responses are coded according to a pre-established scheme (Fontana & Frey, 2003). Focused interviews were used for this study.

Once final permission to conduct the study was granted, an interview was conducted with a district official from each district (curriculum director or literacy specialist), interviews with literacy leaders or coaches at all six schools sites, interviews with one classroom teacher at each school site, and interviews with two principals, one from each district. I conducted focused or structured, rather than informal interviews following an interview protocol of predetermined questions, but also allowed for additional follow-up questions in order to elicit more detailed information. Fontana and Frey (2003) note that in structured interviewing, the interviewer plays a neutral role, never interjecting opinions. This approach requires being casual and friendly but also directive and impersonal. My interview approach was structured to meet the criteria of Fontana and Frey (2003), but also allowed for the possibility of additional ideas and themes coming up during the course of the interviews. I practiced the technique of interested listening, as recommended by Fontana and Frey (2003) and resisted the temptation to respond or comment on the information provided.

Interviews for qualitative research are generally tape recorded because we cannot rely on our recollections of conversation, and summarizing what is said may

not be adequate. Recording the interviews allows the researcher to study the audio recording and focus on the actual details, although Silverman (2003) argues that this is still an incomplete form of data, and that the idea of “completeness” may be as much an illusion as the idea of a perfect transcript. The interviews for this study were digitally audiotaped and fully transcribed so as to allow for greater focus on details and meanings in the data. Because transcriptions became part of the researcher’s data, the transcription process itself was “a selective process reflecting theoretical goals and definitions” (Ochs, 1979, p. 44). The selectivity that one exercises when transcribing interviews should not be random, but should reflect the interests and goals of the researcher (Ochs, 1979). Transcription can impact the way that participants are understood, the information they provide, and the conclusions that the researcher draws (Oliver, Serovich, & Mason, 2005).

Transcription practices can be divided into two different extremes on a continuum: *naturalism*, where every utterance and speech sound is transcribed in detail, and *denaturalism*, where elements of speech such as stutters, pauses, and involuntary vocalizations are not included in the transcript (Oliver, Serovich, & Mason, 2005). Naturalized speech is verbatim and usually follows a system of coded symbols to indicate nonverbal and involuntary speech, whereas denaturalized transcription focuses on the meaning and content that make up the participant’s reality. Denaturalized transcription, which has been used in grounded theory research and discourse analysis, is based upon Foucauldian theoretical constructs, which view human discourses as the ways in which we structure our reality (Oliver, Serovich, &

Mason, 2005). Since the focus of my research is on the meaning and content, the *emic* point of view involved in the social phenomenon of literacy leadership, my approach to interview transcription was to use denaturalized transcription.

Oliver, Serovich, and Mason (2005) also recommend engaging in reflection on the transcription methods used during the process, which, although it may delay the process, proves to be invaluable. For this study, my interest and research goals did not lie in the specifics of communication or elements such as pauses, nonverbal vocalizations, pronunciation, diction, or involuntary vocalizations; therefore, the focus was on the substance, content, and meaning shared during the recorded interviews. Interviews are increasingly seen as negotiated text, where the interviewers are active participants with the respondents, and the result is the product of a social dynamic as much as accurate responses (Fontana & Frey, 2003). The interview leads to “negotiated, contextually based results” and should focus on the ‘how’s’ and ‘what’s’ of the subjects’ lives (Fontana & Frey, 2003, p. 62). I frequently used follow up questions during interviews to solicit information that was more clear, understandable, complete, or detailed.

Following are the interview protocols for the study:

Interview protocol for *district administrators, curriculum directors, or literacy specialists*:

1. Describe your district goals or strategic directions related to secondary literacy.
2. Describe the methods of professional development in place to improve secondary literacy.

3. Has the district mandated specific approaches or professional development or has that been left up to the individual schools?
4. Do you have any evidence of an impact of programs on curriculum, teaching practices, or student performance?
5. What methods of evaluation of the literacy program do you have in place?
6. How does the district work with and support individual school literacy leaders and coaches?

Interview protocol for *school administrators*:

1. Describe your schoolwide goals related to literacy and how you have tried to meet them.
2. What forms of professional development are used? Have you used Professional Learning Communities? Peer Coaching? Literacy coaching? Or other methods?
3. What do you see as being the central role of the literacy coach or leader?
4. Describe your work and interaction with the literacy coach or leader.
5. What do you think is the most important element in building school literacy?
6. What elements are important in encouraging teachers to improve their instructional practices?
7. How will you know when your literacy-related goals have been met?

Interview protocol for *literacy leaders/coaches*:

1. Describe your job responsibilities and roles as literacy leader/coach.
2. What methods have you used to work with teachers? What elements are most important in doing your job effectively?

3. Which of the following are included in your work: preparing professional development, individual coaching, working with teachers on lesson planning, working with school data, observations, demonstration, or work with small groups of teachers?
4. What do you see as your most important role or the most significant aspect of your work?
5. What challenges do you face?
6. What have you done that you think has been most successful?
7. Describe a typical workday for you?
8. Have you targeted a specific student population, i.e teachers of English language learners?
9. What methods do you use for working with resistant teachers?
10. What percentage of the staff have you worked with individually?
11. What forms of district support do you receive?
12. Describe your relationship with building administrators and its importance.
13. What kinds of strategies do you help teachers incorporate? Give a couple specific examples.
14. What one word would you use to describe literacy coaching?
15. Have you encouraged collaboration and sharing of ideas among teachers?

Interview protocol for *classroom teachers*:

1. How important do you think literacy skills are for students in your content area?
2. What challenges with student literacy do you face in teaching in your content area?

3. How often do you/have you worked with the literacy coach or leader?
4. Was the help you received effective or ineffective, worthwhile or not, and in what ways?
5. What specific techniques or strategies have you learned from the literacy coach or leader?
6. Describe a specific strategy or technique you have learned. How did you the coach help you to master it?
7. Have you collaborated with other teachers or groups of teachers or participated in other forms of professional development?
8. Has your teaching changed as a result of your work with the literacy coach or leader?
9. Have you observed student academic improvement as a result of your use of new strategies or teaching methods?

Researcher's notebook/journal for reflection and record-keeping

During the data collection, analysis, and writing process, I maintained a researcher's journal to provide a log of data collection events and important information and also provide a place for self- reflection during the process. Janesick (2004) notes that journal writing can encourage deeper self-awareness and can sharpen the researcher's reflections, writing, thinking, and communication. It is a tool for refining the researcher, who is the research instrument. Journal writing is an heuristic tool and research technique which can help the researcher do the following:

1. Refine the role of the researcher through reflection and writing.

2. Refine his or her understanding of participant responses.
3. Use the journal as an interactive tool for communication between researcher and participants.
4. Allow the researcher to become a connoisseur of his or her own thinking and reflection patterns. (Janesick, 2004)

I also incorporated in the research journal what Maxwell (2005) calls “analytic memos.” These are pieces of writing that facilitate reflection and analytic insight about reading and fieldwork. Maxwell (2005) notes that they can also serve as initial drafts of material to incorporate into the research report. The analytic memos were useful in helping me to record insights, process and make sense of data, and engage in reflection, analysis and critique.

Document analysis

Relevant documents from both school districts studied were an important source of information in this study. Documents are often referred to as “material culture,” which provides mute evidence. They may be written texts or artifacts. They can be separated in space and time from their author or producer (Hodder, 2003). Documents are important for qualitative research because access is usually easy, cost is low, and the information they provide is different from spoken forms. They can also often provide historical insight (Hodder, 2003). Hodder (2003) notes that material culture must be interpreted “in relation to a situated context of production, use, discard, and reuse” (p.160). Some are designed to be communicational, such as written text, and some are more symbolic. However, documents should not be used as a

replacement for other kinds of data. Records do not show how an organization or setting operates on a daily basis (Silverman, 2003). Yin (2003) also notes that the most important use of documents is to corroborate or augment evidence from other sources.

Documents, according to Yin (2003) may include any of the following: letters, memoranda, communiques, agendas, announcements, meeting minutes, written reports, administrative documents, proposals, reports, formal studies or evaluations, and newspaper clippings or media articles. For this study, relevant documents included informational forms, program descriptions, meeting agendas, district and school documents and reports, job descriptions, and teaching or training materials used in the context of literacy leadership work. I requested and received copies of relevant documents from research participants at the district and school levels in both districts. (See a complete list of documents in Appendix D).

Data Analysis Procedures

Data that was analyzed included interview data from transcripts, observational data from field notes, and analytical data from relevant documents. Interview transcripts were read through several times and then hand coded by segmenting key features of the text and major ideas. Field notes were also studied, segmented, and coded to identify major ideas. All documents analyzed were highlighted to identify key ideas pertinent to literacy programs and leadership. Data segmenting and coding is addressed in more detail in the next section.

The data analysis process began soon after the first interviews and observations and continued for the duration of the research, as recommended by Maxwell (2005). In

addition to analyzing documents, I used interview transcripts, fieldnotes and personal reflections. Janesick (2004) notes that it is also important for the subjective elements of research to be acknowledged, valued, and understood. Many of these subjective elements were included in field notes and in the research notebook. Data analysis procedures were based on four principles articulated by Silverman (2003):

1. Qualitative research is not based on freestanding techniques, but on analytically-defined perspectives.
2. The advantage of qualitative research is the ability to focus on actual practice and social interaction.
3. Focus must be on both how people see things and do things.
4. Qualitative research is not just exploratory or anecdotal; reliability can be addressed by systematic transcription.

For case study research, Yin (2003) suggests that data analysis strategies should include consideration of all the evidence (leaving no loose ends), should address all major rival interpretations, should address the most significant aspect of the study, and should depend upon the researcher's own prior-expert knowledge of current theory and discourse on the topic. These principles were followed in the process of data analysis. My expertise and knowledge of research and best practices in literacy learning, based upon my own years of experience teaching and working with teachers as well as my study and research, also provided a solid basis for analysis.

Data Segmenting and Coding, and Emerging Themes

For coding the data, Silverman (2003) recommends having a clear analytical approach and recognizing that analysis is more than listing. Raw text, in the form of interview transcripts and field notes, can be reduced to codes (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The goal of coding is to fracture the data and rearrange them into categories, compare things in the same categories, and develop theoretical concepts (Maxwell, 2005). Coding forces the researcher to make judgements about the meaning of blocks of text. It can be done in a variety of methods: sampling, identifying themes, building codebooks (organized lists of codes), marking text, and constructing models. *Substantive categories* are mostly descriptive and may be developed through coding of the data. *Theoretical categories* place the coded data into a more abstract framework, the *etic* categories (Maxwell, 2005). For this study, substantive categories were used for interview transcripts and field notes, and theoretical categories were used for documents. As in most qualitative studies, data come from free-flowing text, for which there are two methods of analysis: text is segmented into the most basic meaningful components, and meanings are found through analysis of large blocks of text (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The researcher should examine words, sentences, paragraphs, pages, documents, ideas. They interpret, mark, and count, then identify themes and compare them across cases and groups. Finally, themes are combined into a conceptual model that can be used to explain and predict (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). It is also possible to combine several different analytical techniques and apply more than one technique to the same set of data (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

For this study, all transcripts, field notes, and documents were hand-coded using both substantial and theoretical categories. A codebook or list of approximately two hundred codes per district was created. The coding was done separately for District One and District Two. The original codes were then categorized in order to assemble the data into themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Ten to fifteen themes emerged for each district, which were then compared. (See Appendix F for a list of codes and themes.) Constant comparison, the process of comparing emerging categories during data collection and analysis (Cresswell, 1998), was used. Identifying connections and comparisons among the categories, classifying codes, and establishing themes were key steps in the analysis and led directly to the key findings of the study.

Organizational files

Coded transcripts, notes, and documents are kept in files labeled by district and by type of data. In other words, for District One, all interview transcript data are kept in one file, all documents in another file, and all field notes in a third file. The same procedure is followed for District Two. All files are kept in a secure, locked file cabinet in my home office. The files will be kept for three years after completion of the study and will then be destroyed. (See Appendix E for a list of all organizational files).

Thick Description

One of the goals of thick description is to create verisimilitude, an attempt to reproduce actions, context, emotions, and experiences revealed by the data (Cresswell, 1998). Detailed, descriptive field notes and complete interview transcripts provided

the thick description invaluable in presenting a comprehensive, detailed picture of secondary literacy programs in the two districts. The researcher's journal and documents also complemented the thick description.

Detailed narrative discussion for both case sites

In writing the report, as recommended by Yin (2003), I included a summary narrative discussion of the results for both District One and District Two (with a detailed, narrative discussion in Appendices A and B) followed by comparative analysis, discussion, and evaluation. The results section in Chapter Five includes separate, detailed descriptions of District One, followed by description of District Two. These sections provide the necessary information to lead into the cross-case analysis and evaluation in the following section.

Cross-case analysis and program evaluation

This study is a descriptive and comparative, or cross-case, analysis of two school districts, both with literacy programs in place which have similarities and differences. While the multi-site study lent itself naturally to comparison, the primary purpose of the study was not to compare but to find out what could be learned about secondary school literacy by looking at both. In addition, elements of program evaluation are included. Program evaluation is a common element of qualitative research and can influence policy in several ways. It can show the effects of certain programs and identify constraints that hinder policy changes in these settings. It can also provide a voice for those studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Rist, 2003). These evaluation approaches seek to address the interests and experiences of stakeholders,

program staff, and beneficiaries by giving voice to them and their understanding (Greene, 2003). My goal is that this research will be of use to the conscientious practitioners who are leading reform efforts in these two districts, as well as those who work in other districts. Program evaluation is a way to make research more useful for those working in the field (Bogdan & Taylor, 1990), which is the reason I have incorporated it into this study.

Le Compte (1994) notes that the researcher must question whether the assumptions and frameworks of the researcher as evaluator are of importance to the research stakeholders. Some programs are judged to be failures according to criteria that the practitioners don't consider important. In this study, it is safe to say that the goal of improving secondary literacy is a common goal for myself as the researcher and for the two districts studied. Greene (2003) also notes the importance of employing careful criteria of methods so that the evaluation is empirically-based and not viewed as biased researcher opinion. Since this qualitative study offers a rich, detailed description of what goes on inside the institutions, I can "address practical questions of interest to managers and practitioners" (Greene, 2003, p. 80).

Knowledge generated by research is an important component in the decision-making process (Rist, 2003).

Lincoln and Guba (2003) note a shift in participatory research models from mere understanding to social action. This came in response to the lack of utility of evaluation findings and a desire to create practitioners who would follow through on recommendations and construct meaningful action plans. Bogdan and Taylor (1990)

note that case studies can provide an overview of the program, a description of innovative approaches, and a discussion of problems and dilemmas, successes and failures. These can serve to better inform practice, both for the two districts studied and others who are interested in literacy leadership. Case study methods using participant and non-participant observations have advanced our understanding of change and obstacles to change. The term “ethnographic evaluation” has also been used to describe these naturalistic and qualitative procedures (LeCompte, 1994). The goal is to inform and improve services, programs, policies, and to promote conversation in the particular contexts (Greene, 2003).

There are five different case study applications in evaluation: 1) to explain causal links in interventions; 2) to describe an intervention and its context; 3) to illustrate or describe topics; 4) to explore situations in an intervention; and 5) to conduct meta-evaluation, a study of an evaluation study (Yin, 2003). My approach in this research was to describe literacy interventions and to study them in their specific school contexts. Greene (2003) refers to the researcher as a “narrator-evaluator.” An experienced, knowledgeable, sensitive, and insightful evaluator will tell more meaningful stories. She adds that a constructivist worldview is positive, allowing the evaluator to portray a full array of perspectives and meanings. The participants’ stories are positioned as guides for improving specific practices. They can provide learning and insight for the policymakers and stakeholders and can become part of a larger policy conversation.

Researchers, through their study, try to come to understand an organization thoroughly, giving them a unique perspective from which to address issues such as staff development, morale and leadership, philosophy among staff, and confidence in the worthiness of the program (Rist, 2003). These were my goals for this study, to narrate the stories of district and school leaders and literacy coaches, and to be open to all possible perspectives and insights. Ultimately, I played the role of evaluator in formulating practical recommendations for improvement in the two districts' programs. The detailed descriptive data and attention to problems or issues provided me with the basis for making judgments about further action needed. The data in some cases may indicate that the programs implemented are insufficient or missing the target population and that refocusing of the program may be necessary (Rist, 2003).

Evaluation done qualitatively involves the telling of stories of individuals and groups within their communities which will aid in understanding what these school communities share with others and what their unique elements are (Greene, 2003). This requires direct engagement with members of the settings to gather information. The focus is on the insider experiences and perspectives. Observation and interview are the primary methods, which are supported by review of documents and records (Greene, 2003). Le Compte (1994) also recommends thinking through carefully the questions that will focus the evaluation, asking what data will answer the questions, where it can be found, and how it can be managed and reported, which I have included in Chapter Five. The hope is that I have produced findings which are useful to the organizations and which will generate some debate about policy and programs. As a

result of this study, the two districts hopefully have sufficient information to reassess their programs and make necessary changes.

Limitations, Verification, and Ethical Issues

This section addresses threats to validity or verification, and ethical issues that were dealt with in the study. Validity involves the strategies one uses to rule out threats, or ways in which one might be wrong (Maxwell, 2005). The term “verification” is used in this study rather than “validity,” as recommended by Cresswell (1998), because verification is a term more specific and appropriate to qualitative research as a distinct and legitimate approach. My primary goal in this study was not whether the programs studied are representative. Rather than selecting a random sample, I systematically and intentionally used sites to illustrate how districts and school districts are focusing on literacy learning. The districts chosen for the study had already committed themselves to improving literacy in secondary schools. The key for this study was to analyze how they have done so and evaluate their effectiveness.

Le Compte (1994) states, “Qualitative evaluators are held accountable for their behavior and for ethical action in the intricate and intimate interactions that characterize life in the institutions they assess” (p. 34). Lincoln and Guba (2003) suggest that validity refers to authenticity in that the findings of a study can be acted upon, and that we have enough confidence in the findings to construct policy based on them. This concern with validity applies not only to the methodology, but also the practice of interpretation. We must ask if we are interpretively rigorous, so that our

constructed meaning accurately describes important human phenomenon. Cresswell (1998) suggests that there are eight important procedures in verification: prolonged engagement and observation, triangulation of sources, peer review, negative case analysis, clarifying researcher bias, member checking, rich, thick description, and use of external audits. These issues are addressed here.

The study was designed and conducted with ethical issues clearly in mind. As previously indicated, one of the two districts in the study is the district in which I work. I am also the literacy leader of the high school where I work. This, in some ways, provided benefits to my research because of my prior knowledge about schools and individuals in the district. To avoid potential conflict of interest, I did not select my own school as one of the study sites. I selected schools in this district in consultation with district personnel who oversee the district's literacy programs, according to previously-specified criteria. During literacy leader meetings selected for observation, I also withdrew from participation in the group as much as possible in order to focus on taking descriptive field notes.

In qualitative research, there is always the potential for the researcher's involvement or possible biases to impact the results of the study. The researcher's background probably always influences the analysis and interpretation to some degree. I have very strong opinions about the importance of literacy in content area learning in secondary schools, which is based on many years of experience and a large amount of training and research. However, the careful collection and coding of data in this study in order to identify major emerging themes makes it less likely that my background

and views as a researcher have impacted the data. The data in this study come largely from the actual words of the research subjects, as well as objective observational data and document data.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the programs and practices for improving literacy in secondary schools in two different school districts. It is a descriptive study which presents a picture of how literacy leadership happens in secondary schools. This purpose necessarily limits the study. The study is also limited in the sense that it represents the perspectives of the particular individuals in the particular schools chosen for study in each district. Inclusion of different school sites and research subjects may have resulted in slightly different results, although it is hoped that the selected sites were representative of each district. Thus, the findings are not truly generalizable, although the insights provided are to some degree transferable to other schools and districts who have goals related to student academic achievement and effective literacy leadership.

Another possible limitation is that the coding used to analyze and categorize the data was done separately for District One and District Two. Because the data was coded first for District One, it is possible that the coding of District One data influenced the coding process for District Two, resulting in the terms used to identify codes, categories and themes being quite similar. If District Two had been coded first, it is possible that the terms used to describe the emerging themes would have been slightly different. Regardless of the terms used to identify codes and themes, it is hoped that the data still reflect accurate description of both districts' programs.

Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, Confirmability

Case study research may involve attention to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. However, the language of qualitative research is more personal and descriptive, and meaning evolves during the course of the study rather than being hypothesized at the beginning (Cresswell, 1998). Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend use of the above terms as the qualitative equivalents to internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity.

Maxwell (2005) refers to two types of generalizability, internal and external. Internal refers to generalizability of a conclusion within the setting or group studied; external refers to generalizability beyond the setting or group. External generalizability is often not necessary for qualitative studies. In this case, the study is based on some defined population and the results can be expanded to other cases. All of these elements are addressed in qualitative research methods through use of triangulation of data and prolonged engagement in the field (Cresswell, 1998). The thick description this study provides helps insure that findings are internally generalizable, and perhaps externally as well. Both dependability and confirmability can be accomplished with careful auditing of the research process (Cresswell, 1998). They were accomplished in the study through member checking and respondent validation. The following sections present the ways in which I have addressed these verification issues.

Authenticity

Lincoln and Guba (2003) present several criteria of authenticity in qualitative inquiry: 1) Fairness to all stakeholders' views and perspectives; 2) ontological and educative authenticity, or criteria for determining raised levels of awareness; and 3) catalytic and tactical authenticity, which is the ability of the study to prompt action on the part of participants and the involvement of the researcher in training participants. These criteria are incorporated into the goal of this study, which is to illuminate and raise awareness of participant views as well as to prompt any necessary action and change based on the findings of the study, which resulted in specific recommendations for each district. One of the goals of the study was to incorporate into the final report elements of program evaluation in order to provide useful information for each school district in evaluating its secondary literacy program. If the districts choose to act upon the findings of the study, the specific recommendations will assist them in making any necessary or recommended program or policy changes.

Prolonged Engagement

Prolonged engagement in the field is one of the most important ways of establishing the trustworthiness of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Long-term involvement also provides more complete data (Maxwell, 2005). Since the study was conducted over a period of more than one full year, numerous interviews were conducted, and observations were conducted during meetings, training sessions, and at school sites, prolonged engagement and data saturation was achieved to some degree, as recommended by Strauss & Corbin (1998). The prolonged period of time also

allowed for observation of changes underway in literacy programs in the two districts. Because of my lesser familiarity with one school district, I spent slightly more time in this district to more thoroughly understand the programs, schools, and particular school goals and philosophies.

One drawback to the prolonged engagement may lie in the number of observations that were conducted and the particular types of events observed. Due to logistical issues and time restraints, it was not possible, for example, to include very many classroom observations or observations of the work of literacy leaders and coaches at individual school sites. The observations conducted were mostly of training sessions, professional development events, and meetings. An increased number of observations in each school, specifically observing the work of literacy coaches while working with teachers, may have revealed additional data and added to the richness of the study as well as increased the validity. Much of the data about the work of literacy leaders and coaches came from their descriptions and interpretations of their work and the roles they play in their schools.

Site and Individual Sampling

Because the study is a descriptive, multi-site case study involving two different districts, a number of particular schools were chosen to study. Maxwell (2005) states that multiple study sites contribute to the interpretability of the results. This study used purposeful selection of sites, or criterion-based sampling, a strategy in which particular settings and individuals are chosen deliberately to provide valuable information that may not be found with other settings or individuals (Maxwell, 2005).

In this study, I intentionally selected a variety of school sites to study, based on the recommendations of district officials and my own knowledge of schools in District Two. This variety included both middle and high schools, in different areas of the district, and in order to reflect as much diversity as possible in terms of socioeconomic status of the school population to thereby “adequately capture the heterogeneity in the population” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 89). The work of individual literacy leaders and coaches and classroom teachers was studied at the identified school sites. This allowed for capturing as much variety as possible in terms of approaches, working styles, responsibilities, characteristics, roles and so forth. Interviews with a larger number of teachers in each school may have added to the data and revealed more information and perhaps more reliable findings about the work of literacy leaders and coaches.

Researcher Bias and Reactivity

Two of the threats to verification are *researcher bias* and *reactivity*. Researcher bias may include the researcher’s tendency to select data that fits his or her preconceptions, and to select only data that stands out. Reactivity refers to the influence of the researcher on the setting or individuals studied, a problem which probably cannot be completely eliminated, but can be used productively (Maxwell, 2005). An important part of conducting this study was recognizing my own ideas and philosophies about literacy teaching and learning. Because I have spent several years teaching and working with teachers as a school improvement leader, I have developed strong opinions about teacher and student learning. It was important for me to recognize these philosophies and biases, but also be willing to set them aside during

the data collection process. During data collection, I concentrated on taking detailed, descriptive field notes as objectively as possible during observations. I also fully transcribed all interviews. Detailed notes, a type of running account, helped to prevent the possibility of selective collection of evidence, or only seeing and noting those things that I was hoping to see. During data analysis, I made use of all data collected in the coding process, so that researcher bias would not cause some important information to be excluded.

While it is well known that the interviewer can have an effect on the interview setting and subjects, thorough and comprehensive questions, and building of a positive and friendly relationship with interview subjects helps to limit this effect. It was also important to listen non-judgmentally and avoid commenting on interview subjects' statements. Digital audiotaping of all interviews also helped to insure greater accuracy in the collection of information. Since the observations were non-participant observations, it is not likely that reactivity posed a serious threat. In addition, in conducting the minimal number of classroom observations that were included, it was unlikely that my presence had a pronounced effect on the classroom, because secondary students are generally used to having a variety of adults present in the school setting and conducting observations in classes.

Triangulation

Triangulation involves the use of multiple sources of information and methods to provide corroborating evidence and illuminate a particular theme (Cresswell, 1998). It is one of the most important elements in establishing trustworthiness of the study

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Qualitative research is multi-method in focus. The use of triangulation helps us secure an in-depth understanding. Objective reality can never be clearly captured, but we come to understand something through its representation. Triangulation then is not a tool for validation, but an alternative to validation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), the process of using multiple perceptions to help clarify meaning. Because no observation perfectly captures the subject, triangulation helps clarify meaning by revealing different ways to study the phenomenon (Stake, 2003). In case study research, the use of multiple sources allows the researcher to focus on a broader range of issues, but also provides converging lines of inquiry. The conclusions are more accurate if based on several different sources of information (Yin, 2003). Triangulation also addresses issues of construct validity because multiple measures are provided for the case (Yin, 2003).

This study achieved triangulation through the rich, descriptive nature of the interview data, observational data, and document analysis. All of the interviews, observations, and documents provided data that was complementary. For example, statements made and information provided by literacy coaches and leaders in the study was often corroborated by information provided by teachers who had worked with them. The district literacy specialists and leaders in both districts described their work and their perceptions of the roles they play, which was also corroborated by the observational data collected. In some cases, document evidence also was triangulated with information from observations and interviews, providing material evidence for key points.

Member Checking/Respondent Validation

Member checking involves having the transcripts and drafts of the report reviewed by peers or informants in the study (Yin, 2003). Maxwell (2005) also recommends soliciting feedback about data from the people studied to rule out the possibility of the researcher misinterpreting the meaning of the data. Member checking was used in this study once interviews were transcribed. Transcripts were sent to the informants who were asked to review them to insure accuracy and suggest any needed revisions. Participants in this study were also asked to review excerpts from the final report in order to validate that accurate information has been collected and reported in the research. Only a small number of corrections or additions to the transcripts and drafts were suggested by the respondents. This process allowed for the corroboration of essential information and evidence, and the minimal number of corrections made helped contribute to verification of the findings.

Rich data

Rich data is detailed and varied enough to provide a thorough and revealing picture of the research setting and context (Maxwell, 2005) thereby increasing verification and reliability. Analysis of detailed field notes from several observations, at least fourteen fully-transcribed interviews, and numerous documents provided sufficient richness in the data and helped to achieve saturation, as demonstrated by the collected data that appears in Appendices A and B.

Use of consent forms/Voluntary Participation

Stake (2003) notes that a contract exists between the researcher and those studied, a “protective covenant” and a moral obligation. Issues of observation and reportage should be clarified and discussed in advance, and research subjects should receive drafts showing them how they are presented, quoted, and interpreted. The researcher must also be responsive to any concerns raised by the subjects. Using advisors and reviewers can help extend these protections (Stake, 2003). Participation in this study by all individuals and respondents was voluntary. All individuals were clearly informed about procedures, and were given the opportunity to review transcripts and drafts. Informed Consent was signed by all interview respondents prior to the interviews. The forms clearly stated that participants might withdraw from the study at any time. (See Informed Consent forms in Appendix C)

Protecting participant confidentiality

Yin (2003) notes that confidentiality is not generally desirable for case studies because it makes writing the report difficult, eliminates important background information, and presents the challenge of converting participants and cases to fictitious identities. However, because of institutional requirements, confidentiality was the procedure followed in this study. The names of the school districts and individual schools were kept confidential throughout the study and in the final report. The school districts are referred to as District One and District Two. Individual schools are referred to as High School A or B or Middle School A or B for the respective districts. Individual identities were kept confidential, and pseudonyms are

used in place of participants' real names. The code list of pseudonyms to real names will be kept in my home office files and destroyed three years after completion of the study. In addition, for all documents analyzed, specific district, school, and individual names and any other identifying information were removed.

Chapter Four presents the results of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This chapter presents a narrative discussion of the results of the study in order to present a complete picture of the research process and data of the study. I have chosen to separate the descriptive account and the analysis as much as possible in this chapter, although I have followed the advice of Wolcott (1990) who notes that the narrative account must be sufficient to support the analysis. He states that we must keep in mind that "analysis helps to form the descriptive account, just as the descriptive account provides the substance for the analysis" (p. 49). While the first part of this chapter is largely descriptive, the second part includes analysis and comparative observations. The summary of results for District One is presented first followed by the results from District Two. The data for both districts included interview data, observational data, and document data.

Summary of District One Results

Interview data, observational data, and document data provided rich sources of information for District One. This section provides a summary of the data collected in District One. For a detailed description of the results, see Appendix A. The nine interviews conducted with the Curriculum Director, literacy coaches, teachers, and administrators provided data indicating an increased level of awareness about literacy-related issues in the district. All names used here are pseudonyms. Interviewees included in this discussion include the following:

1. Peter, District One Curriculum Director

2. Heath and Franklin, district literacy coaches
3. Colleen, literacy support teacher at High School A
4. Preston, social studies and industrial arts teacher at Middle School A
5. Cathy, language arts teacher at Middle School B
6. Susan, language arts teacher at High School A
7. Brent, assistant principal at High School A

The original interview with the district's Curriculum Director, Peter, provided valuable information about the work of the Literacy Task Force in District One and the goals and directions related to literacy. The task force's goals launched a project that resulted in the district implementing its own local system of reading assessments and establishing a program to provide content teachers with literacy strategy instruction through a program called Reading Apprenticeship. The district has also tried to support its teachers by implementing a coaching model, with part time coaches working at the middle schools and high schools.

The data also indicate additional goals in District One regarding leadership for literacy including a series of trainings for school principals. Other goals address reading intervention. A portion of the data focuses on the READ 180 program for struggling readers. The district has implemented the READ 180 program district-wide at all middle and high schools. READ 180 is a reading intervention program for struggling readers published by Scholastic. It is a technology-enhanced program with an instructional model that includes daily small group lessons, independent reading, and independent work on the computer. The task force looked at approximately thirty

different intervention programs and ended up choosing READ 180, because it is the most comprehensive, is a direct instruction program, and includes phonics instruction, whereas a lot of intervention programs do not include all these elements. In addition to READ 180, most of the middle schools have implemented Read Naturally, a fluency program which is an intervention specific to reading fluency, and they have begun to create a tiered system so that every student who moves from middle to high school will be followed by enough assessment data so that they can be placed at the appropriate level.

A central component in the district literacy efforts has been the implementation of the Reading Apprenticeship Program, on which many of the interviewees focused their comments. Reading Apprenticeship trainings also made up several of the observational sessions conducted during the research phase. Reading Apprenticeship is an approach to reading instruction that trains teachers to help students develop strategies to become more effective readers. It is a framework for literacy development in all subject areas that features a multi-dimensional approach to teaching and learning. The four dimensions include the personal, social, cognitive, and knowledge-building dimensions. Reading Apprenticeship teaches students and teachers processes of “metacognitive conversation” to make sense of texts. The goals of Reading Apprenticeship are to make students more confident, strategic, and independent readers under the mentorship of teachers who support, model, and guide them in their reading (Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko, & Hurwitz, 1999). (See Appendix G, which presents the Reading Apprenticeship Framework.) Peter noted that the training has

proceeded with a new group of teachers each year, and a new wave following in the successive year.

All the data for District One indicates an exceptionally strong focus on professional development for teachers through the Reading Apprenticeship program, which is additionally supported by the school-based literacy coaches. Each school also has a literacy committee which is working on issues of literacy related to their particular student population and student and staff needs. Some schools also have forms of PLC groups in place and depend upon late start days to provide collaborative planning time.

The data indicate that another strength for District One is the reading motivation and incentive programs which Peter notes have been highly successful at several schools, with some tripling their library circulation. Different schools are using different programs such as Reading Counts and Battle of the Books. Other schools are using their own programs complete with school literacy nights, reading contests, student literacy teams, poster competitions, and other motivational activities.

In terms of evidence of program impact on curriculum, teaching practice, and student performance, Peter noted that state test scores have increased, dramatically in some schools, and that many students have made significant gains in the READ 180 program. In general, Peter notes strong early success in the literacy initiative:

So I think there is some anecdotal evidence that things are better and then there's certainly some evidence from state testing that shows some of our schools have made great strides in the last couple years. Other anecdotal evidence would be all the reading motivation programs. I mean, you can't help but know that those things are going on in our middle schools.

He observed some middle schools have posters everywhere, there are pictures of kids reading, and there are reading competitions at night: “It’s palpable at the middle school level. I won’t say that of the high schools, but at the middle schools it’s definitely noticeable.” In general, Peter was confident that there was positive activity going on around the literacy initiative, with all teachers well aware of the literacy initiative, although with varying levels of involvement.

The interview data in the study indicate that the district provides many important forms of support for the literacy coaches, who receive training, are supported financially, and are supported by the two district-level coaches, Heath and Franklin. These coaches play critical roles in the schools in terms of capacity building. Peter also expressed the hope that the district would eventually be able to move to a more full model of coaching, with a full-time literacy coach at each school. He also noted that rather than using the term “literacy coach” which may have negative connotations for some teachers, the district describes them as “literacy support teachers.”

Heath and Franklin, the two district level coaches, who are also assigned to work in particular middle schools, described in detail their work with teachers, in promoting literacy, managing the school literacy committees, providing staff development, and helping to coordinate the district Reading Apprenticeship program. They also help with the district and school reading motivation programs. They noted the importance of facilitating collaboration in the schools. All three of the coaches interviewed indicated that they try to work directly with teachers, focusing first on

those who solicit help. They noted the importance of building strong personal relationships with staff members and the importance of Reading Apprenticeship as a means of promoting literacy with teachers. They have helped teachers access data through the district's Mastery in Motion database and used data to identify students for intervention programs. Two of the three coaches interviewed noted that they have conducted classroom demonstrations and all have made classroom visits and worked individually with teachers as well as with small groups. All three viewed their work as an important form of support for teachers which involves communication, providing information and helping teachers with strategies. Franklin noted that his most important role is improving the classroom practice of teachers. All mentioned that helping teachers implement particular strategies has been the most important part of their work.

The literacy support teachers all noted the challenges they face. For Heath and Franklin, a major challenge is being pulled in too many different directions at once, and all noted a certain level of ambiguity in their roles and that a period of time to define their roles and establish priorities was necessary. The data also provide information about their successes in terms of working with teachers. All have noted positive feedback. None of the coaches has targeted specific student populations such as English language learners, nor have they specifically tried to work directly with resistant teachers, to date. They have taken the approach that their work will have a trickle-down effect, recognizing that some teachers will become more comfortable working with them over time. All the coaches also noted the importance of the forms

of support they receive from administration and from the district, everything from financial resources, to flexibility, to professional development. All the coaches also focused on specific strategies on which they have worked with teachers including Think-Alouds and various SOS (Student-owned strategies).

Colleen, the literacy support teacher at the High School A, noted that her most important role is also working one on one with teachers, and she has a specific process she follows. She said administrative support of her position is a key factor. She has worked with teachers on reading comprehension and vocabulary activities and provided lots of support for freshman teachers who asked her to do some research to identify specific skills that freshmen needed to be successful. She also encourages collaboration and sharing of ideas among the staff.

The three classroom teachers who were interviewed for the study provided data that corroborates the literacy coaches' description of their work. One teacher, Preston is a social studies and industrial arts teacher, and the other two teachers, Cathy and Susan, are language arts teachers. All three have worked directly with the literacy coaches in their schools and described those processes in detail. All of these teachers noted the importance of literacy for their students and the importance of supporting students with effective strategies for reading comprehension. All have received or are receiving training in Reading Apprenticeship as well. The teachers identified a number of challenges they face in their work, from lack of cultural awareness and basic skills to challenges with academic content reading. Some also expressed frustration that students don't read for pleasure more often. All of them described specific strategies

they have learned from the literacy coaches and how the coaches have worked with them to support their teaching. They also discussed ways in which they have collaborated with other teachers during late start sessions, in small groups, in committees for reading incentive programs, and for Susan, in her work with the freshman team and the literacy committee at High School A. All of the teachers noted that their teaching has changed as a result of their work with the literacy coach. They noted a heightened level of awareness about literacy and a greater focus on effective use of strategies for students. All of them also stated their appreciation of the work of the literacy coach and their recognition of the important contributions the coaches make in their respective schools.

An additional interview with the Assistant Principal at High School A, Brent, provided information about the schoolwide goals related to literacy. Those goals are to explore incentive programs in place at other high schools, to implement a stratified system of interventions for struggling readers, and to develop a data system to track improvement. He discussed the activities of the school literacy committee and noted a focus on starting with freshman students and then adding subsequent grades each year. Data was also provided regarding the professional development at the school and the role of the literacy coach. Brent recognized the importance of having the literacy coach work one-on-one with teachers in implementing strategies in the classroom. Data provided shows that there is a positive focus on literacy schoolwide and a focus on professional development and good instructional leadership. Brent noted that they would assess what progress has been made at the end of the year, analyze the data, and

set goals for placing students more appropriately and moving forward in better serving students.

The observational data included several field observations of district Reading Apprenticeship trainings during the 2007-08 school year. These allowed for collecting data about the specific training methods used and the central elements of the Reading Apprenticeship program. All the trainings were conducted by the Curriculum Director, Peter, and the district literacy coaches, Heath and Franklin. The data from these observations demonstrate effective use of collaboration among teachers, a variety of activities, demonstration and modeling of teaching strategies, and rationale for content area literacy. Some of the observations were of first year training sessions and others were second year training, which allowed for observing the different phases of the program. The trainings focus on the four dimensions of the Reading Apprenticeship framework: the personal, social, cognitive, and knowledge-building dimensions (See Appendix G). They also provided teachers with lots of supplementary materials, books, and resources to use in their teaching. The activities teachers participated in during the trainings allowed for a good sense of fun, and it was clear that teachers enjoyed their participation in the training process. Strategies taught included Think-Aloud activities, Jigsaw, Think-Ink-Link, Question-Answer Relationships and several others. Other activities in the training allowed teachers to self-evaluate their progress, set goals, and establish timelines for incorporating the strategies into their teaching. Collaboration among teachers both in and outside of the training sessions was also

encouraged. Teachers were encouraged to use substitute time to collaborate with each other and hold work sessions in their own buildings as well as to visit other buildings.

Another observation was conducted during High School A's literacy committee meeting, which provided data about the schools three goals: putting in place a reading incentive program, developing a multi-tiered reading program, and increasing the use of content area reading strategies schoolwide. During the meeting, committee members reported information collected during their visit to other schools. During these site visits, staff members were able to examine and observe literacy programs at other schools. The committee members showed enthusiasm and willingness to explore what other schools are doing, and there was much discussion about intervention programs and the specific work of subcommittees. The group noted a gradual shift in momentum and increased focus on making literacy an integral part of the school's goals.

Another observation at Middle School B provided data for analyzing the work of the literacy coach at the school level. Franklin conducted a test preparation lesson for eighth grade students in the school computer lab. These students had been identified by their language arts teachers as being students with scores close to passing on the state reading test. The session focused on useful strategies for students to use, targeted toward those strands in which they had lower scores. Franklin focused on test preparation strategies such as monitoring reading, making inferences, using clues to identify vocabulary words, and maintaining attention.

In a final meeting with Peter, the Curriculum Director, I gathered data from recent reports on literacy events, including the district-wide Battle of the Books (reading incentive program), power point slides from his presentation of a district literacy report, and assessment data of progress made toward meeting the original task force goals. He stressed the importance of focusing on reading interventions at each school for particular groups of students, and discussed the possibility of a summer school program for struggling readers. In general, data collected demonstrated district leaders' commitment to literacy, a focus on both motivation and intervention for students, and attention to ongoing assessment and evaluation of current goals and programs.

The documents collected for District One provided a valuable source of data. (A list of all documents appears in Appendix D). The documents were provided by Peter, the Curriculum Director, and also collected during Reading Apprenticeship trainings. In summary, the documents included demonstrate the careful research, work and goal setting of the literacy task force as the impetus for secondary school literacy reform in District One. There is also evidence of regular revisiting of the original recommendations and evaluation of current progress in an attempt to refine and improve programs. Documents also indicate the importance of the Reading Apprenticeship program as the centerpiece of the district's professional development in literacy, which is supplemented by the work of individual committees and coaches in each school.

Table 1 shows the elements included in District One's literacy reform efforts:

Table 1:
Elements of District One Literacy Initiative

<u>Element</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>School or schools</u>
Secondary School Literacy Task force	Researched best practices, made report of recommendations	District committee
District reading assessments (6-9 assessments)	Local assessments used as formative assessments twice yearly (comprehension, fluency, vocabulary)	All
Reading Apprenticeship	Professional development in content-area reading/academic literacy (seven days of training yearly)	All (new trainees added every year)
Literacy coaching model/ "Literacy support teachers"	Part time coaches in all secondary schools. Work with teachers, provide staff development in schools, facilitate Reading Apprenticeship training, promote school reading incentives, facilitate late start times. Job-embedded professional development	All
Principal trainings and school literacy committees	To provide for building leadership in literacy	All
READ 180	Reading intervention program for struggling readers, direct instruction	All
Read Naturally	Intervention, fluency program	Some
Professional book clubs	Thirteen titles available for school staffs to read	Some
Late start days	Monthly collaborative planning time for school staffs	All
Battle of the Books	Incentive program	All middle schools
Reading Counts	Incentive program, published by Scholastic	Some middle schools

Individual school contests and programs	Incentive programs	Some middle schools
Survey of administrators	Assessment tool to evaluate implementation of task force recommendations	All
Mastery in Motion	District database for teachers to access student test scores and data	All
District resources	Financial support, materials, substitute time	All
Teaching strategies	Reading motivation, metacognitive strategies, content-area reading, SOS (Student-Owned Strategies)	All
Individual coaching	One-on-one, lesson planning, providing materials, observations, demonstrations, provided by coaches	All
Focus on freshmen (Freshman Support Team)	Collaborative time for freshmen teachers, focus on notetaking skills, similarities/differences, and summarizing	High School A
Professional Learning Communities	Grade level groups to target instruction in state reading standards, developing lessons, aligning curricula	Middle School B
School Visitations	Exploring incentive and literacy programs at other schools	High School A
Reading Apprenticeship support materials	Resource notebooks with reading strategies and supplemental materials	All
Summer School	Intervention program for struggling students	Some
“Study Island”	Test preparation program to target reading strands	Middle School B
Evaluation of literacy initiative	Literacy team identified ten task force goals for level of implementation, prioritized goals.	All

Summary of District Two Results

Interview data, observational data, and document data provided a wealth of information for secondary school literacy leadership in District Two. This section provides a summary of the data collected in District Two. For a detailed description of the results, see Appendix B. Interviews were conducted with the two secondary literacy specialists, literacy leaders at each of the three school sites, teachers from each school, and an administrator. All names used here are pseudonyms. Interviewees included in this discussion are as follows:

1. Katherine and Beth, secondary literacy specialists for District Two
2. Larry, literacy leader at High School A
3. Steven, literacy leader at High School B
4. Kayla, Kendra, and Gloria, literacy leaders at Middle School A
5. David, English teacher at High School A
6. Joelle, health sciences teacher at High School B
7. Louis, industrial arts teacher at Middle School A
8. Darla, principal at Middle School A

Katherine and Beth, the secondary literacy specialists for District One explained the district's goals related to literacy. They noted the goal was to develop a common K-12 literacy model and narrow down the state standards in reading, literature, and writing to core standards that identify what students will know and be able to do at each level. They also provided information about the history of the literacy initiative in the district, which included establishing a program of literacy

leaders at all secondary schools. These literacy leaders are full time teachers who are paid a stipend to receive training, distribute information, and support literacy in their schools. They also noted the district was in the process of hiring full time Instructional Coaches for middle and high schools. The superintendent's strategic plan focuses on student achievement, and provides rationale for the focus on literacy.

The data indicates a large number of professional development activities related to literacy in District Two. These include literacy leaders meeting to receive training as a cohort group, professional development for READ 180 teachers, and the introduction of a common model of writing instruction at all middle schools. The common model of writing instruction is a program is called *Teaching the Qualities of Writing*. It has involved an extensive series of training sessions for all middle school language arts teachers, focusing on the writing workshop approach to writing instruction. District Two, like District One, also uses the READ 180 program as a form of intervention for struggling readers. Professional development and support for READ 180 teachers is provided. In addition, Katherine and Beth work to support the efforts of individual schools as needed. The data shows that District Two does not provide a traditional literacy coaching model, although the literacy leaders in each secondary school do provide various forms of literacy support to the staff, which is seldom one-on-one instructional support. Interview and document data also demonstrate other elements of professional development in the district: online resources, a yearly summer institute, workshops and mini-courses, and several examples of site-based professional development. While the district's approach to

school improvement has always been very site-based, evidence indicates that this may change due to the prominence of the superintendent's Strategic Plan, which will result in a more centralized approach.

Some data indicates an impact on achievement, particularly with the testing data from the READ 180 program. Some schools have shown modest improvements in reading assessment test scores, but evidence of writing improvement is not yet apparent. Another aspect of district reform is putting in place a system of formative assessment to provide more timely feedback on student performance for teachers, thus helping them to better target instruction. Katherine and Beth note anecdotal evidence of program success through data they collect from surveys and following training sessions. They also noted the importance of district financial support of the program and the importance of communication among schools, which has improved dramatically. Building leadership within the individual schools is an important part of the support that Katherine and Beth provide. They noted that there is an advent of change in the district, and that they work to advocate for teachers and students, providing a liaison between administrators and teachers.

Interviews were also conducted with the literacy leaders in High Schools A and B and Middle School A. Larry is the literacy leader at High School A, Steven the literacy leader at High School B, and Middle School A has three literacy leaders, Kayla, Kendra, and Gloria, one for each grade level. The data indicates that individual literacy leaders perform a variety of different leadership roles in their schools, and that their roles vary widely from one school to another. They work with school data and

help interpret it for the staff, they prepare presentations and professional development activities for the staff, and to a lesser extent they work with teachers one on one to provide them with ideas and materials to support literacy. Larry noted that his role also varies from year to year and may depend upon what his principal asks him to do. He said some of his job can be described as literacy coaching, but much of it ends up being something else. Because High School A has large numbers of English-language learners, Larry's work has been partly designing programs and curriculum for the different levels of students in the building, such as the freshman writing lab. All of the literacy leaders have worked with small groups of teachers in departments or grade level teams.

The literacy leaders described themselves as “cheerleaders for literacy.” They noted the importance of having administrative support and being able to keep a focus on literacy, to keep it fresh in people's minds. The level of support and the intensity of the focus varies from school to school. High School A uses PLC groups, but the other schools do not. All the literacy leaders analyze and present data, and conduct professional development activities, but there is very little individual coaching, lesson planning, or one-on-one work with teachers. All have worked with small groups of teachers. All of the literacy leaders noted that one of their biggest challenges is time; they observed that because they have full time teaching responsibilities, the time and energy they can direct to literacy leadership activities is limited. All of them indicated they do spend a large amount of time, and a portion of each day, doing research, gathering materials, and sharing information with staff members. All of them also

gave specific examples of the types of strategies they have introduced to staff and helped teachers to incorporate. These include reading and writing strategies, vocabulary, higher-level thinking strategies, and others. They also try to solicit feedback from teachers on their teaching strategies. Data indicates a variety of projects that literacy leaders have worked on with particular teachers. Middle School A's literacy leaders have also done more work with implementing the writing workshop approach, which has not yet been implemented at the high school level. The literacy leaders work with individual teachers ranges from ten percent to sixty percent of the staff over the course of a few years.

Literacy leaders at Middle School A have done some modeling of strategies, worked with the staff to identify a schoolwide goal related to literacy, prepared professional development, and worked individually with teachers in their respective grade level teams. Like the other literacy leaders, they noted the importance of raising the level of awareness about literacy as their most important success. They have also targeted those students who are just below the passing mark on state tests.

Literacy leaders all provided data showing the importance of the district support they receive, although they also do a lot of research and work on their own. They also noted the importance of support from building administrators, which varies from building to building and administrator to administrator. Two of the schools' leaders expressed some frustration in the lack of communication with or consistency in support from building administration.

The teachers interviewed in District Two provided evidence to corroborate the literacy leaders' descriptions of their work. David is an English teacher at High School A, Joelle is a health sciences teacher at High School B, and Louis is an industrial arts teacher at Middle School A. All the teachers commented on the importance of literacy skills for students in their content areas. Louis' comments about the importance of literacy skills were very insightful because of the subject matter he teaches. They noted that large class sizes, a wide range of student skills, and poor writing skills present challenges for them. All three have worked directly with the literacy leaders in their schools and noted their helpfulness. Joelle and Louis both described particular research and writing assignments they had conducted with students, along with the help of the literacy leaders. All of them had positive things to say about the work of the literacy leaders and its impact upon their teaching. Two of the three noted that student performance and quality of work on those projects on which they had worked with the literacy leaders was improved. All of the teachers noted the importance of collaboration with other teachers in their buildings in a variety of ways, both formal and informal.

Darla, the principal of Middle School A, provided additional data from an administrative perspective. She noted the school's attempt to make literacy a key element in the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan, with an emphasis on both reading and writing. She noted the benefits of having three literacy leaders in the building as opposed to just one, and the importance of setting building goals for literacy that all teachers could agree on. She also provided data about professional

development in reading and writing strategies at the school. Darla praised the work of the three literacy leaders, noting them to be very talented and passionate leaders, whom she tries to give the power to do their jobs well.

Several observations were conducted in District Two between May of 2007 and February of 2008. The majority of observations were conducted at district meetings and training sessions, and a couple at individual schools. The observations of literacy leader meetings allowed for collection of specific data about the work and roles of the literacy leaders as well as presenting a perspective on how the district provides the necessary support for the literacy leaders. The meetings allowed for positive interaction and collaboration across grade levels and schools. Katherine and Beth, the literacy specialists, facilitated all the meetings of the group. Data indicates a focus on the literacy leaders' roles and responsibilities, sharing of ideas among schools, and a focus on writing instruction. A good portion of one full-day meeting was focused on discussion about the roles of literacy leaders in contributing to school improvement and the literacy leaders' job descriptions in an attempt to better define their roles and responsibilities. Other topics of discussion included the formative assessment system, promoting literacy through use of young adult literature, setting goals, the writing trainings at middle schools, specific teaching strategies for reading and writing, and discussion of the Strategic Plan. Data clearly indicates that the literacy specialists spend a large amount of time planning for the meeting and carefully coordinating materials and use of time. They also promote dialogue and collaboration among the group members.

Another observation was conducted at High School B during a staff meeting which included a presentation by the literacy leader, Steven. He focused on barriers to content area understanding, including how to teach text features, access prior knowledge, and how to focus on content-specific vocabulary. He also presented a teach-the-text-backwards activity and encouraged teachers to try using this method. Data was also collected during a training and work session for language arts teachers at Middle School A. Their goal was to discuss school writing assessment data, identify a writing strand as a focus area, practice scoring sample papers, and refine the definition of the strand. Their discussion focused on two strands, ideas and content and sentence fluency, as those in which students needed the most work. Grade level groups met independently and then presented to the whole group.

Another observation was conducted during a meeting of the committee working on identifying core standards in reading, literature, and writing for all grades. Teachers participating represented all secondary schools in the district. Level groups had already generated ten core standards in each area and these were being presented to the whole group for feedback and revision. Discussion focused on grade level analysis, omissions, gaps or overlaps in the standards, and coming to consensus. There was also discussion of how content teachers can best teach conventions, modes of writing, and other aspects related to identifying and putting the core standards into practice in the schools, with a lot of debate about whether individual standards should be included or not included for the various grade levels.

Numerous documents were also collected and coded for District Two. The documents were provided by Katherine and Beth, some by school literacy leaders, and some collected during observation sessions. A list of all the documents is included in Appendix D. Documents provide data showing the level of focus on literacy in a wide variety of contexts, from the activities of literacy leaders and READ 180 teachers, to writing workshop trainings, inservices and special events, and the committees for core standards and the common literacy model. The documents present important data about the work of the district literacy specialists, charged with coordinating all of these efforts. Many of the documents reflect that a central aspect of their work is effective communication with a variety of individuals all over the district, including teachers, administrators, and others. The importance of organization and careful planning of meetings, workshops and other events is also clearly reflected. The documents also indicate a prominent change in direction currently underway in District Two, some of it dictated by the Strategic Plan and an increased focus on best practices in literacy instruction.

Table 2 shows the elements included in District Two’s literacy reform efforts:

Table 2
Elements of District Two Literacy Initiative

<u>Element</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>School or schools</u>
Comprehensive K-12 Literacy Model	Instructional model in literacy	All
Core standards in literacy, K-12	To identify what students will know and be able to do. Committee worked to identify standards	All
Literacy leaders	Full-time teachers who	All

	receive training, distribute information, and conduct literacy leadership in schools	
Strategic Plan	Superintendent's plan to improve student achievement, addresses literacy model and core standards	All
Common Writing Instruction Model	Training for all language arts teachers in <i>Teaching the Qualities of Writing</i> , a writing workshop approach	Middle Schools
READ 180	Reading intervention program for struggling readers	All
Instructional Coaches	To provide one-on-one instructional coaching in all secondary schools	All schools in 2008-09
Summer Institute	Mini courses offered for teachers, optional attendance	District
Formative Assessment System	To provide periodic assessments supplementary to state testing, to identify student needs and target instruction	Partially implemented
District resources	Financial support for literacy leaders and program	District
District literacy specialists	Coordinate literacy leaders, READ 180, writing trainings, encourage communication and collaboration	District
PLC Groups	Collaborative groups of teachers within or across content areas or grade levels	Some
Freshman writing lab	Supplement regular English curriculum and assist struggling students	High School A
Targeting students	Appropriate placement and curriculum for ELL	High School A Middle School A

	students, those below passing in state tests	
Teaching Strategies	Focus on content-area reading, vocabulary, and writing strategies	All
Literacy Leader cohort meetings	Collaboration, planning, sharing, goal setting, discussion of literacy leader roles	District
Program evaluation	Use of surveys by literacy specialists following training sessions. No formal evaluation of literacy leader program	District

Major Themes Emerging from the Data

Following the coding of all data, which included tabulating the frequency of codes, codes were categorized in order to identify major themes emerging from the data. There were a total of 231 codes for District One and 188 codes for District Two (See Appendix F for a complete list of codes). Counting and sorting of the codes resulted in fifteen major themes emerging for District One and ten major themes emerging for District Two. Themes are discussed in order of number of codes, from most to least. The codes that resulted in each theme came from interview data, observational data, and document data. Each theme is discussed in this section separately for Districts One and Two with separate tables for the themes in each district. Table 3 shows major themes emerging for District One.

Because the coding for District One was done prior to the coding for District Two, it is possible that the identification of codes in District One affected the coding process in District Two, in that the terminology used to identify categories may have

carried over from District One to District Two. Had District Two data been coded first, it is possible that the terms to identify categories for both districts may have been different. It is also notable that fewer major themes emerged for District Two than for District One. While the literacy initiatives in both districts have branched out in a number of different areas, the coding process in District Two allowed for terms to fall more readily into a smaller number of categories. Perhaps the words used to describe each theme in District Two are broader or more general terms. Several common themes also emerged for both districts, as discussed later.

Table 3
Major Themes for District One

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Brief description</u>	<u>Number of codes</u>
Literacy Coaching	Characteristics and responsibilities of literacy coaches	65
Instructional Strategies	Reading strategies and those related to Reading Apprenticeship	59
Collaboration	Communication, brainstorming, relationships, discussion, small group work	55
Reading Apprenticeship	Details describing Reading Apprenticeship as central form of professional development, includes materials related to	46
Forms of literacy leadership	Literacy coaching, teams, instructional leadership, school-based coaching	45
Best practices	Capacity building, classroom instructional practices, modeling, demonstrations	45
Resources	Forms of support, financial and material	42

Goals	Related to literacy, implementation and evaluation of literacy task force goals	38
Assessment and evaluation	Data, assessments, research, standards, evaluation	36
Student literacy skills	Specific student skills such as summarizing, making inferences, notetaking, oral fluency, vocabulary	32
Professional development	Types of professional development: late starts, meetings, training sessions, workshops	31
Challenges	Problems and issues such as resistance, constraints, confusion, obstacles	30
Intervention	Specific intervention programs such as READ 180	29
Reading incentives	Incentive programs and reading motivation	26
School and district-level relations and connections	District support of schools, other districts and schools, visitations, networking	25

Major Themes for District One:

1. The first theme to emerge from the data for District One is *literacy coaching*, with a total of sixty-five codes. This theme includes the characteristics and responsibilities of literacy coaches. Due to the focus on the roles of the coaches in the individual schools, many codes refer to their important characteristics: helpfulness, organization, credibility, openness, optimism, and flexibility. Some codes also refer to specific responsibilities of the coaches: checking in, support, classroom visits, mentoring, co-teaching, listening, doing observations, delivering, navigating, soliciting,

and follow-up. The code “support” was the most frequently identified as descriptive of the role that coaches play. “New teachers” was also coded several times, as several interview subjects indicated a focus on working with new teachers. “Credibility” was a characteristic most frequently cited. Other codes in this theme category also refer to coaches defining their roles, performing in non-evaluative ways, establishing trust, and setting priorities. In general, the data reflects that literacy coaches in District One are valued for their positive and supportive characteristics and skills.

2. The second theme is *instructional strategies* with fifty-nine codes. “Reading strategies” specifically is coded twenty-three times. Several codes refer to specific teaching strategies: Student-owned strategies (SOS), think-alouds, SSR (Sustained Silent Reading, talking to the text, QAR (Question-Answer Relationships), active reading, graphic organizers, test taking strategies, think-pair-share, think-ink-link, thick and thin questions, open mind strategy, SQ3R (Survey-Question-Read-Recite-Review), and two-column notes. Think-alouds was the most common among the coded strategies because it is a key strategy promoted in the Reading Apprenticeship training. Some codes also refer to best practices, cooperative learning, the reading process, and approach to text, all important elements of instructional practice. This theme area demonstrates District One’s commitment to effective instructional strategies, which are

an important part of the district's professional development and are also promoted by literacy coaches district-wide.

3. This third major theme is *collaboration*. The most common codes in this category are the terms "collaboration," coded twenty times, and "discussion," coded eleven times. Relationships were also frequently cited in the data. Codes such as participation, communication, brainstorming, small groups, and activities are also coded multiple times, all referring the collaborative work around literacy that is evident in the district. Coaches work collaboratively with staff members in schools, and teachers collaborate during Reading Apprenticeship trainings and within their buildings. Other codes in this category refer to coaches meetings, presentations, expectations, and culture. In general, the data demonstrates that people working cooperatively to achieve literacy goals is a key element of the reform in District One.
4. *Reading Apprenticeship* is the next theme that emerges. The name of the program itself was coded twenty-three times in the data, because it is the centerpiece of the district's professional development for literacy. Several codes also refer to the resource binder with Reading Apprenticeship materials, and the Four Dimensions of Reading, which are a central concept in the framework. Other common codes include the goals of RA, apprenticeship, common language, and metacognition. Data from interviews, observations during Reading Apprenticeship trainings, and

document analysis all point to the prominent role of the Reading Apprenticeship program and materials as an invaluable resource for literacy coaches and teachers in District One, the centerpiece of its literacy training.

5. The next theme is *forms of literacy leadership*, with forty-five codes. This theme includes two frequently coded terms, literacy coaching and literacy teams. The work of the individuals who are coaches and the school literacy teams are referred to frequently in the data as forms of leadership because they are the vehicles for improving literacy in the schools. Other forms of leadership in this category include modeling, job-embedded coaching, literacy support teachers, instructional leadership, school-based coaching, and one-on-one coaching because they all refer to different forms that leadership takes in the district. The data demonstrate that providing leadership from the top down in the area of secondary school literacy is a central goal for District One.
6. *Best practices* is the next major theme with forty-five codes. It is a general descriptor for a category that groups a variety of codes referring to capacity building, classroom practices, changing instruction, teacher needs, classroom application, and reflection. Modeling and demonstrations are included as codes in this category because they provide a means of supporting best practices in the classroom. Other codes include teacher needs, lesson plans, pre-teaching, and change. Some refer to more specific

concepts such as technical reading and writing, literary elements, sociocultural context, challenging text, types of questions, and reader identity. This theme reflects the focus on improving instructional strategies, and promoting changes in teaching in order to impact learning which are evident in the data from District One.

7. The next emerging theme is *resources*. The general term “resources” is coded eleven times. Other terms coded multiple times include financial support, administrative support, and textbooks. Much of the data indicate the concern with resources, both financial and material. Those related to materials include teaching tools, professional library, technology, and textbooks. Some are more closely related to resources in terms of human capital, such as people, time, substitute days, and diversity. Other terms refer more to material resources and infrastructure. Because resources are an important element of support for school districts attempting to improve teaching and learning, this is an obvious theme area. The attention to resources that emerges from the data indicates that the district has made considerable investment to back up its goals in adolescent literacy.
8. The next general theme is *goals*. The more specific term of “literacy goals” is coded twenty times in the data. The district task force is included as an important part of the goal setting. Other codes in this category include the district initiative, survey, recommendations, follow up report, implementation and rationale. Commitment and momentum are important

codes as well as descriptors such as trickle-down, mandate, and rationale. Clear goals and objectives are an important beginning point for any major reform effort, and the data clearly indicates that District One has set clear goals around literacy reform in secondary schools and maintained a deliberate focus upon them. Goals are also important in teaching, as some codes refers to teachers' and coaches' goals.

9. *Assessment and evaluation* is the next major theme with a total of thirty-six codes. All the codes in this category refer to various forms of assessment and data, including state tests, test scores, z-scores, research, strand data, self-assessment, data systems, standards, evaluation, and anecdotal evidence. The work in District One has been guided by information provided by assessments, both at the state and district level. The original task force began its work by looking at student data related to literacy, and program evaluation elements have since been carried out through careful analysis of data. Biancarosa and Snow (2006) recommend ongoing summative assessment as an important element in effective adolescent literacy programs because it allows for monitoring progress and providing information to teachers and policy makers over time. Based on coding resulting in this theme, the data indicates that District One has effectively designed and used assessments and made effective use of the data provided as well.

10. *Student literacy skills* is the next emerging theme, with thirty-two codes that refer to specific student skills. The most commonly coded are summarizing, making inferences, writing skills, and notetaking. Other terms related to student skills are oral fluency, vocabulary, roots and suffixes, similarities and differences, grammar and sentence structure, questioning, locating information, on-demand tasks, monitoring reading, and academic literacy. Identifying skills is one important code in this category as is mastery. This theme demonstrates the district's focus on what student know and can do, which becomes the basis for improving student learning.
11. *Professional development* is the next emerging theme with a total of thirty-one codes. The term professional development itself is coded fourteen times. The other codes in this category include those related to types of professional development in District One: Professional Learning Communities, late starts, training sessions, meetings, presenters, workshops, and freshman team. On-going, high quality professional development is a key element of improving literacy in secondary schools. It is the focus of the work of literacy coaches and the Reading Apprenticeship program in the district.
12. The next emerging theme is *challenges*. The codes in this category relate to problems and issues that are frequently mentioned in the data. Common codes in this category include: reluctance or resistance, constraints,

inequities, disagreement, ambiguity, conflict, confusion, obstacles, challenges, and assumptions. Some of the terms also refer to challenges in terms of student academic performance: lack of reading, transition to high school, low skills, non-readers, levels of literacy, and struggling readers. For example, teachers interviewed often expressed concern about students who did not value reading and who had low skill levels. The variety of skill levels among students was mentioned as a particular challenge by one teacher. Change does not happen easily, and the fact that problems and challenges are a major theme for District One is not a negative element, but a positive one in the sense that district is willing to recognize the challenges with literacy reform and find ways to deal with them.

13. The next theme is *intervention* with a total of twenty-nine codes. The term “intervention” is coded seven times as is “READ 180.” Some codes also deal with specific programs or types of interventions such as Read Naturally, Reading Counts, stratified intervention, multi-tiered programs, and interventions for ELL and special needs students. Other related terms in this category include placement, targeting students, preparing students, and academic improvement. District One has included intervention as one of the major elements in the literacy initiative, and the data indicate a high level of attention to various forms of intervention.

14. The next major theme is *reading incentives*. The term “reading incentive” was coded nine times and the term “motivation” was coded ten times.

Other codes include: book clubs, parent nights, student teams, competitions, Battle of the Books, and field trips. District One has included incentives for reading as one of its major goals in the literacy initiative. Incentive programs are often discussed by the interview subjects in the data. The district coaches have also made supporting the incentive programs an important part of their work, and teachers interviewed also cited their impact.

15. The final major theme for District One is *school and district-level relations and connections*. This theme includes codes that refer to the district support of schools, school support of literacy elements, and the impact of other districts in providing information for District One. Related codes include: district connections, building approach, problem solving, planning, exploration, and timelines. Seven codes refer to other districts and schools and others include school visitations, subcommittees, and summer school. Data reveal that district coaches network with coaches and school districts outside of District One, and High School A, for example, conducted visitations to other schools. These sources of information and support have made important contributions to the literacy initiative in District One.

Table 4 shows the major themes that emerged for District Two

Table 4
Major Themes for District Two

Theme	Brief description	Number of codes
Professional Development	Literacy coaching, meetings, workshops, and other activities	96
Writing	Writing training sessions, assessment, and student writing skills	73
Leadership and change	Elements of leadership and forms of change. Administrative support for reform	72
Roles and characteristics of literacy leaders	Literacy leaders' work, roles, characteristics	71
Instructional strategies	Student skills in vocabulary, reading strategies, best practices	60
Standards and assessment	Core standards, benchmarks, accountability, alignment, assessments	59
Collaboration	Discussion and sharing, communication, participation, small groups	55
Challenges	Problems and constraints, "time" being the most frequent	40
Goals	Strategic plan, goals related to literacy, literacy model	39
Resources	Funding, material resources, diverse forms available to teachers and students	35

Major themes for District Two:

1. The first theme emerging from the data for District Two, with ninety-six codes, is *professional development*. The most frequent codes were: "professional development" coded twenty-three times, "content-areas"

coded thirty one times, “literacy coaching” coded eight times, “meetings” coded eleven times, and “workshops” coded six times. Professional development for new teachers was also coded multiple times. Several codes refer to different forms of professional development in District Two: summer institute, site based, literacy coaching, PLC’s, instructional coaches, peer coaching, and content-area professional development. Some codes in this category also refer to resources that support professional development, such as Title IIA applications, adult learning, trainings, workshops, and meetings. The data from interviews, observations, and analysis of documents clearly indicate that high-quality professional development is a priority for District Two.

2. The next major theme emerging from the data is *writing*, with 73 codes in this category. The term “writing” itself was coded twenty-seven times, “conventions” was coded ten times, and “writing trainings” was coded six times. Some codes refer to specific student skills related to writing: conventions, fluency, technical writing, authentic writing, pre-writing, and revision. Some codes refer to student writing work samples such as writing strands, writing assignments, scoring guide, and work samples. Other codes refer to specific writing programs used and promoted in the district: Jane Shaffer writing, writing programs, writing workshop, and models of writing. Three codes also refer to writing assessment. This theme demonstrates the prominence of writing as an important part of the literacy

program in District Two. A large number of District Two documents are materials related to writing programs and trainings. Middle School A's efforts to improve student scores in writing, and the middle school professional development in *Teaching the Qualities of Writing* and the workshop approach demonstrate how essential writing is in District Two.

3. The next emerging theme is District Two is *leadership and change*, with seventy-two codes. All the codes in this category are terms referring to different elements of leadership and various forms of change.

Administrative support is included in this category (twelve codes). Other frequently-coded terms include: teams and teamwork, leadership voice, literacy consortium, support, change, surveys, teacher feedback. Other codes include: building support, mandates, financial support, directives, expectations, cohort groups, school reform, structural changes, district transition, restructuring, building perspectives, feeder groups, and implementation. The number of codes in this category indicates that the focus on change and providing leadership for change is a key element in District Two's efforts. The term "support" is also included in several different code phrases which demonstrates widespread concern with the need for support, both administrative and structural.

4. The next theme is *roles and characteristics of literacy leaders*. Several codes in this category refer to the literacy leaders' roles and elements that make up their work: liaison (four codes), presenting, missionary work,

facilitation (four codes), demonstration (five codes), lesson planning, observation, changing minds, modeling, simulation, community building, and documentation of work. Several codes refer to the literacy specialists and their roles (five codes), and “job description” is coded five times. Other codes in this category refer to important characteristics of literacy leaders as described by the literacy leaders themselves or those referring to them: passion, cheerleading, humor, persistence, rapport, advocates, ongoing, involved, essential, reflection, visibility, flexibility, consistency, informal, creativity, and awareness. The large variety of codes in this category demonstrate that the literacy leaders perform a number of roles and are central agents of literacy reform in District Two, both the district literacy specialists and the building level leaders.

5. The next major theme emerging from the data is *instructional strategies*, with sixty codes. This category contains codes that refer to student skills in vocabulary and reading comprehension. The term “instructional strategies” was coded eleven times, “vocabulary” four, “best-practices” four, “READ 180” twelve, and “ELD/ELL students” seven times. Classroom application, and real-world application are also included. Other codes refer to specific strategies and skills: word of the day/week, roots program, book talks, teach the text backwards, research skills, literary terms, and listening skills. Other codes refer to particular student needs related to instructional strategies: focus on freshman, student centered, student needs, diversity,

student improvement, and target population. The codes in this category demonstrate that District Two's efforts are student-centered and that a focus on effective instructional strategies and best practices is a central part of the literacy program in the district.

6. The next major theme is *standards and assessment*, with fifty-nine codes. Several codes in this category relate to the term "standards," which was coded nine times: benchmarks, accountability, core standards, literature standards, progression, standards document, power standards, grade-level, and alignment. Other terms refer to evaluation and assessment data: grade-level analysis, focus strands, formative assessment, research, data, and testing. Since assessments, both formative and summative, are an important component of adolescent literacy reform, this category demonstrates that District One has maintained a focus in this area and is making data-driven decisions. Teachers, principals, and literacy leaders interviewed frequently referred to test scores and student data from assessments as the driving force behind their efforts in literacy. The district's strategic direction, which addresses core standards and formative assessments are also a driving force in district wide literacy efforts.
7. The next major theme is *collaboration*. Codes related to collaboration appear fifty-five times in the data. The term "collaboration" was coded eighteen times, and "discussion/sharing" was coded nineteen times. "Communication" is also frequently coded. Other codes in this category are

interaction, shared activity, debate, participation, agreement/consensus, and small groups. The large number of codes here indicates that cooperative effort and collaboration among literacy leaders and groups of teachers is an important element in the literacy reform. All of the literacy leaders interviewed cite the importance of clear communication and cooperation in their work, and documents and other data indicate that the district's efforts depend on the collaborative efforts of its teachers and literacy leaders.

8. The next theme that emerges from the data for District Two is *challenges*. The codes in this category relate to challenges and problems, and most common by far, with thirteen codes, was "time." Full-time teaching was coded three times, and all three times referred to the role of literacy leaders who do their work in addition to full time teaching loads. Other codes in this category are: roadblocks, schedules, class sizes, frustrations, bias, resistance, buy in, fractured, struggling readers, isolated skills, and choice. As noted earlier, challenges come with any change effort, and the coding reflects data that shows lack of time is a significant challenge. All three literacy leaders interviewed indicated that having full time teaching loads prevented them from spending adequate time fulfilling their duties as literacy leader. The data also indicates that District Two recognizes the challenges they face and works on finding ways to bring about change in a positive direction.

9. The next major theme is *goals*, with thirty-nine codes. The general term “goals” was coded thirteen times, “planning” eight, and “strategic plan” five. Goal setting is a critical element for the district in affecting change. The superintendent’s new strategic direction, which is referenced several times in the data, is inspiring significant focus on a common district direction in literacy and on identifying core standards. It has become a central part of the goals in the district. Other codes included in this category are: action plans, AYP, articulation, vision, literacy model, and ideas. Data from literacy specialists and leaders also point to their literacy program goals and individual school goals related to literacy. The data clearly indicates that District Two is goal-driven in its efforts to bring about school improvement.
10. The final major theme for District Two is *resources*, with thirty-five codes. The term “resources” itself is coded nine times, “materials” five times, and “budget/funding,” three times. Other codes in this category refer to a variety of types of resources: videos, web resources, documents, CSR grant, textbook adoption, district shared literature collection, books, tutoring, parents, freshman lab, posters, and high school literature. The variety of codes in this category demonstrate the diverse forms of resources available to schools and teachers in District Two. Data indicates that disseminating resources is a central element in the literacy specialists job in the district, and that they themselves serve as a valuable resource for

literacy leaders and teachers. Literacy leaders also have and make use of a variety of resources in their school communities to support literacy.

The themes identified here for both District One and District Two were used to generate recommendations for each district in the evaluation section of this report. For example, instructional strategies as a common theme in both districts led to recommendations related to how each district might most effectively incorporate best practices in the secondary schools. Because of the prominence and success of the Reading Apprenticeship program in District One, for example, this theme led to the recommendation to continue Reading Apprenticeship for teachers until all secondary teachers have been fully trained. The themes also provide evidence that the research questions, focusing on programs and practices, roles of literacy coaches, and impact on student achievement, have been fully addressed in the study. The data, coding, and identification of themes reveal a picture of the programs and practices used in the two districts, illustrate the roles of literacy leaders and coaches, and help to identify those practices that have had the greatest impact on instruction and student achievement, such as teacher leadership and a systematic program in content area literacy.

Comparative, Cross-Case Analysis

Both Districts One and Two have district-wide literacy initiatives in place with goals specific to adolescent literacy in secondary schools. Both districts' programs have strengths and drawbacks which the data highlight. This study intentionally analyzed the programs and approaches in two separate school districts less for the sake of comparison than for what can be learned by studying a variety of programs in more

than one district. While a study that included only one school district would have still provided valuable insights, a comparative study of two districts which approach the problem in different ways, has allowed for other important insights to be gained. If only one district had been studied, the results would have been considerably limited. The comparative study also allowed for analysis of the roles of literacy leaders in one district versus literacy coaches in the other. Both districts have similar demographic makeup although one district is larger than the other. Both districts have goals related to literacy, have dedicated and supportive administrators, and have excellent teachers and literacy leaders. Each district's data is also complementary to the other in terms of helping to identify what might be missing from each. There are several similarities and differences between Districts One and Two which are discussed in this section. Table 5 shows similarities and differences between Districts One and Two

Table 5
Similarities and Differences between Districts One and Two

<u>Similarities</u>	<u>Differences</u>
Both district have <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy initiatives for secondary schools resulting in significant changes • Initiatives that developed out of concern with student academic achievement • Forms of literacy leadership in place; neither has a complete literacy coaching model • District-level support personnel for literacy • District and site-based professional development • Made effective use of data to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Two has developed a common K-12 literacy model and is implementing core standards. • District One has part time literacy coaches; District Two has literacy leaders, full-time teachers who provide mostly non-coaching support • In District One, the Reading Apprenticeship program provides more focused and centralized professional development for content-area literacy: District One does not have a focused program but provides content-area support in

<p>implement reform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy coaches and leaders who make use of school-level data to develop programs and materials. • A focus on changing instructional practice • Common emerging themes from the data: collaboration, instructional strategies, professional development, assessment and evaluation, and goals • Positive elements of collaboration and cooperative effort around literacy • Common intervention programs such as READ 180 and school-based interventions. • Local formative assessments (not yet fully implemented in District Two) 	<p>a variety of ways and has promoted a more site-based approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District One has school literacy teams at each secondary school; District One does not have school literacy teams • District Two has professional development that is more diversified with a number of initiatives underway • District One has focused almost exclusively on reading; District Two has a more integrated focus which includes writing workshop approach for middle schools • District One has made reading incentive and motivation programs an important element of literacy reform; District Two has not used incentive programs • District One has done more networking with resources outside of the district, such as school visitations; District Two has not
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First of all, both Districts One and Two are districts undergoing a change process; they are in transitional periods. The change in both districts has developed out of concerns over student performance and school improvement issues related to literacy. Both districts realize the critical importance of better meeting the needs of adolescent students in literacy and are to be commended for turning their attention to this issue and for providing resources for secondary schools. Both districts' construct "literacy" to mean reading and writing skill that is measurable in test scores as well as academic performance. District One has a more specific construct of literacy which is provided by the framework of the Reading Apprenticeship program. District One's

literacy initiative began only a few years ago, and will likely flourish as district support for secondary literacy increases, school literacy committees become more active, and individual school coaches refine their work. District Two's literacy initiative also began several years ago and has branched out in a number of different directions since. The district's superintendent has included literacy as an important part of her strategic plan, and more changes will be forthcoming as the common literacy model and the instructional coaching model is put into place in 2008-09.

Both District One and Two have forms of literacy leadership in place, but neither makes use of a complete coaching model. Both districts have district-level personnel, literacy support teachers in District One and literacy specialists in District Two, who work to coordinate the secondary literacy program in the district. District One has only part-time literacy coaches in secondary schools. They work to provide literacy support for teachers and do some coaching, but most have worked with only a small percentage of the staff. District Two currently has literacy leaders who are full time teachers and who provide support and leadership around literacy. The literacy leaders' work is mostly non-coaching leadership, and their work is hampered by the fact that they are also full time teachers which limits or completely prevents actual classroom literacy coaching from happening, although they provide leadership in a variety of other ways. In general, neither district currently uses a complete literacy coaching model: District One has partial literacy coaching and District Two has literacy leaders who perform support that is not one-on-one coaching. It is likely that District One may move toward implementation of a full coaching model as funding

becomes available. District Two may choose to redefine the role of the literacy leaders and may make a literacy focus part of the work of the new instructional coaches beginning in 2008-09.

District-wide and school-based professional development is evident in both districts, which much of the data in this study documents. District One has a more centralized and unified program of professional developing with the Reading Apprenticeship program, but each school's literacy team is also carrying out training. For example, in High School A, the literacy committee has planned to conduct whole-staff training in content area literacy strategies. District Two's district-level professional development is more diversified, with a number of initiatives underway simultaneously. These include the training for literacy leaders, the training in writing workshop approaches for middle school teachers, and the upcoming training in use of core standards and the common literacy model. Professional development activities in District Two at the school level is left up to the individual school administrators, other school leaders, and the literacy leaders. High School A does most of its professional development through PLC groups and academic departments, High School B includes elements of literacy combined with other areas of focus, and Middle School A has conducted whole staff training in content-area literacy as well as a language arts focus on improving writing assessment scores.

District One has focused its professional development specifically on content area reading with the academic literacy or reading-to-learn approaches used in Reading Apprenticeship. Ogle and Lang (2007) note that evidence based practices in

literacy instruction for adolescents include: building a common understanding of the reading process, creating a framework for teaching students strategies, engaging students metacognitively, ensuring students have materials they can read, and creating contexts for students to learn together. Reading Apprenticeship has provided for all of these elements in District One. In addition, a level of enthusiasm and excitement about literacy is evident in the training sessions. It is obvious in the training sessions that participants are having fun, yet are also serious about mastering the material. There is a strong sense of engagement with the program that carries on into the school sites. The program also provides the positive element of collaboration for teachers who are working toward a common goal. However, District One has focused very little on content area writing and writing-to-learn strategies, which research shows is an important element in adolescent literacy (Bromley, 2007). A balanced approach to literacy instruction incorporates both reading and writing as reciprocal processes (Gambrell, Malloy, & Mazzoni, 2007). Teachers and students might benefit from a more integrated approach to literacy that includes a focus on both reading and writing.

District Two has largely left content-area reading approaches up to the individual schools, although they do provide some district-level support. They have focused much more attention on writing as a key element of professional development, especially with implementation of the writing workshop approach, which involved training for all middle school language arts teachers in the district. The reason for the focus on writing came from concern over test scores in writing which were lower than state averages. Because writing is an important element of literacy, and because

reading and writing scores tend to demonstrate covariance, the focus on writing is certainly an appropriate one. However, a more balanced approach to literacy may be needed in both districts. The new common literacy model in District Two may encourage a more centralized and integrated approach to literacy as well.

Despite the greater focus on writing in District Two, writing scores from state assessment data have not shown improvement, as reported by the district literacy specialists. This is likely due to the fact that the writing focus has been mostly at the middle school level with the training provided in *Teaching the Qualities of Writing*. Since state test data report scores for grades seven and ten only, it is likely that over the next few years, as the program is more fully implemented, writing scores for grade ten students will increase. In addition, the identification of core standards in writing may help teachers better target essential skills in writing.

Both districts are comparable to school districts nationwide and statewide, and like many districts have focused time and resources to secondary school literacy programs. Each one has done so in different ways, choosing different areas of focus, which function as different means toward a common result. Teachers and administrators from both districts are generally supportive of literacy efforts. The two districts are also similar in terms of climate. From the administrative offices to the individual school sites, staff members are friendly and positive, school buildings are welcoming, there is a general sense that learning is valued, and in general, caring adults provide for students nurturing learning environments.

The data in the study indicate that both districts make effective use of data and implement data-driven reforms. District One's literacy initiative began with analysis of student achievement data which helped to target the needs of adolescents in the area of literacy. District Two's focus on writing developed out of concern that writing scores district-wide were not showing adequate improvement. Literacy leaders and coaches in both districts also make use of school-level data in order to develop programs and materials, set goals, and work with teachers, which is one of the roles of literacy coaches typically (Buly, Coskie, Robinson, & Egawa, 2006). Both districts have also focused attention on changing instructional practices; however, District One's approach has been more centralized and focused on content area reading, which research shows is an important area of focus (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Gambrell, Malloy, & Mazzone, 2007) whereas District Two has promoted a more site-based approach. The variety of methods used by literacy leaders in District Two and variation in focus from school to school support this conclusion.

District One has made reading incentive and motivation programs an important element of its literacy initiative, with several different effective programs and practices underway in schools, which research shows is important for struggling readers who have experienced repeated failure (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Lewis & Dahbany, 2008). These include the district-wide Battle of the Books and school-level programs, activities, and contests. District Two has not included reading incentive and motivational programs in its goals. While some schools may have activities and incentive programs for reading, they are not evident in the data in this study. District

One has also done more networking with resources outside of the district; for example, its literacy coaches participate in a state literacy coaches' organization which meets regularly. District personnel have made visitations to other school districts and sought information from resources outside of the district. Some schools, such as High School A, have also conducted visitations to other schools to observe their literacy programs and practices. District Two has not made use of many resources outside the district. If there is networking with other schools districts or organizations, it is not evident in the data in this study.

The themes that emerged from the coding of data in this study indicate other similarities and differences. There are themes common to both districts, including *collaboration, instructional strategies, professional development, and assessment and evaluation*. Both districts' data indicates a strong focus in all of these areas. Especially notable is that positive elements of collaboration and cooperative effort are built into the literacy program in both districts, an important element in improving instruction as noted by Ogle and Lang (2007). Reading Apprenticeship in District One provides sociocultural contexts for teachers to collaborate, as do the literacy leader cohort meetings and the middle school writing program in District Two. The literacy initiatives in each district are cooperative efforts that recognize the importance of having the input and participation of and clear communication with all stakeholders.

As pointed out earlier, both districts also focus on literacy leadership, but in different ways. Both also are goal-focused and goal-driven, with *goals* also being a common theme in the data. District One has a direct focus on intervention and

incentives and little focus on writing to learn strategies, whereas District Two has some intervention programs such as READ 180, little or no focus on incentives, and a large focus on improving the teaching of writing and student writing skills. Among elements important to literacy, research shows the importance of intervention for struggling readers (Ogle & Lang, 2007), reading incentives and motivation (Lewis & Dahbany, 2008) and a focus on writing instruction (Calkins, 2001; Reeves, 2004; Bromley, 2007).

Finally, District Two has chosen to identify core standards through the process followed by a committee of representatives from each school in 2007-08 to narrow and refine the state standards to core standards in literature, reading, and writing. They have also chosen to design a common literacy model to guide instruction in literacy district-wide (See Appendix I). District One has focused more on refining its assessment system and implementing intervention and incentive programs, along with a focus on explicit comprehension strategies in content areas, as recommended by Biancarosa and Snow (2006) through Reading Apprenticeship, but they have not attempted to specify core standards or identify a literacy program model.

Both districts have made enormous strides in implementing and refining a literacy program for secondary schools. Both also face challenges and barriers, which are to be expected, as change does not happen easily in schools, as noted by Covey (2004).

Conclusion

Both districts in this study have undertaken a process of gradual change over the last several years, identifying goals and establishing programs that focus on improving academic performance through increased literacy instruction in secondary schools. Both districts have wisely proceeded slowly and incrementally with the change process, and as of the conclusion of this study, the change process continues in each district, as district leaders revise and reform their programs. The data this study provides clearly shows a number of key components of the literacy reform, including a focus on content area reading and instructional strategies, collaboration, professional development, goals, and assessment and evaluation. These key theme areas emerged from the data for both districts, in addition to others separate for each. The data and resulting themes are used to provide specific recommendations for each district in the next chapter.

While the data clearly reflect strengths and weaknesses in each district's approach, it is important to focus on the fact that each district has made a serious commitment to focusing on literacy learning in secondary schools, in addition to a substantial investment of money and resources. This focus has contributed to a heightened awareness of the importance of literacy in both districts, which is critical to long-term success. Each district has also maneuvered the difficulties of balancing school autonomy and site-based decision making with district-wide goals and the need for a centralized approach.

Chapter Five makes specific recommendations for both District One and District Two and discusses the implications of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Secondary schools all over the nation have begun to make significant school reform a priority, with the primary goal being increased student achievement. Achievement in secondary schools is largely determined by students' literacy skills and ability to read for comprehension and use writing to learn across the curriculum. This case study provided an opportunity to closely study and analyze the programs and practices in two separate school districts with different approaches to secondary school literacy. As noted in Chapter Four, both Districts One and Two have made a great deal of progress in reforming schools, improving instructional practice, and maintaining a focus on adolescent literacy. Both districts also have similarities and differences in their approaches, as well as strengths and weaknesses. This chapter discusses the findings and implications of this study by returning to the original research questions, making recommendations for each district, discussing implications of the study, and making suggestions for further research.

The Research Questions

This study began with three research questions. Although the topics addressed by the research questions are integrated into the reported findings, this section will address each research question separately in terms of the results.

The first research question was: What district-wide programs and practices are used in the two districts to promote literacy in secondary schools? Both districts have a number of programs and practices to promote literacy, and both have created

sociocultural contexts for learning that encourage collaboration among teachers and school leaders. District One has used the recommendations of the Literacy Task Force to guide its efforts. Based on the task force's recommendations, several components were put into place including new district assessments, intervention programs such as READ 180, reading incentive and motivation programs such as Battle of the Books, training for teachers in content area literacy, and a partial literacy coaching model. The district's multi-faceted efforts have achieved some success as indicated by the data in this study. Reading scores have improved significantly at many schools, teachers have a heightened awareness of important content area reading concepts such as metacognition as well as a large number of strategies which they are learning to use, and both district-wide and individual school programs are being used as incentives to interest and excite students in reading. In addition, the use of a limited literacy coaching model, with one literacy support teacher assigned to work in each secondary school building, is another practice that the district is using to promote job-embedded professional development. Finally, READ 180 is helping those students significantly below grade level in reading make positive gains in reading, in addition to the development of new courses and other forms of intervention at individual schools.

District Two also has several programs and practices in place that are helping to promote literacy. Most importantly, there are a number of professional development activities in the district. Each school currently has a literacy leader, a full time teacher responsible for providing literacy support at the school level. These leaders receive

district training and support. The district has also put in place programs to focus on improving writing instruction with the writing workshop approach, which has provided training to all middle school language arts teachers. District Two also uses READ 180 as an intervention program, which has helped improve the skills of many struggling readers, in addition to other forms of intervention offered at individual schools. Finally, District Two's recent Strategic Direction put in place by the superintendent has resulted in some new efforts being undertaken. These include a formative assessment system to provide teachers with usable information about student skills, identification of core standards for each grade level in reading, literature, and writing, and the design of a comprehensive K-12 literacy model. Since the core standards and literacy model efforts are relatively recent, several professional development efforts in District Two in the future will be focused on them.

The second research question was: What roles do literacy leaders and coaches play in promoting literacy? District One has part-time literacy coaches who are called "literacy support teachers" at each secondary school. The interview, observation, and document data indicates that these teachers provide a number of forms of support for literacy in their respective schools: they participate in staff training and professional development events on inservice days, they help to coordinate the reading incentive programs in the schools, they work individually with teachers on incorporating literacy into their content teaching, they provide materials and resources for teachers, they work in classrooms co-teaching and modeling strategies, and they work with administrators and teachers on the school's literacy committee. The conclusion that

can be drawn is that literacy coaches or support teachers play a central role in promoting literacy through their direct work with teachers and programs in the individual schools.

District Two has literacy leaders in each secondary school. They function in mostly non-coaching roles to support literacy. Although they are full time teachers, they provide a number of forms of literacy support for teachers according to the data: they provide materials and resources, they analyze school data, they work with individual departments on literacy-related issues, they function as liaisons between district, school administrators, and teachers, they provide teaching ideas and strategies for teachers, they support the READ 180 programs and the writing workshop programs, and they coordinate professional development activities related to literacy. In general, the literacy coaches in District One and literacy leaders in District Two provide critical support for literacy but in different ways in each district.

The third research question was: What practices have had the greatest impact on teacher instruction and student achievement. First, in District One, data indicates the Reading Apprenticeship program has had a large impact on classroom instructional practices used by teachers. Although all secondary teachers have not yet been trained, those who have speak highly of the program and acknowledge its impact on their instructional practices through helping them understand the four-part framework of Reading Apprenticeship and how students comprehend content area reading. This is likely, in turn, to impact student learning and achievement as well, although the results of this study do not provide direct evidence of that. In addition, the work of the

literacy support teachers or coaches in each building has had an impact on instruction as well. Interview data indicates that the types of support provided by the literacy coaches has positively impacted teaching through the various forms of support the coaches provide, including helping teachers to implement Reading Apprenticeship strategies and practices in their classrooms. The district and school-level reading incentive programs such as Battle of the Books are also having an effect on student behavior by increasing the amount of reading that students are doing, especially at the middle school level. The Curriculum Director in District One stated that reading scores have improved significantly in some schools and that there is quantitative evidence of improvement for students in the READ 180 program. The cumulative effect of the efforts in assessment, intervention, incentives, and instructional practice in District One should have a significant impact on student performance in the district over time.

In District Two, the practices that have had the greatest impact on instruction and student achievement include the roles of literacy leaders, the professional development in writing workshop methods, and the READ 180 program. The literacy support provided by the literacy leaders working in each school has certainly impacted practice, at least among a number of teachers. Although they perform vastly different roles from school to school, interview evidence points to their helpfulness and impact on changing teaching practices and raising the level of awareness about literacy issues. They function as school leaders in a number of ways in the different schools. The writing workshop trainings for middle school teachers have significantly influenced

the way that writing is taught in the schools. Because almost all middle school language arts teachers have participated in the trainings and each school has a facilitator for the program, the reform effort has affected the instruction of all students in writing. The literacy specialists in District Two also report that there is quantitative evidence that demonstrates the reading gains of struggling readers in READ 180. Because the core standards and the comprehensive literacy model are relatively recent efforts and professional development related to them will be forthcoming, it is too early to assess their affect on instruction or student achievement. However, both of these efforts show promise in District Two.

Data-Based Program Evaluation for Districts One and Two

As noted earlier, this study incorporates elements of program evaluation. Bogdan and Taylor (1990) note that case studies are used provide an overview of the program, a description of innovative approaches, and a discussion of problems and dilemmas, successes and failures. These elements can help to inform practice, both for the two districts studied and other stakeholders in secondary school literacy leadership. Case study methods can advance our understanding of change and obstacles to change. My goal is that this study will be of use to the district officials who are leading reform efforts in these two districts, as well as those in the broader educational community, who may find useful insights and ideas.

The data this study presents is important for several stakeholders. School districts and district level administrators can find useful insights for district level programs and practices that impact literacy learning in secondary schools. High

schools and middle schools, especially principals and those who provide school-level leadership, can also benefit from the findings related to coaching, professional development, content-area literacy, assessment, data, motivation and incentive programs, and instructional strategies. Classroom teachers and literacy coaches and leaders are obvious stakeholders as well. This study illustrates how literacy leadership has been implemented in two individual school districts. It also illustrates the fact that there are a number of different approaches and methods of coaching appropriate for particular schools and teachers.

The broader educational community can also benefit from this study's findings. Teacher education programs can use the information to consider how their training methods and curricula are preparing secondary teachers. Teacher educators need to provide more extensive and effective training in academic and content area literacy for pre-service teachers. Colleges and universities may also want to consider implementing programs to train teachers in literacy coaching methods. It is possible and likely that in the future, programs that specialize in literacy coaching will be available to teachers and those seeking advanced degrees. Literacy coaching specializations and endorsements may become common. Because of the power and potential impact of the literacy coaching model, colleges and universities will need to turn greater attention to the role of academic literacy in general, and specifically, the role of literacy coaches in secondary schools. High school and middle school students will also be the ultimate stakeholder in this study because they will receive better support for literacy learning and content area achievement, and thus be better prepared

for success in future college and career paths. Ultimately, the broader community receives the benefit of programs targeting literacy, which will improve the reading, writing, thinking, and learning skills of future workers, citizens, and leaders.

Program evaluation is a way to make research more useful for those working in the field (Bogdan & Taylor, 1990), which is the reason I have incorporated it into this study. This section presents specific recommendations for both District One and District Two in order to improve their district-wide literacy programs. The recommendations are based on the findings of this study and the major themes that emerged from the data and also on research in best practices in literacy for adolescent learners. Recommendations are presented separately for each district.

Recommendations for District One

Based on the results of this study and the themes that emerged from the coding process, and based on research in best practices, the following recommendations are offered to district and school leaders in District One:

1. Since the data indicate that some schools in District One have given greater attention to adolescent literacy than others, the district should work toward centralizing the literacy program and setting clear expectations for each school. By making clear to school leaders and staff what is expected for each school, the district can address the problem of different levels of implementation from school to school. This centralization would provide the leadership necessary for a comprehensive and coordinated literacy program, as recommended by Biancarosa and Snow (2006). This recommendation comes from interview information from

the curriculum director in District One indicating that some secondary schools and principals have been more supportive of the district's literacy initiative and efforts than others. He noted that district mandates had not been clearly made and that efforts were more voluntary on the part of individual schools but that in the future there would probably need to be additional pressure placed upon the leaders of some schools to become more involved in literacy efforts. The three schools included in this study have all been actively involved in literacy and have supportive administration; however, other schools not chosen as research sites show less commitment to secondary school literacy.

2. The district should expand the literacy coaching model district-wide as funds become available, with the ultimate goal of having one full-time literacy coach in each building, as recommended by the IRA (2006). This allows for building upon the initial successes of the limited coaching model currently in place in all secondary schools. This recommendation comes from the interview data which shows the impact and effectiveness of literacy coaches through their own description of their work. Interview data from teachers at each school also demonstrates specific information about the effectiveness of the coaches. The literacy coaches have provided building wide professional development in literacy and shared strategies. In High School A, the literacy coach has worked with freshman teachers on notetaking and summarizing skills. Franklin at Middle School B has worked with teachers and students in classrooms to address test-taking skills and reading strategies. Heath at Middle School A has worked with

teachers such as Preston on incorporating literacy and Reading Apprenticeship strategies into lesson plans.

3. Ogle and Lang (2007) suggest that literacy programs require the “cooperative efforts of whole-school teams of teachers and administrators” (p. 128). Secondary schools in District One have literacy committees in place currently. Require each school literacy committee to design and implement a literacy action plan as part of the broader school improvement plan. While each school in District One has a literacy committee in place, an important element of school improvement in literacy, a literacy action plan would allow individual schools to analyze their own student achievement data and set goals appropriate for their building’s staff and students. This recommendation comes from observational and document data related to the work of the literacy committee in High School A. The committee has designed a literacy plan and literacy goals related to professional development in content area literacy, has conducted school visitations to other high schools, and has established goals and timelines. Other schools may have similar efforts underway, but a district requirement to prepare a specific literacy plan to become part of the school improvement plan would increase attention given to literacy and set specific goals for each school in the district. The goals of the plan would be designed to meet the particular needs of each school.
4. District One has effectively used the Reading Apprenticeship program to address explicit comprehension instruction, effective content area instruction, and text-based collaborative learning, as recommended by Biancarosa & Snow (2006).

District One should continue the Reading Apprenticeship training process until every secondary teacher in the district has been trained. In addition, the training should be maintained on a yearly basis for new teachers. This recommendation comes from interview data and observational data that describe the Reading Apprenticeship training sessions. The prominence of Reading Apprenticeship in the data and the large number of codes related to it demonstrate the success of the program as a central element of professional development for content area literacy. The curriculum director, the literacy coaches, and the teachers interviewed all cited specific information about the role that Reading Apprenticeship has played in their work. Teachers described specific strategies from Reading Apprenticeship that they had used in their classrooms, such as the think-aloud strategy. The training sessions observed also revealed a high level of enthusiasm about the program and its benefits on the part of teachers being trained. It also provides positive collaborative support for teachers that is so important to improving instruction. Because of the success of the program the data clearly shows, it is important that it be continued in District One until all secondary teachers are trained in the common language and strategies it provides.

5. While District One has focused its efforts in academic literacy on content-area reading, there is too little focus on writing instruction and writing to learn in the content areas. District One should expand the literacy initiative to include writing to learn as an important focus. This would provide a more integrated approach to adolescent literacy as recommended by Bromley (2007) and Gambrell, Malloy,

and Mazzoni (2007). This recommendation comes from comparative observations between District One and Two. District Two data indicates a strong focus on writing through *Teaching the Qualities of Writing* and other individual school efforts. This focus is noticeably lacking in District One, which has focused mostly on reading. The curriculum director indicated in interview information that the focus has been mostly on content area reading. Reading Apprenticeship materials also demonstrate that the program focuses on metacognition and reading skills, but not writing specifically. It is important that a comprehensive literacy program incorporate both reading and writing. Literacy coaches in District One could easily add writing strategies to the materials and strategies they present to and coach teachers in using.

6. Professional Learning Communities can be an important elements in teacher learning and schoolwide change to promote literacy (DuFour, 2005; Bean & Morewood, 2007). District One should require each secondary school to implement PLC groups for all staff members. These groups should collaboratively engage with teachers across content areas in order to analyze data, brainstorm, read and study research, evaluate student work, and focus on literacy (Bambino, 2002). This recommendation comes from interview data that indicates the influence and effectiveness of collaboration with other teachers. Each of the teachers interviewed discussed specific ways in which they have worked with other teachers, on committees, and in small groups. Reading Apprenticeship program data also show the importance and benefits of collaboration. Since

District One provides late start time for professional development, school staff could easily be arranged in multidisciplinary or grade level groups to help facilitate discussion and work on instruction to support literacy.

7. District One should continue to encourage and support the reading incentive and motivation programs, which the research recommends as a valuable element in promoting reading improvement (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006; Lewis & Dahbany, 2008). This recommendation comes from interview data from Peter, the curriculum director, and Heath and Franklin, the district level literacy coaches. Peter described the impact of incentive programs at the school level as “palpable.” He referred to posters, competitions, student literacy committees, reading contests, and programs such as Reading Counts. He noted that library circulation has increased at these schools and that students demonstrated a greater level of excitement and enthusiasm for reading. Heath and Franklin also specified ways in which they have worked to support the incentive programs and activities at their schools. One of Heath’s earliest activities as literacy coach was preparing a collection of reading materials and traveling to different classrooms to conduct a motivational activity. For these reasons, the district should continue to support and encourage these programs in all schools.
8. Since an important element of effective literacy coaching programs requires principals to understand the roles of coaches (Symonds, 2002), District One should provide training for principals in the literacy coaching model and effective use of coaches. This recommendation comes from interview data provided by Peter, the

curriculum director, who noted that some principals in the district were not as committed to literacy. Providing training for principals in the coaching model would help all principals to recognize the value of literacy coaching and also prevent the possibility that they might misunderstand the role of the coach and assign coaches to other non-coaching duties.

9. Afflerbach (2008) states that reading assessment is critically important in improving literacy and that both formative and summative assessments can help teachers better meet the needs of students. District One should continue its use of the district-wide formative assessments and also train teachers to use them to effectively assess student needs and target instruction. This recommendation comes from interview and document data provided by the curriculum director. The specific description of the formative assessment testing done in reading and fluency has provided valuable information for the district to help them appropriately place students in classes and programs and better track student progress. Heath and Franklin also described their work in helping teachers to understand and use the assessment data. Interview data from the assistant principal in High School A also revealed the school's use of data to implement "stratified interventions." For these reasons, the district should continue its assessment programs and explore ways that teachers can be most effectively trained in using the information provided.
10. District One should provide funding to supplement school libraries and media centers and content area classrooms with diverse texts at a variety of levels of

reading difficulty, as recommended by Biancarosa and Snow (2006). This recommendation comes from document data showing that increased funding for libraries and media centers was one of the original task force goals in the district. Interview data from the curriculum director also reveals that this particular goal had not been met due to funding constraints. Since the literacy initiative is a long-term, gradual process, supplementary library and classroom materials should be given considered in the future. In addition, the availability of more diverse and compelling reading materials in schools would further support the incentive programs in those schools by providing students with greater choice and more interesting reading materials.

11. Struggling readers often benefit from intense individual instruction as an intervention method (Biancarosa & Snow, 2006). District One should provide additional help for struggling readers by having school literacy committees coordinate tutoring programs for struggling readers. These committees should consider the possible use of community members, volunteers, parents, and existing student groups as tutors. The tutoring programs can also become a part of each school's literacy plan. This recommendation comes from a lack of any evidence of tutoring programs in the district. Because struggling readers often benefit from individual attention that tutoring provides, it is simply an additional way that the district can support student literacy needs, especially for the students who struggle the most academically.

12. District One should use the IRA's Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches (2006) as a tool for evaluating and refining the work of literacy coaches. The fact that the standards address both leadership and content-area standards makes it an effective tool for refining the work of the literacy coaches. Because District One has part time literacy coaches working in each school, their yearly evaluations should focus on their effectiveness in working with teachers and staff. The IRA document provides a convenient framework or rubric to evaluate their work, and doing so will help further refine and improve the literacy coaching that is underway in the district's schools.

Recommendations for District Two

Based on the results of this study and the themes that emerged from the coding process, and based on research in best practices, the following recommendations are offered to district and school leaders in District Two:

1. The first recommendation for District Two is to implement reading incentive and motivation programs for students in schools, an important part of a broader approach to literacy, as recommended by Biancarosa and Snow (2006) and Lewis and Dahbany (2008). This recommendation comes from the lack of data in documents, observations, or interviews about reading incentive programs. While District Two has a number of reading intervention programs in place, none of the school sites make use of incentive programs for students. This recommendation is also made for District Two because of the success of reading and incentive and motivation programs in District One and the potential impact of such programs.

2. District Two should move toward a more complete literacy coaching model, with the goal being one full-time literacy coach in each school. This can be accomplished in District Two by removing the literacy leaders from their teaching responsibilities and training them in the literacy coaching model, or by allotting a portion of their day to conduct literacy coaching in conjunction with the new instructional coaches. This recommendation comes from interview data from the three literacy leaders and the three teachers in District Two. In describing the nature of their work, literacy leaders play a number of different roles in their schools. They provide support, often individually, to teachers, but it is not in the form of literacy coaching. Because the literacy leaders are full-time teachers, they are not available to observe in classrooms, provide feedback on teaching practices, or conduct modeling and demonstrations. Releasing teachers from their teaching duties for at least part of the day would allow them to conduct actual coaching for teachers in their classrooms. The data indicate that none of the literacy leaders interviewed actually work with teachers in their classrooms. Because the literature provides some evidence of the benefits of literacy coaching, making this change in the roles of the literacy leaders would be significant. District Two has hired full time Instructional Coaches for the 2008-09 school year. Another option for the district would be to focus the work of the instructional coaches on literacy, in which case they could replace the literacy leaders currently working in the schools.
3. District Two should make literacy a key element of the work of the new instructional coaches, who began their positions in the fall of the 2008-09 school

year. If the district replaces the literacy leaders with the instructional coaches, it is important that a major focus of their work be directed toward effective literacy instruction in content areas. Interview data with the literacy leaders indicates that they all believe that lack of time impacts their ability to work with teachers. The work they do is mainly during inservices and staff trainings, in small groups of teachers or with departments, and occasionally one-on-one. The instructional coaches can play a significant role in impacting literacy learning in the district by working with teachers in their classrooms to implement new strategies, lessons, and techniques.

4. Research shows the importance of collaborative professional development for improving literacy instruction (Bean & Morewood, 2007). District Two should find ways to increase collaborative professional development time for school staff members, with additional inservice days or late start times. This could also be accomplished by requiring each school to organize staff members in Professional Learning Communities to increase collaboration across content areas and work on issues related to literacy. This recommendation comes from interview data from the district literacy specialists, literacy leaders, and teachers who cited the importance of teachers having time to talk and collaborate. The theme of “challenges” that emerged from the data included “lack of time” as being the most often-mentioned challenge faced by both teachers and literacy leaders. While some schools in the districts have PLC’s in place (High School A) others do not. In addition, more collaborative staff development time could be provided through late

start days, which would free up teachers to work together in collaborative groups, as is done in District One. The PLC groups could then analyze student data, brainstorm ideas, examine student work samples, discuss teaching strategies, and identify ways of improving literacy instruction.

5. District Two should increase the focus on content-area reading strategies in secondary schools, which includes explicit comprehension instruction embedded in content areas, as recommended by Biancarosa and Snow (2006). District Two should consider using a particular program or approach such as Reading Apprenticeship or other programs such as Project CRISS (Creating Independence through Student Owned Strategies), the Strategic Literacy Initiative, or Partnership for Literacy, which are all recommended by Ogle and Lang (2007). However, the current focus on improving writing instruction and the writing workshop model should be maintained to provide for an integrated approach to literacy. This recommendation comes from interview and observational data which shows a number of different approaches to content area literacy. In interviews, all of the literacy leaders cited specific instances of strategies they have promoted with their staff or particular aspects of content area literacy they have worked on. The interview data also indicate that much of this work has been targeted to students who are in special programs or interventions for struggling readers. It has not been targeted to content areas in general. There is no systematic program or district approach to content area literacy in District Two. Since the data from District One

suggest strong success of the Reading Apprenticeship program, District Two could also benefit from implementing such a program for all teachers.

6. If District Two chooses to maintain the literacy leader program as it now exists, it should refine and focus the work of literacy leaders which is currently fragmented and varies widely from school to school. This might be accomplished through establishing clear and specific expectations for what literacy leaders will do in schools and clearly communicating these to school principals. This information comes from interview data from the literacy specialists who acknowledge that the roles of literacy leaders vary widely from building to building, and that some literacy leaders may be more proactive than others. The interview data from the literacy leaders demonstrates that they are all very active and work very hard in their buildings to support literacy, but they do so in a number of different ways. In addition, observational data from one of the literacy leader meetings shows the group focusing on what roles they play and attempting to refine the description of their duties. They discussed ways in which they might be able to monitor and document their work. Some documents examined include job descriptions for the literacy leaders, which are very general. The district literacy specialists also acknowledged that there was no means of evaluating the work of the literacy leaders in place, but that it is a good idea. The district could refine the work of the literacy leaders by specifying what roles they play in school leadership and setting clear expectations for what literacy leaders will do.

7. District Two should provide professional development for literacy leaders and coaches to help them effectively work with teachers in using reading and writing to learn strategies. This goal may be accomplished simultaneously with Goal 5, and is also dependent upon providing additional time for literacy leaders.

Observational data from literacy leader meetings show that their collaborative cohort time is often taken up by other matters such as professional development funds, discussion of materials and resources, and literacy activities that are specifically language-arts related. Literacy leaders need training in the coaching model, in a particular approach to content-area literacy, and in the *Teaching the Qualities of Writing program*, so that they can better support their teachers in reading and writing in the content areas.

8. District Two should thoroughly implement the newly-adopted common literacy model and core standards in literacy by providing training and coaching to teachers to help them incorporate them into the classroom. This will require the participation of literacy leaders and instructional coaches. Interview data from the literacy specialists and observational data from the core standards committee meeting show that the literacy model and core standards have clear purposes and great potential. The literacy model uses a research base to describe how literacy learning should happen in classrooms district-wide and the core standards are a clear attempt to narrow down the state standards and focus on essential standards that describe what students will know and be able to do at each grade level. However, the success of these two elements is dependent on how they are

implemented over the next few years. Teachers will need to be trained in the use of the literacy model, and instructional and literacy coaches will need to help teachers to focus on the core standards in their lesson planning and classroom teaching.

9. District Two should include training for principals in the role of literacy leaders and instructional coaches to help insure that each school makes appropriate and effective use of these individuals. Because the coaching model is relatively new in District Two, it is important that principals have a solid understanding of coaching and support it in their schools. Administrators should also be evaluated in part on the level of implementation of the literacy model and core standards and their effectiveness in providing instructional leadership for literacy in their schools. Interview data from the principal at Middle School A indicates support for literacy school wide but does not reflect specific knowledge of the coaching process. There may be other schools in the district with principals more hesitant to commit to secondary school literacy or the use of literacy coaches. As was noted for District One, training for administrators would also help insure that coaches are not assigned other tasks or used in non-coaching roles.
10. Research demonstrates the important contribution of school literacy committees in improving literacy (Ogle & Lang, 2007). District Two should require each secondary school to form a literacy committee and prepare a strategic literacy plan as part of the larger school improvement plan. The literacy plan should establish specific literacy goals targeted to the needs of the students and staff of each particular school. Literacy committees could establish tutoring programs for

struggling readers, which are recommended by Biancarosa and Snow (2006), using community members, volunteers, parents, and existing student groups as tutors.

This recommendation comes from data in District One which shows that school literacy committees are actively involved and having a positive impact on school programs. There is no evidence in District Two data that any schools have literacy committees in place. If literacy committees were formed, these groups could evaluate data, assess the literacy needs of students in the school, implement programs such as tutoring and incentive programs, and set clear goals and timelines.

11. District Two should provide funding to supplement school libraries, media centers, and content area classrooms with diverse texts and reading materials at a variety of levels, as recommended by Biancarosa and Snow (2006). This recommendation comes from observational data and document data related to district resources, which include grant funds, shared literature collections, books, textbook adoptions, and other resources available to teachers and schools. The literacy specialists also indicate in interview data that part of their job is to disseminate resources in the district. Additional funding provided to supplement library collections and provide classrooms with content-related reading materials and books that are accessible and appealing, would encourage students to read and help to advance the literacy goals of the district.

12. District Two should assign the district literacy specialists to research programs and practices in other districts as a means of identifying additional methods of

promoting literacy in secondary schools. Require literacy leaders and instructional coaches to network with other coaches and schools outside of the district and make school visitations in order to learn more about other schools' programs. This networking and communication with other district would provide an important means of evaluating the literacy program and identifying promising practices that might improve literacy in District Two. This recommendation also comes from a lack of data about networking with other districts and between schools. While the interview and observation data indicate that there is a lot of collaboration between literacy leaders within the district, there is very little networking or communication with other districts or resources available statewide. District Two could strengthen the literacy program by having literacy leaders visit other schools and districts to see how they approach issues related to literacy. They could also use online resources to network and communicate with literacy coaching groups and consortiums such as the Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse (literacycoachingonline.org.)

Recommendations for Further Research

The detailed data collected and the themes that emerged in this study present several implications for future research. Because the study was a multi-site case study that analyzed both district-level and school-level policies and practices, and included analysis of literacy coaching and other forms of professional development, it helps reveal a number of specific areas that could be further researched. Further research is recommended in the following areas:

- Quantitative studies that examine the effects of district-wide literacy initiatives on student academic performance
- Comparative studies that assess the effectiveness of district-wide literacy initiatives with individual, school-based literacy goals and programs
- Further studies of collaborative sociocultural contexts for teachers, such as PLC groups, specifically their impact on teacher performance and school literacy reform
- Study of specific district literacy programs such as reading incentive programs, and particular professional development programs in terms of their effects upon instructional practice and student learning
- Additional research on the impact of particular literacy strategies and various coaching methods
- Studies that analyze the effectiveness of various forms and models of professional development such as academic content-area literacy training, training in writing instruction, PLC groups, peer coaching, and literacy coaching
- Descriptive studies of the roles and impact of the work of literacy coaches and on teachers and overall school culture
- Studies that examine the barriers to literacy learning in secondary schools, especially descriptive studies that analyze student perspectives.
- Studies that examine the impact of content area literacy strategies on student academic performance

While this qualitative study provides valuable, detailed, descriptive information about literacy leadership in the two districts studied, the next obvious step would be a quantitative study after a period of time to assess the impact of the districts' programs on student academic performance. This could be accomplished by comparing student assessment data from the beginning stages of the literacy initiatives to student assessment data over the course of implementation of the literacy initiatives.

Research in new forms of professional development such as literacy coaching is in its infancy. While literacy coaching has become increasingly common in secondary schools and some have called for large numbers of trained literacy coaches to go to work in the nation's secondary schools, there has been little formal research demonstrating that coaching is an effective model. The Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse (literacycoachingonline.org) and the International Reading Association (2006) recommend research to address several important questions related to literacy coaching:

- Research into forms of support needed for literacy coaches
- Studies exploring the characteristics of highly effective coaches
- Studies exploring the contribution of qualifications, prior experiences, and training to successful coaching
- Studies that examine and describe the experiences of teachers being coached
- Studies to identify what domains are most impacted by coaching

- Studies that identify the characteristics of effective literacy coaching programs
- Studies that examine several variables in literacy coaching, including student performance, teacher satisfaction with the coaching model, teacher retention, and district expenditures.
- Descriptive studies of particular models of literacy coaching and leadership and examination of which are most effective in impacting instructional practice and student achievement

We can easily assume that if literacy coaches are effective in impacting and improving instruction at the classroom level, improvements in student achievement will necessarily follow. This has yet to be supported by solid research. The International Reading Association (2006) recommends adopting a different kind of research agenda that begins with the practice of coaching as it exists and “addresses questions of greatest importance to the practitioners, while at the same time attending to possibilities for accumulating findings across sites” (p. 46). Another significant factor is that the literacy coach’s role varies greatly from district to district and school to school. What will be needed in the future is research-based evidence that particular models of literacy coaching and leadership are more effective in impacting both instructional practice and student achievement. As the IRA (2006) recommends, descriptive studies of literacy coaching as it exists in schools today are needed now to provide a foundation for future research on the impact and effectiveness of coaching models.

Implications and Conclusions

This study provides potential benefits in two major ways. First, it contributes to current knowledge in the field about specific approaches to literacy being used in secondary schools, specifically forms of professional development that provide literacy leadership such as literacy coaching. The study provides detailed, descriptive data about secondary school literacy leadership programs that can serve as a foundation for future research, both qualitative and quantitative, in district-wide staff development, and literacy coaching and leadership. Second, it will benefit both of the participating school districts by providing them with valuable information for evaluating their literacy programs and improving the learning of both staff and students in their secondary schools.

Whereas at one time it was assumed that if adolescents had not gained sufficient literacy skills by the end of the elementary years, it was too late for them, we now know that it is possible to significantly improve the literacy skills of adolescents, but it requires extensive commitment, planning, assessment, goal setting, and *hard work* at both the district and school levels, in addition to a substantial financial commitment. This study began with the assertion that bringing about improvement in literacy skills requires a dual focus on district-level literacy leadership and improved instruction at the classroom level. As a result, I attended numerous district-level meetings and training sessions and talked with teachers and other personnel in six school sites, encountering everywhere concerned, dedicated, hardworking professionals committed to academic success for their students. Over and

over again, the words used to describe the role of literacy included terms such as “essential,” “very important,” “critical,” and “paramount.”

Research was presented regarding the achievement gap and the importance of a focus on content area literacy instruction. Literacy leaders and coaches are helping to maintain this focus in schools in Districts One and Two. Working with content area teachers is a challenging process: it involves presenting a strong rationale for incorporating literacy strategies into content area lessons, helping teachers learn a repertoire of useful strategies, and modeling and coaching teachers through implementation of these strategies. These challenges provide us with a powerful rationale for the use of literacy leaders and literacy coaches in secondary schools working directly with teachers. Literacy leadership, combined with appropriate assessment, intervention programs, incentive programs, and a strong, goal-driven, district-wide focus on adolescent literacy has the potential to bring about impressive change. Both of the districts involved in this study have made significant progress towards this change, as the findings demonstrate.

During the research process, I maintained the dual-focus on both district administrative leadership as well as activity at the school level, gathering a significant amount of data for analysis. I was able to listen to literacy leaders, coaches, and teachers describe their day-to-day work with students, the challenges they face, and how they try to incorporate best practices in their teaching. My own experience, background, and research in literacy leadership and coaching of secondary teachers has provided me with a knowledge base in best practices that guided my data

collection and analysis and the writing of the report. My years of experience and expertise in teaching students, coaching and training teachers, and serving as school improvement coordinator has also been beneficial in providing evaluative feedback to the districts involved. I was also able to compare my own experience as a literacy coach and staff trainer with those of others. The research provided a lesson in the power of collaboration. I am always astounded by how much teachers can learn about teaching by collaborating with and observing other teachers. This provides a strong rationale for increased collaboration, peer coaching programs, and other strategies to allow for sharing of ideas, strategies, and information.

Several important findings have emerged from this study that provide useful information for a variety of stakeholders. One essential element for improving literacy is the importance of collaboration for teachers. Both the districts included in this study provide means of collaboration and discussion for teachers and literacy leaders. Whether it is in literacy leader cohorts, literacy committees, training sessions, PLC groups, or in late start times, it is important for teachers to have time to work collaboratively, discuss, share ideas, and set goals for improving instruction and student performance. In some cases, districts may be unwilling to provide the necessary time for teachers to work together. Professional development time is often limited, it is expensive to hire substitutes, and the district may be protective of the instructional time provided to students. They may also be sensitive to public perception about students being out of school or having shortened school days in order for teachers to meet. However, despite these roadblocks, the collaboration and

interaction that happens in PLC groups and other contexts is critical to school improvement. Interview data with teachers and coaches in this study reinforce this notion repeatedly. Collaborative groups contribute to the culture of learning that is necessary for adults and students in schools, and they may also be the best way to break down resistance against change that is prevalent in many schools and that is common for content area teachers, some of whom still believe that teaching reading strategies is not their job or takes too much time away from their curriculum. Literacy coaches and their fellow teachers can help these skeptics understand the power of carefully-selected strategies in helping students learn content material.

The findings also contribute to our understanding of the roles of literacy coaches. Literacy coaching is a powerful model with a lot of potential. The many different literacy coaches and leaders who participated in this study and described the work that they do made it clear that there are many different methods of coaching. There is no “handbook” that provides exact directions or a recipe for successful coaching. Different coaching methods are needed for different contexts, teachers, and schools. Literacy coaches must be flexible and adaptable and wear a number of different hats. As Heath and Franklin noted in describing their work in District One, every day is different and what they might be doing one day is vastly different from the next. Colleen in District One focuses on helping teachers use textbooks and reading materials effectively; Franklin in District One checks in with teachers regularly and finds out how he can be useful to them; Larry in District Two works mainly with department and small groups of teachers on targeted issues; Steven

presents a variety of strategies to staff members. What is perhaps most important is that literacy coaches and leaders have the respect of the staff and good interpersonal skills to be able to work with a variety of teachers. There are numerous examples of these from the data presented in this study. Some coaches are personable and well-respected teachers who have been nominated for awards, others such as Colleen are experienced, retired teachers. They are individuals who have literacy background and knowledge but can also work well with a variety of people, play a number of different roles, multi-task, and function as good communicators.

The coaching model is a powerful one because coaches can affect the teaching skill of an entire staff, as noted by the curriculum director in District One. Whereas a teacher works with students in his or her own classroom, a literacy coach can impact the learning of all the students in the school by increasing the knowledge and skill of teachers schoolwide. All of the teachers interviewed in this study gave specific examples of strategies literacy coaches and leaders had shared with them and helped them implement. The data in this study helps to reinforce the idea that literacy is important in every content area, not just in English class, and in fact, not just in the core subject areas of English, social studies, science, and math. It is important in all areas of the curriculum, in every area of learning. Literacy cannot be separated from learning. Some of the teachers interviewed in this study are teachers outside of the core curriculum areas. Preston in District One and Louis in District Two are both industrial arts teachers and both noted the importance of the critical reading and writing in their disciplines, especially technical and nonfiction writing. Joelle in

District Two teaches health science courses. She acknowledged the significant role of both reading and writing and its impact on student learning in her classroom. She also provided several examples of ways in which she incorporates literacy in her curriculum, and ways in which the literacy leader has provided ideas and assistance. The perspectives these teachers provide from outside of the core curriculum areas are highly germane to the argument that literacy is inseparable from learning.

This study also helps to illuminate the role of literacy leaders and coaches, showing both what the experience is like for them and for those with whom they work. One conclusion that can be drawn is that no two literacy coaches' experiences are the same. In District One, Franklin and Heath noted that a lot of their work is determined by what is requested of them. Since much of their time is taken up by facilitating professional development, when they do have free time, they "check in" with teachers to find out how they can be useful. They also noted that the heart and soul of their jobs is the personal relationships they develop with teachers, allowing teachers to feel comfortable in working with them. Through the relationships they build, they establish credibility and trust. They also see themselves not as individuals but as part of a team, a school team and a district team, what they referred to as "circles of collaboration." There tends to be a lot of ambiguity in the nature of their job, something which other literacy coaches echoed. It is important for them to be organized in order to maintain their credibility. Franklin and Heath noted also that every day is different for them depending on what initiative they are working on and, because they are district level coaches, at which school they are working. Heath noted his sense of optimism about

his position and literacy coaching in general as a practice that has much potential. Regarding his previous experience as a classroom teacher, he reflected that teachers often receive professional development and then go back to their rooms and forget about it because they don't have time to implement it: "Having a coach, a live person in the building who can go into the classroom and work with people is a great professional development model. It's incredibly powerful."

Colleen, at High School A in District One noted that her position allowed her the needed flexibility. Since she is a retired teacher and not a teacher on staff at the school, she is available at any time to meet and work with staff members. She likes the fact that her only role is that of literacy coach. Other literacy coaches in the district may teach part time and coach part time. She noted that the more she does, the more teachers want her to do for them and that it is important to "get the ball rolling." She also noted the ambiguity in the role, that when she began there was no official job description and the district had never had any such position before. Now, she typically meets with teachers, talks with them about their goals and what they want to do, and together they draw up a plan. She spends a lot of time studying textbooks teachers are using, and comes up with pre-reading or vocabulary strategies. She then meets with teachers, shares with them what she has developed and offers to demonstrate the process. She also makes a point of scheduling follow up meetings with the teachers to debrief on their experience. Colleen noted that content area teachers do not see themselves as reading teachers and that her role has been to show them that they are not teaching reading, but teaching students how to navigate the material.

The experiences of the literacy leaders in District Two are much different from the literacy coaches in District One. This is mainly because the literacy leaders are also full time teachers and, therefore, do not have the time to work with teachers directly in their classrooms. It is not surprising, therefore, that some of the literacy leaders expressed frustration with many aspects of their positions. Larry, at High School A, noted his frustration with the lack of clear definition of his role, that what he does one year may be vastly different than the next. He sees himself as a “semi-literacy leader” because “my agenda is usually ninety percent something else.” He also expressed frustration that there is no formal period of time for him to work on literacy in his building. He tends to do most of his leadership work through staff and department meetings and through working with data and finding ways to present critical information to the staff. He observed that having a larger voice in school leadership and actually being a part of the school leadership team would allow him to be more effective. He does do some professional development, but it tends to be more in the form of “presentation of information” rather than teacher learning.

The literacy leader at High School B in District Two, Steven, has a role similar to Larry’s. He has done some preparing of professional development materials and presentations and a limited amount of coaching and working with teachers on lesson plans. He said it is important for him to give teachers lessons they can incorporate into their content areas and that he struggles to have time to work with the staff in a meaningful setting as opposed to five minutes provided at the end of a meeting. He usually spends a portion of his preparation period looking at literacy strategies and

finding useful ones for staff members. He communicates with staff by e-mail frequently, sharing ideas and information. He also noted the need to be persistent in his work, constantly sending the message that literacy is important.

The three literacy leaders at Middle School A in District One note that they try to make themselves available to staff members and be visible. They see themselves as a liaison between their staff and the district. Because one leader works at each grade level, their literacy leadership experiences are very different from each other. A lot of their work is done in their grade level teams, and they have done whole school professional development. They also try to meet regularly to plan and divide work. The time issue is a factor for them as well, and they often take work home or spend time at home doing internet research to find resources or support materials. They try to use positive reinforcement to encourage reluctant staff members and encourage them to move forward on their own timeline. Kendra noted “I need to be happy with what steps they make, and if they are coming to a meeting and not sabotaging my efforts by correcting papers while I’m presenting, then I should be happy with that as well.” They also echo the importance of relationships and work hard to try to build rapport with teachers schoolwide.

The literature review section of this report suggests that the role of the literacy coach is a highly complex one, and the experiences of the literacy coaches and leaders in this study reinforce that idea. They must be the ultimate multi-taskers, wearing a number of different hats and working on a number of different projects simultaneously. It is no coincidence that the literacy coaches in District One

expressed more satisfaction with their jobs, while the literacy leaders in District Two, although not negative, shared several frustrations. This is because literacy coaching and leadership requires time, and full time teachers can be only minimally useful in a literacy leadership position. Lack of time was cited as the biggest challenge for all of the literacy leaders in District Two. Therefore, this study demonstrates that it may not be possible to be a teacher and literacy coach at the same time. The more time that literacy coaches have to work on coaching and work directly with teachers in their classrooms, the more effective they will be. The demands of teaching, even if only part time teaching, will certainly detract from the effectiveness of the role. Although an expensive undertaking, school districts can most benefit from hiring full time literacy coaches for each school.

Literacy coaches may also be pivotal in breaking down resistance to literacy that secondary teachers often harbor. Teaching in secondary schools has always been viewed as a very isolated, independent activity. As Franklin noted in District One, during his first year of coaching, some teachers were resistant to working with him because they viewed it as a sign of weakness or lack of skill on their part. Literacy coaches can help to promote collaboration the motivate teachers to become learning professionals and agents of change to improve their schools. We can all improve our skills no matter how experienced or effective. Secondary schools, particularly high schools, are also very departmentalized, and there is often a lack of communication between teachers from different departments. Both PLC groups and literacy coaches can help to counter this form of isolation as well, by helping teachers to learn from

each other and by promoting curriculum integration. Teachers may have the most to learn from teaching methods used in content areas outside of their own. Coaches can also help to spread a wealth of ideas and information about good teaching strategies. Strategies they observe being successfully implemented in one content area, they can suggest for teachers in another content area, as some literacy coaches in this study reported doing. In addition, even though teachers may be provided with new strategies or teaching methods, they may not have the time or the knowledge of how to actually implement those into their lesson plans and into their classroom teaching. This is where the coach becomes instrumental. He or she can work with them one-on-one, provide support, even demonstrate use of the strategy, and help teachers incorporate them into particular units and lessons. The potential of coaching seems almost unlimited.

This study is also significant in that it analyzes the work of literacy leaders and coaches at the secondary level specifically. While elementary schools have long employed reading specialists, literacy specialists, and literacy coaches, secondary schools have just begun to see the value of instructional leadership in the form of literacy coaching. Whether they are called “literacy support teachers,” “literacy coaches,” “literacy leaders,” or “instructional coaches,” their work is similar: increasing teacher capacity and encouraging effective instructional practices. Elementary teachers, one might hope, naturally understand the importance of teaching reading and literacy; secondary teachers are just beginning to embrace this notion,

with the help of literacy coaches and district and school initiatives to improve adolescent literacy such as those in Districts One and Two.

The combined data from both districts in this study also indicate that literacy goals in secondary schools need to include both reading and writing. The success of the Reading Apprenticeship program in District One suggests that it is important for districts undertaking literacy reform to invest in a systematic program that provides a research-based framework, a common language for talking about literacy, and common strategies that can be implemented district wide. The data show that participants in the Reading Apprenticeship training were not only willing but enthusiastic; they were clearly invested in the program and in literacy in their classrooms in general. This was true for those in the second year of the training, who had observed the value of the program and materials for their students, as well as for those in the first year of training. Although the success of the *Qualities of Writing* program in District Two is yet to be seen, it also provides a common framework and materials for teachers, a coherent program district-wide. When schools are allowed to pick and choose there may be a tendency to jump from one idea or initiative or strategy to another, leading to disparities among schools and inconsistent results.

Another significant finding is the important role that building leaders, particularly principals play in overseeing literacy leadership. The school principal must be committed and solidly convinced of the value of literacy in all areas of the curriculum in order to provide instructional leadership around that issue with the staff. The principal as instructional leader must make it clear that literacy is a priority and

that teachers in the school should have goals focused on literacy. He or she should insure that literacy-related goals are built into the school improvement plan and are a part of teachers' professional development goals. The principal must also be familiar with the coaching model and must support the literacy coaches in their roles within the school in order for them to be successful. Furthermore, principals should be evaluated in part on their success in implementing a literacy focus in the schools.

The role of motivation and incentive programs is another significant implication in this study. The significant role of motivation programs in one district and the apparent lack of them in the other suggest that incentive programs that motivate students to read may be invaluable. While some may argue such programs provide only extrinsic rewards, the end may justify the means, because these programs can build a level of excitement about reading that results in students reading more. The middle schools in District One have held bookmark-making contests, poster contests, literacy nights, and literacy socials. Some have formed student literacy committees to promote reading, held reading competitions such as Battle of the Books, and created a level of excitement and enthusiasm about reading that can be vitally important in improving students skills.

Another implication of this study is that it is important for districts to provide both resources and time. It is likely that many school districts acknowledge the importance of secondary school literacy, and they may devote significant resources to literacy, but this study demonstrates that it is also important to provide time for teachers to collaborate, plan, learn new strategies, and participate in professional

development. Teachers who carry a full teaching load in secondary schools are very busy people who are pulled in many different directions, and they do not have time to independently assess and monitor their work, learn new strategies, and change their teaching practices. Because of all the pressures they face, it is all too easy for them to fall back on the information-delivery model of teaching in order to “cover” the content. They need time set aside for capacity building, and they need the help of literacy coaches and leaders in their classrooms.

District One and District Two, like schools all over the nation, are under great pressure to improve the academic performance of all subgroups of students in order to close the achievement gap and meet Average Yearly Progress and No Child Left Behind targets. As a result, they may be engaged in a variety of initiatives simultaneously, but if a laser-like focus is not trained on literacy skills, academic goals will not be met and their efforts will be in vain. The prominent role of literacy learning in student achievement cannot be overestimated.

Perhaps the most significant finding of this study is that a heightened awareness of and commitment to literacy for secondary students is paramount. It is the key that opens the door to significant change and reform. The impact of the study’s findings will influence district policy and lead to improvements in literacy programs in the two districts. Because the study provides rich, descriptive data of the context of teaching and learning in the two districts’ schools, it provides specific information for district leaders which will help them to assess the effectiveness of their current programs and identify areas where improvements can be made. This study presents for

district leaders a picture of their programs and practices in action in the schools. It may also help them identify problems or constraints that prevent the programs from achieving a desirable level of success. As recommended by Greene (2003), the evaluation elements of this study address the interests of all the stakeholders in the two districts: school-level leaders and coaches, district leaders, teachers, and students. Both districts have identified secondary literacy as a priority. The study's purpose was not to pass judgment or label one district or the other as failing to achieve an effective literacy program, nor was it to determine that one district is better than the other. Instead, the purpose was to provide rich, detailed description of what is actually happening in schools in the two districts and produce findings which will be useful to district leaders in reassessing their policies and programs. Both districts, as shown in this report, have strengths as well as areas in need of improvement.

The study also provides useful information for colleges and universities and their teacher education programs. The significant role that literacy plays in learning is applicable to the learning that happens in college settings as well. Strategies that help students to access and comprehend textual material are equally applicable to college students. As secondary schools continue to improve the academic achievement of students, through the work of literacy initiatives like the ones in this study, the skills and preparedness of students entering college will also increase. Teacher education programs should also promote the importance of academic literacy, better prepare pre-service teachers by giving them a solid background in literacy theory, and thoroughly training them in the incorporation of content-area literacy strategies into their

instruction. Pre-service teachers need specific coursework in content-area literacy that will prepare them to deal with the struggling readers and culturally and linguistically diverse students they will encounter in their classrooms. Teacher education programs may also want to consider providing coursework in the literacy coaching model, as it is likely that many of their graduates will be working with literacy coaches in the schools and districts where they are employed. At some point, schools of education may also want to implement coursework and training programs for literacy coaches to help prepare those practitioners working in the field. As teachers recognize the power of the coaching model, and the level of demand for coaches increases, many experienced master teachers may want to pursue further study in literacy coaching through coursework and training in order to prepare them to become literacy coaches.

The study also suggests several implications for literacy leaders, coaches, and secondary teachers everywhere, many of whom feel discouraged in the face of the increasingly diverse students needs represented in their classrooms, and who struggle to learn and implement effective strategies to address literacy in the content areas. It is profoundly important to change our instructional approaches in secondary classrooms, to move away from the information-delivery model, and integrate sociocultural learning and academic literacy into every content area in the curriculum. Meeting this goal can best be accomplished through the work of competent, well-trained teacher leaders, literacy coaches. Secondary teachers have traditionally been reluctant to allow other adults access to their classrooms, but teachers all over the nation are now realizing the benefits of working with literacy coaches to refine their skills and

become master teachers. As Bean (2008) notes, teachers who have worked with coaches value them, and the coaching does lead to changes in classroom instruction.

Finally and most importantly, this study has profound implications for large numbers of students who struggle academically and are at serious risk of failure, dropping out of school, and having little chance of future success in college or the world of work due to insufficient literacy skills. In conducting this study, I have been profoundly impressed by the level of caring and concern for the well-being of all students that research participants have demonstrated. These professionals recognize the critical importance of fully developing their students' potential. The study may have implications for the broader community as well. As secondary schools improve the academic skills and achievement of their students, they will be better preparing students for life after graduation. Students today will become the workforce, the citizens, and the leaders of their communities tomorrow. Society will be the ultimate beneficiary of increased attention to the role of literacy learning. Literacy is empowering; it will better prepare students to become good citizens by helping them to reach higher levels of achievement, to resist oppression, and to make positive decisions for themselves, ultimately alleviating a number of social problems as well. We must never underestimate the power of literacy and the impact it can have upon our lives.

Today, students need a greater range of literacy and higher-level thinking skills than ever before, and their ability to achieve high levels of literacy during the secondary years will determine their future success in college and in an increasingly

complex technological and global society in which high levels of literacy are needed. As noted in *Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy*, Biancarosa and Snow (2006) state that the “disparity between the demands of modern life and the inadequate literacy achievement of eight million struggling readers and writers has therefore given a new urgency to the need for reform” (p. 31). But Ogle and Lang (2007) argue that “the potential is great for a global learning community replete with motivated and engaged learners” (p. 152) which can come about through commitment to literacy and appropriate instructional practices. To some extent, the two districts in this study are representative of secondary schools nationwide, who have turned their attention to literacy instruction in their secondary schools, although in a variety of different ways. There is no reform more urgent or significant today than commitment to improving literacy instruction in our nation’s secondary schools. Because of the impact of literacy on learning and achievement in all areas of the curriculum, no reform initiatives will make more of a difference for student academic success than effective forms of literacy leadership in secondary schools.

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APPENDIX A:
DISTRICT ONE DATA

Interview Data: “Circles of Collaboration”

The research process in District One began with an interview with District One’s Curriculum Director, Peter. He began by describing district goals and strategic directions related to literacy in secondary schools. Peter stated that about two years previously, a task force had been formed to look at secondary school literacy with representatives from all the middle and high schools, teachers, counselors, special education personnel, and principals. The task force looked at data to determine current student performance as well as what other districts were doing that seemed to be promising. They studied best practices research and prepared a report that laid out a series of recommendations for what the district should do to address adolescent literacy. The report the task force prepared stated the goals, which included establishing some district-based measures of reading performance. As a result the district has now implemented its own reading assessments to find out how students are doing on a more regular basis. They also determined it was important to support regular content area teachers with literacy strategy instruction. Professional development was provided in reading in content area strategies in the form of a program called Reading Apprenticeship. Reading Apprenticeship is an approach to reading instruction that helps students develop strategies to become more effective readers; it is a framework for literacy development in all subject areas that features a multi-dimensional approach to teaching and learning. The four dimensions include the

personal, social, cognitive, and knowledge-building dimensions. Reading Apprenticeship teaches students and teachers processes of “metacognitive conversation” to make sense of texts. The goals of Reading Apprenticeship are to make students more confident, strategic, and independent readers under the mentorship of teachers who support, model, and guide them in their reading (Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko, & Hurwitz, 1999). Peter said that the training has proceeded with a new group of teachers each year, and a new wave following the next year. As a further means of support, the district has supported content area teachers by implementing a coaching model, although they do not yet have full time coaches in schools. Two district coaches work with five of the middle schools, and each middle and high school has a part-time, on-site coach who has a teaching assignment but also gets some substitute release time and extra pay to do coaching.

Peter noted an additional goal around leadership for literacy. The district expected that school leaders had to assume some responsibility for literacy, so a series of trainings for principals were conducted. Another goal was a program of reading intervention for struggling readers. The district has implemented Scholastic’s READ 180 program district-wide at all middle and high schools. READ 180 is a reading intervention program for struggling readers published by Scholastic. It is a technology-enhanced program with a program model that includes daily small group lessons, independent reading, and independent work on the computer. In addition to READ 180, most of the middle schools have implemented Read Naturally, a fluency program which is an intervention specific to reading fluency, and they have begun to

create a tiered system so that every student who moves from middle to high school will be followed by enough assessment data so that they can be placed at the appropriate level. The task force looked at approximately thirty different intervention programs and ended up choosing READ 180, because it is the most comprehensive, is a direct instruction program, and does deal with phonics, whereas a lot of intervention programs do not include all these elements. This particular goal is still in the earlier stages. Peter stated that some goals have been more extensively implemented than others.

Regarding professional development, Peter noted the direct training provided to teachers in the Reading Apprenticeship program. Teachers currently being trained come to the district for seven days of training throughout the school year. READ 180 teachers also receive direct training. Training was also provided in using the new assessment system. Additionally, through the work of the district and site coaches, more job-embedded professional development has been the goal. These coaches are referred to as “literacy support teachers” and are in the buildings to work one-on-one with teachers in their classrooms, modeling lessons, giving strategies, observing, and giving feedback. Peter also pointed to professional book clubs in several schools. The district currently has sets of seventy or eighty copies of thirteen titles available, so that a whole staff can check out and read a book about literacy as a sort of a book club. Peter was asked about the role of Professional Learning Communities and he stated that some schools have formally developed PLC’s and others are doing similar kinds of activities although they may not call them PLC’s. Late start days were also

implemented to provide an hour's time to staff for collaborative planning time and to give staffs a chance to look at some of the assessment data. To summarize professional development elements in District One, they include direct training, job-embedded training, and collaborative planning time.

The reading motivation or reading incentive programs, Peter observed, have seemed to increase the amount of reading students are doing and they appear highly successful. All of the middle schools have tripled their library circulation. Peter mentioned several programs such as Battle of the Books and Reading Counts. Battle of the Books is a competition where four kids read and compete with another team of four, and all the teams read twelve common books, with quiz contests related to the books. It ends with a final team as the champion. Reading Counts is a published program by Scholastic, similar to Accelerated Reader, where most every book in the library has an online quiz students take to earn points. Some middle schools have also developed their own homegrown incentives. One school has a program called Got Books, which is modeled after the "Got Milk" advertising slogan, and kids are encouraged to always have a book in their hands. Any time instruction ends in a classroom, they are encouraged to read, the school provides sustained silent reading time, and they write book reviews that are displayed in the hallways. Teachers have taken pictures of kids reading, and posters about reading are visible everywhere. There are also parent nights where kids and parents read together in the evening. In general, Peter described lots of positive activities to encourage reading. He noted one middle school in particular which established a school literacy team. The school has

a group of twelve sixth, seventh, and eighth graders who get together regularly with an advisor and talk about literacy in the school. They come up with ideas to promote literacy. One group of students came up with a bookmark competition, so students made bookmarks for the contest and the three winning book marks were reproduced and distributed to all students. Students are also the ones who got others excited about the Battle of the Books competition. And the last week of the school year they sponsored a literacy social where the entire day was focused on literacy.

When asked if the district had mandated specific professional development approaches, or if it had been left up to the individual school, Peter observed that it was a little of both. Because the task force was brought together and had representatives from all the schools and the principals, there was a lot of buy in for the recommendations. When it came to getting each school to send participants for the training for Reading Apprenticeship, or to designate teachers for READ 180, or the grade six through nine assessments, people were willing to do it because they had been part of the process. He added, "Some schools I must say participate at a much greater level and their leadership is much more supportive of the literacy initiative than others. We haven't up to this point done much about that, because there's been so much to do that the fact that one school only had a few participants in a training, or they didn't have a well-functioning literacy team, even though it's a problem, we didn't really address it." Since the third year of the literacy initiative is underway, the district will probably start asking those principals to step up the process in order to address inequities from school to school. Some schools, given the makeup of staff and

leadership, have done a lot more than others where the principal was more reluctant or the staff more entrenched: “There are a lot of factors, but we have different levels of implementation. Let’s put it that way.”

I asked if there was evidence of program impact on curriculum, teaching practices, or student performance. Peter said that, yes, the state test scores have continued to go up and in some schools fairly dramatically, fifteen or twenty percent in reading. In addition, a number of students have had success with READ 180, not all of them involved in the program, but a good number have made significant gains in reading lexile scores from the Student Reading Inventory provided by READ 180. The READ 180 teachers universally see more engagement and motivation in the students. With Reading Apprenticeship, Peter noted that based on comments from participants, it’s extremely frustrating to go through the training which seems like a slow exercise in going over the same concepts, but those who stick with it begin to change their stance toward teaching, their approaches and dispositions: “So I think in the long run, it’s probably the most profound thing we’re doing because Reading Apprenticeship is saying ‘Make what you do explicit to students.’ Reading Apprenticeship is all about making everything overt, explicit, so a science teacher using a textbook can be an effective reading teacher, not because they’ve studied reading strategies in school but because they are an expert in reading science texts. That’s why they are a science teacher. It is about slowing down and making strategies apparent to students who are apprenticing to you, the mentor.” Peter said many of the teachers during the second year of training told him that the implementation was hard

and they weren't sure it would work, but by the end of the year they were seeing promising results.

During the 2006-07 school year, the state testing system had collapsed, so the district did not have final reading results, but some schools who had received early results observed that they were seeing the highest performance ever and were attributing some of that success to Reading Apprenticeship. Students were finally really comprehending and, therefore, able to answer more of the questions correctly: "So I think there is some anecdotal evidence that things are better and then there's certainly some evidence from state testing that shows some of our schools have made great strides in the last couple years. Other anecdotal evidence would be all the reading motivation programs. I mean, you can't help but know that those things are going on in our middle schools." He observed middle schools have posters everywhere, there are pictures of kids reading, and there are reading competitions at night: "It's palpable at the middle school level. I won't say that of the high schools, but at the middle schools it's definitely noticeable." In general, Peter was confident that there was positive activity going on around the literacy initiative, with all teachers well aware of the literacy initiative, although with varying levels of involvement.

Peter was asked about the methods of evaluation of the literacy programs in place. He stated that the local and state assessments provided evaluation. The district also used a survey of administrators to see how far they felt the district was in terms of implementing the task force's recommendations. This provided a sense of the

principals' perceptions, and surveys have also been done with the literacy support teachers.

I asked Peter to provide further information about the local assessments being used. He said they refer to them as "6-9 assessments." Students are given three readings tests in grades six through eight; an oral fluency test which is done individually, and a vocabulary test and comprehension test, both of which are multiple choice tests. That process is done twice, in the fall and the spring. In grade nine, students take the vocabulary and comprehension tests but not the oral fluency test, which is replaced with a "maze" or "cloze" test, where every sentence or so has a word missing and students have to select a word that makes sense in the sentence. All of those scores are entered into a database, where teachers can access information on how kids are doing. A z-score is calculated, a psychometric measurement which calibrates the three different measures and comes up with an overall score. A student who has a minus one or lower z-score needs help in reading and might be a good candidate for READ 180. These tests were developed by the University of Oregon and another local school district. District One duplicated that project to provide a local assessment along with some other school districts.

Peter discussed how the district has worked with and supported the individual school literacy coaches. He noted they have regular meetings for the school-based literacy coaches where they will meet with him and the district coaches to hear what's going on and brainstorm ideas. In some cases, an outside presenter is brought in to do a training. In addition, at the school site the district coaches check in with them, and

each site has a literacy team that the onsite coaches coordinate, setting up the agendas and running the team. Also, coaches are brought in from other districts to hear what they are doing and share ideas, and they have taken field trips to other districts to observe. Some of the coaches participate in a large statewide group of coaches coordinated by a staff member at an ESD three or four times a year to network and get ideas. In addition, all have gone through Reading Apprenticeship training to help support those new to the program. They are also supported financially. They get a stipend for doing the work and substitute days provided. Peter noted, "It's not ideal. The best way is to do it where you have a full time literacy coach in each building, a respected teacher in that building who no longer has teaching responsibilities but can support other teachers." He noted the critical role of coaches in capacity-building. Whereas literacy specialists work with students, literacy coaches work with teachers, who in turn work with a lot of students. Therefore, a literacy specialist might only work with twenty of the most-needy students, but a literacy coach who does a good job can affect the teaching skills of the entire staff: "I always argue that economically, coaches are a pretty good investment. Not everyone agrees with that, but to me it makes a lot of sense. And the key is getting good people." Peter mentioned the two district level coaches, Franklin and Heath: "They're awesome. One of them actually won Teacher of the Year in the district, as a literacy coach. People just loved what he was doing. It's a reflection of his years as a great teacher, but it's also the fact that he has been so helpful to other teachers." Peter noted that the model seemed to be working in the middle schools, where no one begrudges the coaching positions.

Whereas sometimes people feel if a teacher is taken out of the classroom to do something else, they will have more students in their classes, Peter did not feel anyone in the middle schools felt that way because they see how active and productive the coaches are.

Peter expressed his hope that the district would someday be ready to move to a more full coaching model: "I'm pushing for it. It's in our recommendations. I mention it all the time." However, the district funding is not yet there, but he believes when funding becomes available, it will become a priority. The onsite coaches are currently in place. He added that rather than calling these individuals "coaches" they are called "literacy support teachers." Peter said, "We cut the word "coaches" out because that had a negative connotation for some people, who might think 'I don't need a coach; I know what I'm doing.' They also liked the fact that the name 'teacher' remains in the title."

Peter noted that the district has seemed unwilling to give staff members time to collaborate. At some districts where good things are happening, teachers have an early release of one to two hours every week and four full staff development days throughout the year. He observed this is considerably more than provided in District One. Peter's energy and enthusiasm around issues of literacy was obvious, but he is also respectful of teachers: "I will push. I'm really into this stuff, but I also have to be respectful of people's time and energy, because just managing your classroom, getting through the content of the things you have to teach, those things are important and take time and energy, and then we're asking staff to learn all these new strategies and try

new things, but not giving them a lot of time.” He added that a lot of the training happens on regular school days with substitutes provided, which requires a lot of funding. It is the most significant staff development cost. It’s not the fees of consultants or materials, but paying for subs. He also added that every year on survey data, teachers say their least favorite format for staff development is regular teaching days with substitutes, because they have to prepare their lessons and return the next day to catch up and solve problems. Principals also don’t like it because it means extra supervision on their part, so it’s more work for everyone and more expensive for the district: “There’s no compelling reason to do it that way. It’s very disruptive.” Peter said if he could recommend one thing, it would be more time.

The next interview conducted was a joint interview with the two district literacy coaches. They serve as district-level coaches or literacy support teachers in place of teaching assignments, but are also assigned to two particular middle schools. Heath is the literacy support teacher at Middle School A and Franklin is the literacy support teacher at Middle School B. They began by describing their roles as literacy coaches, noting their responsibility for several different areas, working with teachers in classrooms to promote literacy practices, on a school-based level. They have focused almost entirely on reading practices up to this point. They also have responsibilities building wide as members of literacy committees, working with the principal, and providing staff development during late start days. They also have district-wide responsibility for professional development training such as Reading Apprenticeship. They help facilitate district-wide reading motivation programs such

as Battle of the Books, and Reading Counts. At the school level, they analyze data to establish goals to work toward and help in identifying struggling readers and supporting the READ 180 program. Some of the new READ 180 teachers need additional support, which they help with. Since they also do Reading Apprenticeship trainings they are available to provide support to the whole staff. They added that a lot of what they do is on-demand or “on the fly,” targeting problems, issues and concerns. Franklin mentioned for example helping to coordinate a new technology program because someone needed to do it. They also mentioned the importance of facilitating collaboration in the schools, which have a late start staff development time every other week. The middle school model has been to use them for whole-staff collaboration and they are often literacy-focused. They have taken quite a bit of responsibility for these staff development sessions.

Franklin and Heath elaborated upon their work with teachers, noting there are a couple of methods used. One is professional development activities, facilitating other teachers in school-wide issues, often solicited by staff members. Heath noted, “Personally, if things slow down for me in my schedule or I have gaps, I just solicit. I say, ‘Would you like to do a reading motivation activity in your classroom?’ or ‘Just checking in. How’s everything going.’ So it’s kind of like drumming up business.” Franklin mentioned the added advantage of having a strong personal connection with staff members at Middle School B, where he previously taught for many years: “I’ve known a lot of these people for years, so I can just wander in and see what they’re doing at various times and kind of offer support.” He mentioned the advantages of

Reading Apprenticeship as a way of promoting literacy with teachers. One teacher expressed a need for checklists to use during think-aloud, so he designed them for her and worked with her in using them in her classroom. At Middle School A, with several new staff members, Heath has worked with teachers on unit planning, helping teachers who teach multiple subjects in block periods to coordinate content and identify themes. His work involves curriculum, mentoring of new teachers, providing materials, and peer teaching. Heath does not have the extensive background in Middle School A that Franklin does in Middle School B, so he mentioned that a method he used to get involved was collecting a set of books and a reading motivation activity to take to classrooms: “Part of my goal was just to get my foot in the door and establish a relationship with the teachers, and to come back with other sorts of things later.”

I asked Franklin and Heath what elements were most important in doing their jobs effectively. They noted the need to develop good relationships with teachers as a first priority: “That’s really been the heart and soul of our job, is really to have a personal relationship with a teacher to where you can walk in at any time and they feel comfortable with that.” Franklin mentioned negative experiences with a couple of new teachers who were so unsure of themselves that they wanted to “hide in their rooms,” as if working with other teachers would be a sign of weakness. He mentioned the other challenge in his work being organizational in nature, “because I work on so many different things at three different places, at two schools and this building, that is a huge challenge to keep everything straight.” Completing tasks in a timely fashion and meeting everyone’s needs is a challenge he struggles with. However, he noted his

true goal is working with teachers in their classrooms, yet that a lot of other matters tend to draw him away from that. Heath added the importance of establishing trust and credibility as a known-resource over time. He tries to approach his work not as a solitary person doing something, but as part of a team, a school team and a district team. He used the term “circles of collaboration” to work toward a goal. He added it’s important not to come on too strong or present oneself as the expert, but listening to what someone’s needs are and working with that person on whatever the project is: “It’s a kind of ‘subtle leadership’ rather than telling someone what to do.”

We discussed different common coaching elements that are included in their work. Regarding professional development, they noted that the curriculum director is the “professional development guru” but they work closely with him in facilitating Reading Apprenticeship trainings. They have coordinated literacy support teacher meetings, READ 180 and Reading Counts trainings. In addition they help with collaboration district wide and at their individual schools facilitating late start sessions. They also do individual coaching and lesson planning with teachers. Asked about working with school data, they referred to the district database called Mastery in Motion, accessible online, and helping teachers learn to use the data and find usable reports on their students. Getting people on the system and teaching them to navigate it is a big part of their work with data. They also mentioned looking at fifth grade test scores during the previous year in order to identify students who needed reading intervention as sixth graders. They followed up with the same process for eighth graders to prepare for the transition to high school: “We have been really responsible

for looking at the data and selecting kids for intervention programs.” In terms of observations in classrooms, Heath mentioned that he has done some, and Franklin stated that he hasn’t done formal observations but has done a lot of informal things, going into a teacher’s room just to see how they were doing: “I just call it hanging out. I can hang out and see what teachers are doing, and provide a little feedback.” Heath added, “There’s a line where you don’t want to be an evaluator or an administrator, you don’t want to make the teacher feel uncomfortable. Personally, I feel more comfortable in the role of modeling something or peer teaching something.” They have both done classroom demonstrations or model lessons, and they have also worked with small groups of teachers, mostly during late start times, breaking into smaller groups of teachers to talk about common interests. These function as collaborative learning teams. This work is in addition to facilitating the literacy teams at the schools.

When asked what is their most important or significant aspect of their work, Heath stated two major areas. One is motivating students and helping them to think of themselves a successful, interested in reading and in school. The other is support: “We titled ourselves Literacy Support Teachers rather than coaches, so it’s really broad-ranging support for teachers.” He sees it as involving communication, providing information and strategies, and providing information about what other schools are doing: “If we hear about something, we pass it on. Facilitating communication. It’s not just us individually communicating, but facilitating within schools and within the district and between teachers.” Franklin stated his most

important role is improving the classroom practices of teachers: “To me, everything else we do is peripheral to really just getting teachers to be better teachers, use better practices, and have better outcomes with their students.”

Heath and Franklin were asked what challenges they face. They stated a major challenge is being pulled in too many directions at once, and keeping organized. Part of having good relationships with teachers is credibility. If they say they are going to do something, it needs to happen. When things are promised to people and they don't materialize, it deteriorates credibility. Heath mentioned a phrase he learned studying linguistics in college, “tolerance of ambiguity,” or being comfortable in confusion. For them it is a lot of ambiguity in terms of not knowing exactly what their role is and what the priorities should be, when they would work with particular schools, when they would do district work, attend district meetings, and so forth. Heath noted that the previous year, his first as literacy support teacher, it was particularly challenging, but that they have now defined their roles a little more clearly, although fulfilling them adequately at a certain level of quality is very challenging: “So part of it is it's really impossible. So it is forgiving yourself too, and saying ‘Okay, I can do this much,’ or ‘This is my focus for this week.’ Even though I know there's more to be done, and I need to look at data, and I need to check in with new teachers, and I need to . . . You can really make yourself crazy.”

I asked them to describe what they have done that has been most successful. Heath said he has had successful experiences in classrooms with individual teachers, where he conferenced with them, talked about their goals, coached and in some cases

modeled something for them. Afterwards, he received very positive feedback from them: “That’s what I’ve found is most satisfying, that I felt was most important, when a classroom teacher actually picks up something that you do and carries it forward.” The Reading Apprenticeship training has provided similar experiences and teachers have reported positive practices resulting. Both agreed that the satisfying part for teachers is when the magic of the classroom happens and you’re connecting.

When asked to describe a typical workday, both Franklin and Heath had difficulty. They noted that every day looks different. At the beginning of the school year, their days look a little different than the rest of the year. Franklin noted, “This week I have and will attend meetings at every school, staff meetings that I’ve participated in, literacy meetings, planning meetings for next week’s collaboration time, in classrooms this morning doing reading motivation activities with teachers. Yesterday, I was at one of the schools and the literacy support teacher and I were talking about notetaking skills, things that we did last year. Yesterday, from 4 to 7, we were in a training for literacy support teachers on site and we were facilitating.” That particular afternoon, they were going to a school library’s Battle of the Books meeting. Heath added, “Everyday is different. It just depends on what you’re working on and who you’re working with, and what school needs you that day.” They attend numerous meetings, and sandwich in work on district-wide projects and work with classroom teachers and individual school projects: “I may be in four or five places in a day, or at one school all day. You just never know.”

They stated that they had not specifically targeted any student population such as English language learners other than working to support the READ 180 program in its work with struggling readers. Reading Apprenticeship is a content area program that targets every student. But they have worked some with special education teachers and ELL teachers: “We touch everybody in the school and I can’t say that we target anybody. We’re just there!”

I asked about working with resistant teachers, a common challenge for literacy coaches. They noted that they have so much work they are doing, working with so many people in different areas, that they find ways to be productive. They acknowledged that it is an important issue because it involves school culture and schoolwide change, and it’s difficult to work with those who are a drag on the momentum. They said they had largely worked with the willing. Franklin said, “My goal is to build personal relationships with the people I’m not working with directly. I try to go around and talk to people, just chat with them.” He acknowledged a couple of teachers who want nothing to do with him, but he can still go and talk to them about football season. He uses this as his avenue for getting to know people, to first make them feel comfortable, then hopefully at some point, they may come around to being open to coaching. He is also the union representative for Middle School B, which allows him another avenue for building relationships and making it easier for staff to come and talk with him: “But I haven’t begun to try and sell myself to people. At the beginning of the year, I did a little presentation at the staff meeting about who I am

and what my role in the building is, but it was a whole staff thing, and it's a matter of people wanting to contact me."

Heath stated that he has worked with perhaps thirty to forty percent of the staff individually, although he acknowledges that often many meetings were about "tiny things." Some of them he has spent significant time with on literacy issues, but then there is another twenty percent that he has touched base with on various issues but has not worked closely with. This leaves about twenty or thirty percent of the staff that he hasn't worked much with. Franklin also estimates the percentage as being about thirty percent or perhaps a third of the staff in terms of really working directly with teachers.

I asked what forms of district support they receive for their work. Heath mentioned that as district support teachers, they are part of the curriculum department and get numerous forms of support including praise, and positive feedback, encouragement to make the position what they want it to be, support in terms of time, budget, professional development days, lots of flexibility, and resources. Franklin visualizes his job more as being school-based, but acknowledges the strength in being part of the curriculum department as well. They go to meetings and they know people and resources in the building, which is a big advantage. He also mentioned the importance of financial support provided that has helped make their jobs easier and given them more credibility in the schools: "That's been a part of the job I never really saw, prior to coming into it. If I was at one middle school forty hours and week and never came down here, that would really impact my ability to do a lot of my job,

because the connections and support we get down here are really important to what we're trying to do.

I asked them to comment upon their relationship with building administrators and its importance. They mentioned it has been very positive, praising the leadership of their superintendent and building administrators as well. They noted that because administrators are so busy, they don't work with them as much as they would like to, but stated they are very supportive of everything they want to do: "You don't have people dragging their feet. They're always saying, how can we make this happen?"

When asked to describe the kinds of strategies they help teachers incorporate, Heath mentioned a large number of reading motivation strategies. He said it involved getting teachers to talk to students, have good conversations about literature, reading, their interests, and the things that good readers do. A major theme of Reading Apprenticeship is being more reflective and thinking about one's learning. He also mentioned working on vocabulary strategies with content area teachers. Franklin agreed, and he provided an example of the SOS (Student-Owned Strategies) that the Curriculum Director has promoted, which are before-, during-, and after-reading strategies. He also added the importance of the strategies included in Reading Apprenticeship and the repertoire available in the support notebooks teachers use, which are also available online. He said he looks through the strategies with teachers and tries to get them to identify which ones they would like to do that fit in with their goals.

I asked them to choose one word to describe literacy coaching. Franklin chose the word “optimistic” to describe his perception that coaching is a positive thing with a lot of potential for making a difference: “You know we’re both classroom teachers for many years. I went to so many professional development things. You know, when you go to this three-hour class and sit there, and then you go back to your rooms and forget about it, because you haven’t got time to implement it.” Having a coach, a live person in the building who can go into classrooms and work with people is a great professional development model: “It’s incredibly powerful. So I’m optimistic.” Heath chose the word “collaboration.” He sees his role as being about building relationships in different areas with different people: “Really, it’s about communication, about teams of people working towards a common goal.”

The next question referred to collaboration and sharing of ideas among teachers. They noted the importance of the district-level professional development, school-level collaboration, the work of literacy teams, and facilitation of conversations among students and teachers. Building good relationships with teachers is critical. Franklin stated, “Our curriculum director has a bag of a million toys that he brings to different meeting, and you know, I never really understood a lot of his strategies, but one thing I’ve noticed is when people come, he immediately builds an atmosphere where it isn’t like some guy with a power point. It’s very personal, it’s easygoing, people feel relaxed, and we’ve built good personal relationships.” That has helped them make progress. Heath added that a lot of times in workshops or presentations, there is not good modeling of teaching, it’s not student centered, or is just delivery

method. Part of what they try to do with their trainings are about modeling best practices in the classroom.

In terms of additional thoughts, Franklin and Heath talked about the future. Since their roles were not clearly defined when they began the position, it meant they had little knowledge of whether they were doing it right. It's been an evolutionary process. Through practice and some networking with other districts, their roles are becoming more defined. Heath noted that they had completed a list of goals the previous year but that it has been tough to focus on all of them: "I think we fantasized about if we each worked at one building, what it would look like and how we wouldn't have to move so much, and we could be more effective." That may be the ultimate goal for the district, having literacy coaches in each school, which would be much different than their current multifaceted roles.

The next interview conducted was with the literacy support teacher at High School A, Colleen. Colleen is a retired teacher from the school who now works part-time as literacy support teacher. She describes her role as a literacy coach who works with the staff in any way that will help them integrate literacy skills and instruction into their content instruction. She described her methods used in working with teachers, stating that she uses an interview process with the teacher to come up with some kind of plan to meet the teacher's goals and identify the ways in which she can help them. She noted the face-to-face method seems to work the best. She has not done any small group presentations other than a "marketing pitch" for the position itself with the department heads, because her role at the high school was new. This

provided a way to let the staff know that her services were available. She noted a lot of times she waits until they come to her rather than soliciting: “I think one of the strongest things is administrative support is key, communicating to the staff that literacy is a priority, that this is not an option. That the school is adopting literacy as a priority across the board.” She added that flexibility for her in terms of being able to get in to classrooms, and not being a full-time teacher, is also important. She can make herself available at any time or for any class if they want her to come in, talk with them, meet during their prep period: “My only job is literacy coach; that’s been important.

She mentioned also the benefit of having been a staff member at the school previously: “I had a history with the school, I was respected, they knew that I was a classroom teacher, so that gives me some credibility.” She added high school teachers tend to be reticent about letting someone come into their classrooms or try to talk to them about how they could improve their instruction. She said she never uses the word “should,” but instead asks “What would you like?” or “How can I help?” Another important element in doing her job well was the training she received at a summer coaching institute. She follows the methodology she learned there which involves the one-on-one interview and working with the teacher to come up with a plan as opposed to giving directives. She noted her role as “assistive” not evaluative, which it is very important that leadership has made that clear, that people understand she is not connected to the administration, that if she comes in and observes or provides them with ideas or materials, it’s just between the two of them.

I asked Colleen to identify those elements that are included in her work. She has not prepared formal professional development activities for the staff, but she does do individual coaching, lesson planning with teachers, observations, and demonstrations. She mentioned she would like to do more work with data, but that there had not been a place for it yet, and that she was open to working with small groups of teachers. She said the most significant aspect of her work is working one on one with teachers, helping them with strategies for their specific content areas and teaching styles. One of her biggest challenges is the reluctance of high school teachers to open up their classrooms to an outsider. Another challenge is becoming familiar with the myriad number of textbooks that teachers use in the content areas: “Looking at a chemistry book, for example, and trying to help the chemistry teacher with some literacy strategies. Looking at a Spanish book which is in Spanish.” She noted once trust has been developed with the teachers, “it’s smooth sailing.”

She mentioned one of the most successful things has been the use of Student Owned Strategies being used by teachers. Teachers were coming to her asking how they could use them in their classrooms. She mentioned as an example a pre-reading strategy called “THIEVES” which she had adapted for four different content areas: “The more I do, the more teachers want me to do for them, so it is just getting the ball rolling, getting some of those SOS strategies into the classroom.” Colleen said it took her a while to establish a daily routine because when she accepted the position, it was entirely new and something the district had never done before. A typical situation might be that a teacher asks if she could help them. She makes an appointment with

them, usually during their planning period, meets with them, talks about what they are currently doing, what they want to see happening, and how she can help them. She then draws up a plan, and goes to get a copy of the textbook, which she takes home and studies. A lot of this she does on her own time at home, which she described as “a luxury.” She then comes up with ideas they can incorporate, perhaps a pre-reading strategy or a vocabulary strategy. She then schedules a follow up meetings with them to give them what she has developed. She noted teachers had never asked her to come in and demonstrate how to use them; they generally just take the strategy and try it. She arranges another follow up meetings after that to find out how it went, how it could be improved, or if she could come into the classroom to see how they are doing. She mentioned a typical workday might also be a meeting with the school literacy team, the district literacy team, or one of the school team’s subcommittees.

Colleen said, “When we were initially trying to get this thing off the ground and figure out what my role was going to be, I probably spent a lot more time with administrators and communicating back and forth that way, before I really got off the ground.” In January of 2007, she was really able to start doing some things with teachers, and it was spring of the first year before a more clear picture of the position developed. Starting the 2007-08 school year she “hit the ground running because we already know what we wanted and where it was going to go.” She has also tried to focus specifically on the newer teachers, who were often the ones who came to her. Then through word of mouth, some of the veteran teachers also began coming to her.

I asked if she had targeted any specific student population. She said she has not, that her role has been to work with staff, but that if a teacher wanted to target specific students, she would work with them on that. She said the work with struggling readers has all been done through the READ 180 programs at the school. Identifying students for that program has not been part of her role.

When asked about how she tries to work with resistant teachers, Colleen said she is using the “trickle down theory” and waiting for them to get on board when they see a need or decide that it is okay: “So a direct answer is I’m not working with resistant teachers, but the reality is that I’d like to.” She referred again to her training in coaching which advocated moving slowly, establishing a reputation, and gradually bringing people along. She stated that if it was mandated for teachers to work with her, she would again follow her training and some clear steps she had learned; however, the administration at High School A is not mandating at this point: “I’m of the philosophy that the more you stiff-arm somebody, the more they push back in resistance.” She estimated she has worked with between fifteen and twenty percent of the staff of about sixty teachers. Some teachers she worked with last year asked her to come back the following year.

In terms of the district support she receives, she stated it is through the literacy support team and the Curriculum Director. It includes professional development, team support, camaraderie, idea sharing, and some financial resources. She noted that support from building administrators is important in her work. It is important that they back her up and communicate to the staff that her role is important. If that

element is not there, her work would be meaningless. She said her relationship with administrators had always been asking them how they want to use her skills to serve the staff, so that they have ownership in her work, believe in it, and can take it to the staff. She noted this hasn't always happened, that the push for literacy in the content areas was just beginning to become a priority this year. She said, however, she does feel like she has their support and that her work with the literacy team is also an important part of the role: "If the administration is supporting literacy and giving time, in staff meetings or whatever, then I feel it's important to me as well, indirectly."

I asked Colleen to describe a couple of specific examples of strategies she has helped teachers incorporate. She has worked with some math teachers on doing Think-Alouds to help students learn how to navigate example problems: "I worked with one pre-calculus teacher and one pre-algebra teacher." It has been helpful to students who miss class because they have a strategy for navigating the problems. She also mentioned working with a ninth grade science teacher doing three pre-reading activities, Word Splash and the Frayer Model for vocabulary, and the THIEVES strategy for textbook reading: "A lot of the strategies I've been using are the Student Owned Strategies because that's what the district has trained us in and what they're promoting." She also mentioned the importance of the Reading Apprenticeship strategies such as Think-Alouds and Talking to the Text. She also worked with ninth grade teachers on building notetaking skills and recognizing similarities and differences. She recommended to the teachers three strategies: the classification model, the Venn diagram, and another strategy to use in content areas. She has also

worked on summarizing with the ninth grade teachers, teaching techniques for summarizing different types of text: “The freshman teachers last year on the freshman team, before they were even willing to think about everybody teaching the same skills—that just raises the hair on the back of any teacher when you tell them they have to teach the same skills as somebody else—they wanted some research, so everything I gave them was all research-based.” Based on her research, she chose the three top skills every high school student needs to succeed. This led to the focus on recognizing similarities and differences, summarizing, and notetaking.

When asked to choose one word to describe literacy coaching, Colleen chose the word “essential.” She stated, “I think if we’re going to get content teachers at the secondary level to see, to recognize the importance of literacy within their content, they are going to need somebody to come in and help them do that.” Content teachers do not see themselves as reading teachers, and Colleen’s role has been to show them that literacy in their content area does not mean that they are teaching reading: “What you are doing is teaching these kids how to navigate your material, and it’s made a real difference. Without it, they will say, ‘They can’t read the books. I’ll just do welfare reading. We’ll do something else besides read this book.’”

Finally, Colleen stated she has encouraged collaboration and sharing of ideas among teachers. As an example, she met with a teacher teaching anatomy and physiology who was panicking over the large amount of vocabulary. She asked Colleen for some vocabulary strategies. Colleen agreed but also encouraged her to talk with another teacher whom she knew to be doing some excellent work with

vocabulary in her science class. So when she knows a particular staff member is doing something in particular, she can refer other teachers to them: “It gives more validity to what I’m trying to do and credibility, and it gets them out there.” She mentioned the benefit of her learning things as well, such as a variation upon a particular strategy.

The next phase of interviews in District One were with classroom teachers who had some experience in working with the literacy coaches in their schools. The first teacher interviewed was Preston, an English and social studies block teacher and also an industrial arts teacher at Middle School A. Because of his unique teaching assignment, Preston offered an interesting perspective. I first asked Preston how important literacy skills are for students in his content area. He said they are critical and paramount: “You can’t do anything without literacy, without reading. Even in shop class, I emphasize technical writing and technical reading. For instance, if you buy something at Fred Meyer and you have to put it together, you have to be able to read the instructions.” He also said that in social studies, students can’t learn the subject without being able to read the textbook and read primary sources such as opinions in newspapers and magazine articles.

Preston described the challenges with literacy that he faces in his teaching. He expressed his belief that students had not been taught to read nonfiction material in elementary school, and that they have no prior knowledge of things such as Latin and Greek roots and suffixes. He referred to it as a “dumbing down of cultural awareness.” Teachers are forced to teach at what seems like a very low level to bring

kids up to the curriculum level, even at sixth grade. He expressed his frustration that kids don't read for pleasure and don't read at all if they don't have to. He referred to the Reading Counts program, in which students check out books, read the book and take the quiz to earn points. They can use those points for extra credit in his class and receive other rewards, yet only six out of twenty-four are participating: "I feel like it is very difficult to compete with electronic entertainment, whether it is TV or video games." He mentioned running into some of his students at the library where they were gathered around a computer trying to play a video game. He asked them how it worked and they replied that they didn't know. He pointed out that the instructions were right there, but they didn't want to read them because it required too much effort: "So where's the motivation to read the things I'm trying to get them to read?" He said with writing it is very similar, giving an example of writing assignments he has done with students and the amount of time he has spent teaching paragraph writing, syntax, sentence structure and so forth, yet students' writing is still very poor quality. Preston believes that the poor writing skill is a result of the lack of reading students do, a lack of understanding of the way that language works. He said he also spends a lot of time going over basic grammar, which he knows they have had before, yet many cannot identify simple nouns and verbs.

Preston said he worked with the literacy support teacher for a few weeks off and on during the previous school year, and this year is working with him weekly, partially because he is in a new assignment as social studies and language arts teacher. He mentioned working with three new textbooks, so he has needed help in organizing

lesson plans, setting goals, and coordinating his plans with district curriculum. He mentioned the literacy coach has worked with him on Reading Apprenticeship strategies. Preston was in the first group to receive training, and the first teacher at Middle School A to receive the training, “so I really had no one to work with, so that was what he (Heath) and I worked on last year and this year. That’s a major focus that I want to include in what I’m doing, the metacognition, getting kids to think about their thinking, be aware of their thinking, be aware of how they are reading and things they are reading, understanding how to be able to identify the trouble they are having, teaching them tools to address those reading problems.” He said they have talked about doing in-class coaching or modeling but haven’t done it yet. His work with the literacy coach has mostly been done after school for an hour or so. He did acknowledge that the help he received was very useful.

Preston was asked to describe more specifically techniques he has learned from the literacy coach. He mentioned two that he really likes. One is Talking to the Text. However, he said unless he copies pages out of the textbooks, it’s difficult to use this strategy because students can’t write in their textbooks. The other is the QAR (Question-Answer-Relationship) strategy where students identify information that is “right there” in the text, from different places in the text, requires combining the reading with prior knowledge, or is entirely opinion or background knowledge. He compared the four levels of this strategy to Bloom’s Taxonomy, which he finds useful. Preston said he does not feel like he has mastered using any strategy: “I’ll consider that I’ve mastered it when the kids master it. It’s ongoing.” He said his use of

strategies in his lesson plans has come out of his discussions with the literacy coach. Also, at late start sessions, the literacy coach presents to the whole group, which has helped him to come back and incorporate it in what he is doing. Preston added, “I think that literacy coaches should be a permanent part of any district. There’s so much for us as teachers to do, and so many standards to meet, and we can’t begin to do it all.” He said even the two of them working together don’t always have a clear focus on what the district or state standards require, and it is easy to go off on tangents. Having someone help you focus on the goal is very valuable. He also mentioned the importance of Heath being very friendly and personable.

Preston said he has collaborated with other teachers at the late start sessions and has worked with another teacher at a nearby middle school. He describes her as a master teacher who has truly mastered Reading Apprenticeship. He has observed in her classroom lessons on Talking to the Text and the six writing assessment traits. He also noted collaboration with other teachers in his school, which is a challenge because of lack of time. Late start sessions at Middle School A are every other Wednesday for an hour. Many times the literacy coach was the presenter. He mentioned that it is easy to get overwhelmed with strategies and techniques and information, with no time to process or analyze it, much less implement them. He also added the sixth grade team was trained in Reading Apprenticeship this year.

I asked Preston if his teaching had changed as a result of working with the literacy coach. He said it was in the process of being changed, “because I’m starting to present things at a higher level.” He referred to charts of Bloom’s Taxonomy on the

walls of his classroom and his use of it with students in trying to get them to think beyond the obvious literal level: “I want them to do analysis and application, and maybe even evaluation someday.” He noted that is essentially what Reading Apprenticeship is all about, higher-order thinking skills: “So I’ve changed my focus in my words that I use in the classroom, in my emphasis. It’s not perfect yet. It’s still a work in progress. But I can see where I’ve changed a bit. I don’t care about the facts so much, but why is it important? How does it relate to today?” Preston said he does not yet see student academic improvement as a result of his use of new strategies, and that he doesn’t think change will come until it has been in place for a couple of years: “I think we need a cohesive, building-wide approach before you can actually say what the results are.” He also mentioned the large number of “at-risk” students at Middle School A, which makes it more difficult to maintain high expectations when there are constant discipline problems. However, there are new administrators and a positive feeling among the staff, but still some need to change the larger culture and get more parent support.

The next interview was with Kathy, a language arts and social studies block teacher at Middle School B. In terms of her content area, she stated literacy skills are very important. The curriculum teaches writing and reading as two separate courses and both are completely dependent on literacy skills. She mentioned this is also true in social studies where there is a lot of content information and informational reading that is text-based. Kathy was asked to describe the challenges students face with literacy. She said she has some students who can decode just fine and also read

fluently, but they don't comprehend well. They don't have any foundation in monitoring their comprehension. She mentioned that Middle School B does not have second language students or students with serious language development delays, but they do have lots of students with low comprehension skills. Other students have writing challenges and some students struggle to translate their ideas into correct written form, write complete sentences, and so forth. Some students rush to get their ideas on paper, but don't have much awareness of conventions or audience.

Kathy said the literacy coach has come in and worked with her in connection with the Battle of the Books competition. He brought in books and an activity. Earlier he had worked with her on Reading Apprenticeship strategies, Talking to the Text and Think-Alouds. She said they worked as co-teachers for the activities, which was very successful. Kathy mentioned that she is a new teacher at the school and has not taught for the last four years, although she had taught for six years previously. She said in some ways she is a brand new teacher, and others assume she knows what she is doing, but when she asks for help she does get it. She said the person who has been most supportive of her is the literacy coach. It's difficult for her to distinguish his role as a literacy coach from his role as just another person, another pair of eyes in the classroom, or someone to talk about a particular lesson with. She has been able to bounce ideas off of him, do some co-teaching with him: "Some of the things we were doing I felt really confident about such as Talking to the Text, but with the Think-Aloud strategy I wasn't really sure. So just to have him there was helpful, to see that I

was on the right track.” She is currently involved in the Reading Apprenticeship training.

I asked her to describe further specific techniques or strategies learned from the literacy coach. She said they worked on the Think Aloud and used a chart he had developed that would help students focus on what they needed to pay attention to, so they would tally reading strategies used, and write down evidence to show the strategy had been used. This provided a little more accountability for students. Afterwards, they revised the chart to make it even more effective. They debriefed after her first use of the chart and then did another activity with the revised version. She feels like she has mastered the use of the chart, but not yet mastered Think-Aloud or Talking to the Text: “I feel really comfortable about what I’ve done, but it can be taken to another level. The kids are really good about using these strategies, making a connection, predicting, identifying questions and problems,” but she acknowledged a need to work more on paraphrasing and summarizing and getting students to a proficient level with these skills.

When asked about collaboration with other teachers, she mentioned that Middle School B is using Professional Learning Communities. The sixth grade group chose the goal of improving student skills in “Reading to Perform a Task,” one of the state’s reading strands. Their general literacy goal is to have all students passing the state assessment test at 80 percent, and developing lessons to teach that skill. She said the PLC groups meet once a month. Another group of teachers meets to work on aligning the writing curriculum, identifying which writing prompts are going to be

used at which grade levels, a sequence for teaching the modes of writing and which writing traits would be tied to each mode. They tried to align the writing modes with what was available in the textbooks and other resources. Kathy is also on the school literacy committee with other sixth grade block and other content area teachers. She said they met more frequently early in the year and less since then, but she has helped with the organization and implementation of programs like Battle of the Books, Reading Counts, and Got Book? “The programs are great, but I think the literacy committee had us running in circles with so many new programs in the fall. They are doing all sorts of things. We have a class period at the beginning of the day and everyone starts the day with fifteen minutes in a separate class. This is the Got Books program.”

When asked if her teaching had changed because of her work with the literacy coach, Kathy said it was hard to tell because everything she had done with Franklin had been associated with Reading Apprenticeship: “Whether he was here or not I don’t know if I would have done anything differently. The training itself has inspired me to do different activities I may not have done as much of otherwise.” Other things that have been useful to her has been the Battle of the Books: “I think that kind of activity is great. Kids who are already strong readers, maybe they don’t read a wide variety of books. Something like that will get them reading different kinds of books they might not normally read. When asked if she had observed student academic progress as a result of using new strategies, she replied that it was too early in the school year to answer that. She said she feels like students are able to do the strategies

when she directs them to, but she has not yet seen them using the strategies independently, which is the ultimate goal. She said because state test results from the previous spring may not be accurate, she does not feel like there is enough data to indicate if comprehension levels have gone up. She mentioned her work in a previous, much smaller district which did not have a curriculum specialist much less literacy coaches. She was impressed to have some of those resources in School District One: “To have a literacy coach I think is awesome, and I think it makes a lot of sense, and whether because I’m new and I did Reading Apprenticeship with the literacy coach, I don’t know if other teachers in this building use the literacy coach as much as I have. Being new, I took advantage of that more, and I think it’s a great resource.” She said she goes to Franklin for a lot of things and that he has been a big help in numerous ways from getting new projectors in classrooms to a new textbook adoption: “He’s a resource in a lot of ways outside of just assisting with teaching practices.”

The last teacher interviewed in District One was Susan, a language arts teacher at High School A. She began by stating that literacy skills are important in her subject area because if students can’t read, they aren’t going to do well in language arts. She added that reading and writing are inextricably linked. When asked what challenges she faces with literacy, Susan said a big challenge is having so many different levels of literacy in one classroom added to large numbers of students in each class: “It’s really difficult to meet the needs of all those different levels of literacy. So you have everything from students who are reading at or above grade level, those who get bored and impatient with the pace of the class, to students who have such low

reading skills that it winds up being shown in behavioral or management problems.”

Another challenge she faces is the lack of interventions currently in place at the school, which they are working on improving. She said the only current intervention is for the very-low skilled readers and there are too few sections to meet the need adequately. There is a lack of an in-between, transitional program for improving fluency or comprehension skill, which the school is trying to implement.

Susan said she has worked pretty closely with the literacy coach, mainly in trying to implement a core set of literacy skills in all of the freshman classes she is teaching. She said the literacy coach, Colleen, has been instrumental in helping to figure out what those skills are and how they should be implemented in freshman classes. In addition, she has worked closely with Susan in establishing goals for the school literacy team. Susan has not worked one on one with Colleen in the classroom, although other teachers have. Susan said Colleen has been a key element in establishing literacy goals for the school, and conversations with other teachers indicate the coach has been extremely helpful to them. Some of the skills focused on include identifying similarities and differences, summarizing, and active reading strategies.

When asked about specific techniques she has learned from the literacy coach, Susan identified summarizing as a strategy and active reading strategies. The literacy coach has provided an overview of what the research says, and has provided graphic organizers and tools for them to use. She said Colleen makes it easy and digestible for

the freshman team and provides things that don't require re-designing the whole curriculum, but can be inserted as they are.

Susan says she has collaborated with other teachers in her involvement with the school literacy team and the freshman academic support team. All freshman teachers are on the freshman support team and they work together to figure out ways to help freshmen be successful in their transition into high school, to give them the skills they need to be successful. In addition, the team provides a forum for collaborating with each other about curriculum content, best practices, and discussion about students who are struggling: "It's a great team and we've done a lot of work on literacy skills, academic literacy in the team, and I see a lot of future collaboration between the literacy team and the freshman team."

Susan said her teaching has definitely changed as a result of her work with the literacy team and the literacy coach, that it has changed her thinking about what skills she needs to emphasize in the classroom. She is able to take a step back and not make assumptions about what students know or what skills they have. She now recognizes the importance of teaching metacognitive skills, how to think about things, how to handle content material, deal with the textbook, break things down. She is involved in the Reading Apprenticeship training as part of the second wave of teachers going through the process. In terms of observing academic improvement in her students, Susan thinks it is too early to say because the initiatives are recently implemented. She has observed improvement from the vocabulary exercises she's been using, and students seem to better understand the concept of similarities and differences. One

thing that has been advantageous is teachers in all the different content areas are using the same strategies such as Venn diagrams, which they recognize and understand: “Overall, whether it will have a huge impact on grades or on their comprehension level, I think it’s a little bit early for me to make that judgement.”

The final interview conducted in District One was with an administrator. The principal of High School A referred me to the assistant principal in charge of curriculum and instruction, Brent. Brent was asked to describe the schoolwide goals related to literacy and how they have tried to meet them. He mentioned that a meeting had taken place the day before on the literacy initiative. He said there are three schoolwide goals. One is to explore incentive programs currently in practice at other high schools and see if there are any the school wants to try. Another goal is to have stratified intervention for readers, starting with the lowest level of students in READ 180 and adding another program for students whose needs are no longer met by READ 180, to prepare them for mainstream classes. The third goal is to develop a system of data tracking to mark improvements, and identify what needs to be adjusted. These goals were established the previous year and the school leadership has been working towards them during the current year. Brent mentioned that the high school had a lot of teacher turnover the last two years, so most of the people on the literacy team are newer teachers, which has required sort of starting all over. He stated only recently the district-wide focus on literacy was implemented. The school literacy committee includes Brent as administrator, a teacher of basic freshman English, a READ 180 teacher, a tenth grade teacher, a freshman science teacher, and a social

studies teacher. Their meetings are also attended by Peter, the district Curriculum Director and a retired educator who helps with district literacy. He noted strong representation from the freshman cohort teachers, and that their hope is to implement literacy strategies and polish those things they are working on so that students are ready to move on to the next level. Their work has begun with freshmen and the freshmen teachers and then will advance to sophomore level during the next year, followed by junior and senior levels.

Brent was asked what forms of professional development are used. He noted that the literacy coach is provided by the district and is part of the literacy team. The literacy team has been active for the last two years. Several teachers have received Reading Apprenticeship training. Reading rewards are also being used in certain classes, and courses are designed for students who don't qualify for special education but who have not been successful in mainstream classes. He noted the freshmen team looks for conferences or workshops that are geared toward literacy strategies across the content areas. He estimates that about fifteen percent of teachers have gone through the Reading Apprenticeship training.

I asked what Brent sees as the central role of the literacy coach. He said the essential role that he would like to see her do is to work with teachers one-on-one in identifying strategies they can implement in the classroom, as well as gathering some data on the implementation of the strategies, doing some follow up, and determining if the strategies have been successful or not. He said his work and interaction with the literacy coach is developing. This is her second year in the building and he

acknowledges the first year, “we really kind of spun our wheels” to see where she would be able to get the most out of her time. He said, “I look to create opportunities, get subs for teachers so they can work with Colleen to look strategically at how we are going to get literacy strategies implemented.” So far the literacy coach has worked mostly with the freshman team to thoroughly implement strategies in all entry level classes. They write grants or find resources to go to workshops. Brent works with the Curriculum Director, goes to district meetings, and tries to collaborate between high schools and middle schools in order to have some common language. It’s important for the staff to have opportunities to observe other teachers and to take time for them to talk to people from other schools about literacy initiatives.

I asked what is the most important element in building school literacy. Brent said it is keeping the conversation going, articulating a measurable goal, gathering and reviewing data and determining what progress has been made. He stressed narrowing the focus and keeping the conversation going around literacy, looking for opportunities for teachers to get professional development, making sure that there is focus in observations and curriculum planning. He says good instructional leadership has to have some components of literacy involved. In terms of what helps teachers to improve their instructional practices, he said it takes thick skin: “We are constantly asking people for their perspective in a group setting around literacy and what should be done, what is the role of a content area teacher around literacy instruction.” He said teachers need to articulate why they think they should or should not be reading teachers. If they think they are not literacy teachers, they need to be questioned about

why they assume they aren't. It may be necessary to take some shots and not back down: "Our goal should be to prepare kids to move forward, be that college or military or work or the trades. Even if we like our butterfly volcano unit, students have to be able to read, which is first and foremost."

I asked how he would know when literacy-related goals have been met. He said they will assess where they are at the end of the year. Hopefully, they will have some common language about an incentive program. If what is in place doesn't work, then they will need to do something else. They hope to have a stratified approach to literacy from students who enter high school below grade level to students who are taking AP (Advanced Placement) courses: "I think the players we have at the table at literacy meetings aren't just language arts teachers; they are people from lots of different content areas that seem pretty committed to improving literacy schoolwide, so it's not really dependent on me as an administrator or any one person from the language arts department." Brent feels positive about the progress that has been made so far. This district and school has just begun to use data in a functional way, and they have been several years behind in infrastructure, so they are now able to develop a better picture of students when they come into the school. Students are now being placed in classes more appropriately given their skill levels when they start the school year.

Observational Data: "A gradual shift in momentum"

This section includes descriptive reports of field observations that took place in District One in the 2007-08 school year. Observations were conducted at district

training sessions, and at individual schools whenever possible. The first observation conducted was in August of 2007 during the first of two full-day training sessions in Reading Apprenticeship for those teachers involved in the first year of the training. The training was led by the Curriculum Director, Peter, and the two district literacy coaches, Heath and Franklin. Approximately forty middle and high school teachers were involved. This was one of several sessions throughout the school year for this group of teachers. The training began with use of a cruise ship metaphor, with all participants on a voyage together, and there was an obvious attempt to encourage fun and engagement and help participants get acquainted. The first activity was a getting acquainted activity where participants formed a large circle. A series of statements were read and people stepped into the circle if the statement applied to them. The activity revealed a diverse group of teachers with a larger number of middle school than high school teachers, and several different subject areas represented. The introductory activity was a way to present a rationale for content area reading. Participants were asked to partner up and share something about themselves and what they expected to gain from the training. One pair then shared with another pair, in a “pair up, square up” activity. Peter explained that the social aspect is a part of Reading Apprenticeship, as part of the social/collaborative dimension of reading. He explained that Reading Apprenticeship is designed for content areas, with some activities customized for particular areas.

The next activity was a gallery walk around the room. Quotations related to reading were posted on the walls around the room. Some were famous quotes, some

were from research findings, and some were from students. Participants were asked to choose a quote to discuss with someone nearby. Afterwards, participants volunteered to share their thoughts with the whole group. They were then asked, “What strategies did you use to read these quotes?” Participants answered with such things as categorizing, focusing on the short ones, interest in the name, and so forth. Next came a review of the goals of Reading Apprenticeship. The history of the literacy initiative in the district was reviewed with a rationale for why it is needed. The review included where the district is currently in terms of the literacy initiative with the assessment system, intervention for struggling readers, use of literacy coaches, and professional development. A six-minute video overview of the literacy program in the district was shown. The film included READ 180, the grade 6-9 assessments, Reading Apprenticeship and subject-specific teaching, the literacy support network, and reading incentive programs at the middle schools. Training, support personnel, and new curriculum are all part of the program.

There was a positive sense of fun and liveliness throughout the workshop, even in the handing out of materials. Drawings for prizes were included throughout the day. Next was an overview of the materials in the Reading Apprenticeship resource binders. The materials include review of the four dimensions of reading in the Reading Apprenticeship framework: personal dimension, social dimension, cognitive dimension, and content knowledge-building (See Appendix). Goals for the program were also discussed. In addition to the resource binder, each teacher was also presented with the Reading Apprenticeship guidebook, *Reading for Understanding: A*

Guide to Improving Reading in Middle and High Schools Classrooms, by Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko, and Hurwitz (1999). The resource notebooks also include ancillary materials that go along with the text. They also include materials added by the district coaches, which they call Super Supplements. Peter reviewed the big picture of Reading Apprenticeship, the four dimensions and metacognitive conversation. He noted it presents a broader definition of literacy with a focus on thinking and learning. The term “apprenticeship” is a model of practicing and partnership where the teacher is the master and the students are apprentices.

Teachers participated in a jigsaw activity for the four dimensions in order to develop a more thorough understanding of them. The participants were very attentive and participated well. Each book handed out was marked with a numbered happy face to indicate which group the participant would join. The facilitator checked each one for the correct number of members. A handout on each table was divided into sections for each of the four dimensions. Each section included page numbers corresponding to a description of the particular dimension. Peter noted that because teachers care about content, they often provide “reading welfare,” which enables students and does not give them the skills to access information. The group also discussed how poor reading skills can be disguised by students. The jigsaw activity involved each person reading three pages of text and then reporting and summarizing for the group. Silent reading took place for the next few minutes, and then the groups began to discuss, with each person reporting on his or her section of the reading. In their discussions, the participants included specific applications and shared ideas for the classroom. A

wrap up discussion provided a final review of the four dimensions. Important themes focused on included sharing and constructing meaning with others, metacognition, cognitive elements, contextual knowledge, and application of strategies and skills. It was also noted that the different dimensions of reading are simultaneous, not sequential.

After a lunch break, the workshop resumed with a drawing for prizes. The focus of this session was on the personal dimension, which required use of a particular section of the resource binder. The “Thread Runs Through It” activity began with the reading of a William Stafford poem. Each person was asked to think about learning to read, their early memories, trauma, joys, their adult reading, their favorites, and their approaches to reading for pleasure and work. Participants wrote their memories on strips of paper which they attached to a spool with a needle and thread. This strategy is a way to get students to focus on the role of reading in their lives and backgrounds. The participants worked mostly quietly on this activity, writing their personal histories on the long strips of paper. The facilitator then refocused the group on the purpose of developing an identity as a reader. Members were asked to share one event or item from their history at the table groups. Next, a handout in the resource binder on research of trends in reading practice across grades was reviewed. A short piece of text called “Father’s Butterflies,” by Vladimir Nabokov, was handed out. Participants were instructed to use their expert reading to make sense of the text. Highlighters and sticky notes were available on the tables. After reading, participants were asked to make notes about the process they used, strategies they used, roadblocks they

encountered, what problems they solved, and what remained unsolved. The activity helped emphasize the fact that different people approach texts in different ways.

Teachers shared with a partner and there was enthusiastic discussion

Discussion followed about the collaborative contexts in the reading process, a good activity to help teachers recognize what they do as readers and why they need to help students use these skills. The whole group generated a list of all the different strategies they used, comparing and contrasting their methods. More discussion followed about ways to use textbooks, how to teach students to read text, higher-order thinking, visualization, and so forth. The presenter shared a scenario where the teachers assigned students to read the Gettysburg Address without any pre-teaching. Students shared their confusion in a short piece of writing. Then the teacher asked them to read the text again without any pre-teaching. Each time the students read the text, their comments reflected a deeper level of understanding. This also provided a good example of how writing can be used as a reflection tool.

Next was a think-pair-share activity with the prompt, “What strategies do students use to read?” The pairs generated several ideas: skimming, asking someone else, using Cliff’s Notes, going to the internet, using a glossary, reading ahead, over-highlighting, waiting for the teacher, making personal connections, skipping words they don’t know, pair reading, and reading just to get done. The presenters focused on use of strategy lists in the classroom and the importance of modeling reading strategies for students. They also pointed out student reading surveys in the textbooks. The training in general allowed for a lot of sociocultural structures and collaborative

elements, which will continue throughout the year, also providing a network and support system for teachers.

The next segment was on using Think-Alouds to increase metacognition. A modeling of the think-aloud strategy was done by the facilitators. Next a rationale for the use of non-reading activities that can be transferred to reading took place. One container of Play Doh was given to each pair. Partners determined who would go first. The active partner had ninety seconds to make an animal out of the Play Doh. While they were constructing the animal they were to do a think-aloud. The other person listened and observed without commenting. The activity was followed by a conversation about what the observer noticed about the process used. Whole group discussion ensued about the think-aloud activity. Partners then switched and the one with the Play Doh was asked to make a vehicle with the Play Doh while doing a think aloud. Some obviously found it awkward to talk about what they were thinking. The next activity involved one pair of scissors per pair. Slips of paper were handed out and a complex figure on a sheet a paper. Pairs were challenged to reproduce the figure. After a few minutes, the other partner tried to solve the puzzle. This was followed with debriefing about the process and the challenges of being the observer.

After these warm-up activities, the group transitioned to think aloud with actual text. The facilitator asked for a volunteer who was to do a cold reading of a piece of text. The volunteer was asked to read a comic strip, *Doonesbury*, and to do a think-aloud while reading it. The comic strip was a challenging piece of reading with ambiguous meaning. The whole group then discussed and the volunteer shared her

thoughts about the challenge of reading and comprehending a politically-oriented comic strip as well as the pressure of being in front of the group. The activity demonstrated that it is okay to be confused when reading challenging text, something that teachers need to make students aware of. The group also discussed the importance of background knowledge and the benefits of teachers modeling this process in front of students.

Teachers were asked to think about activities in their content areas students could do. The principles of read-alouds were reviewed. Participants were asked to use post-it notes to indicate insights gained, write down one question and one concern and post them on the “parking lot” poster. The presenters referred teachers to other materials available in the binder related to the personal dimensions of reading. Presenters reviewed the day’s activities and set the stage for tomorrow’s session. Optional homework reading in Chapter 2 was assigned and participants were asked to think more about the term “metacognition.” The day ended with a brief review of tomorrow’s agenda.

The next observation session took place in November of 2007 during a full-day Reading Apprenticeship training for a large group of teachers in the second year of training. On the projector screen as people were coming in were various quotes about literacy teaching and learning, many of them quotes from famous writers. Teachers gathered into groups by school. The district literacy leaders began with introductions and then showed a video clip on reading motivation with the theme “reading inspires kids.” Think-Ink-Link, a Reading Apprenticeship activity, was demonstrated as a way

of helping students to focus on reading reasons, or strategies to motivate students to read. The directions were to think for one minute about one motivation strategy. Next, write down something you have used in your classroom or seen someone else use. Then, link up with someone else by walking around the room and finding someone to share with for one minute. Participants then walked around a second time to link up with another person. All teachers participated enthusiastically in the activity. Conversations were about what strategies work to motivate students. The second time teachers were asked to find someone they don't know very well to link up with. The facilitators then asked for volunteers to share strategies. One teacher mentioned using a graph showing income related to educational level which he had shared with his classes. Another shared about using paired reading, where two students read the same book for a two-week period, wrote letters to each other, and then did a follow-up project. The students then took the Reading Counts quiz. This was noted to be an effective way to use the social dimension of reading. Another teacher shared a whole-school reading of a particular book. Teachers were reminded to refer to the Reading Reasons in the Reading Apprenticeship materials for good ideas.

Next, a handout of the QAR (Question-Answer-Relationships) strategy was presented with four colored squares. QAR is one of the text strategies for good comprehension. Peter, the Curriculum Director, discussed the concept of "making reading heard" by having students talk about reading. All of us are experts in our content areas. As teachers model reading, they are the CEO, "Chief Example for

Others.” Teachers were asked to do a sketch in each of the boxes. The green box was for the “Right There” questions, where the answer can be located in one place in the text. The yellow box was for “Think and Search” where the answer is in several parts of the text. The red box was for “Author and Me” where the answer is in the text and in the readers’ background knowledge. The blue box was for “On My Own” questions, those which come from the readers’ own knowledge. Teaching students the four types of QAR questions helps them understand where the information is coming from. It was pointed out that anyone can answer the “On my Own” questions. Four sheets of paper were handed out to each table, one red, one green, one yellow, and one blue, along with one envelope with questions taken from a content-area textbook. Table groups were directed to lay out the questions on the correct paper according to type of QAR question. The presenter stressed the importance of finding key words in the questions that indicate the type of questions. As groups completed the task, there was lots of discussion about what category some questions belonged in. Some also noted the difficulty of not having the text to refer to. The presenter then asked, “What makes the question fit in a particular category?” He stressed that QAR is not an exact science. He typed onto the projector screen cue words that identify each type of question as group members called them out. The importance of students being able to identify the types of questions and generate their own questions in different content areas was also advocated. This type of practice also prepares students for the questions on the state reading test. A more simple alternative to QAR is thick and thin questions. Teachers were referred to Tab 8 in the resource binder for a description of

thick and thin questions. A volunteer was asked to describe how he or she had used QAR in their classroom.

The next activity was reflection and sharing time. It began with a stretching activity. Presenters first went through the self-evaluation rubric in TAB 13 of the binder: “Teacher Practice Rubric: Developing and RA Classroom.” The rubric goes through all the dimensions: personal, social, cognitive, and knowledge-building, and three different levels of development. Teachers were asked to use the rubric and post-it notes to locate where they are in each dimension, and to date the post-its to refer back to later.

The next activity was to identify tools and resources for each of the dimensions. A matrix was handed out for teachers to analyze where they are and what they will do next, by January, and then February through June. They were asked to complete the first two columns and discuss them with partners. Teachers discussed different barriers to implementing them. Some seemed to struggle with assessing their own performance, but also shared a lot of ideas. Facilitators moved around the room and monitored and answered questions. This was a useful activity for sharing ideas, which also involved reflecting on practice and doing self-assessment. Discussion about the obstacles followed. Half sheets of colored paper were handed out and groups of four were to discuss problems and obstacles to implementing Reading Apprenticeship. Facilitators moved around to talk to individual groups. Charts were placed on the wall for each dimension with columns for Want to Visit and Can Visit Me. The intention was to identify teachers who feel they are strong in a particular

dimension and would invite others to observe them in order to encourage collaboration through organizing visits to other teachers' classrooms. The literacy coaches will help facilitate this process. Only a handful of teachers, however, felt confident enough to sign up on the posters.

During the break, the facilitators collected all the struggles and obstacles and categorized them into themes: resources, prior knowledge, time, motivation, and classroom management. These topics were posted on large paper around the room and teachers were instructed to go to one area and generate possible strategies with a discussion group for that particular obstacle. Ten minutes were provided. One person in each group recorded the group's ideas on the chart paper. Lots of discussion and generation of ideas took place in the groups, with open discussion of teachers' challenges and frustrations. Members then switched to another station to continue the discussion. As the activity continued, people began to drift off task and into other conversations. Rather than complaining, however, teachers were genuinely exploring ways that problems could be solved. As an example, how to provide substitute time for those participating in Reading Apprenticeship for preparation and implementation of strategies.

Whole group discussion followed about what might help. Each person was handed a sheet to complete individually or as a group with a plan to address obstacles. They were asked to brainstorm, consider options, and then give suggestions to the literacy leaders for ways they can help. The Reading Apprenticeship Action Plan Chart included four columns: objectives, participants, resources, and time frame. The

teachers were reminded that the district has budgeted two full substitute days for each member in Reading Apprenticeship training. The Curriculum Director explained aspects of substitute days provided versus pay for additional time. The two days can be converted to additional pay amounting to about eight hours. Teachers could use evening or other times. The provision of substitute time shows the district's commitment to resources needed for literacy. The resource book *Subjects Matter* was also handed out to teachers for their resource libraries, and which will be used more in the January session. It was mentioned that each school would also be getting a set of additional books specifically for reading in math, social studies, and science. Drawing for prizes was held at the end of the meeting.

The next observation was conducted during High School A's literacy committee meeting on December 12, 2007. The literacy committee at High School A includes about 14 members: teachers, administrators, and district support staff. The committee began with review of three goals of their work: 1) to put in place a reading incentive program to increase the reading volume of all students at the high school, 2) to develop a multi-tiered reading program that meets the needs of a wide range of students, 3) to increase the use of content area reading strategies throughout the school. Their timeline is to complete study and planning during the 2007-08 school year and begin implementation for the 2008-09 school year. Each goal area has a subcommittee chaired by one of the members. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss recent high school visitations and the subcommittee goals.

Groups that made visits to other high schools to examine their literacy initiatives presented their reports to the group. Their comments reflect good, thorough exploration of the others schools' programs. The first group reported on their visit to a large suburban high school, describing the program in operation for literacy, tutorials, and the work of literacy leaders. Literacy leaders at the school conducted book talks and sponsored "lunchtime reads" with grant money. They also sponsored summer reading programs, visits to a well-known area bookstore, a Sustained Silent Reading Program, and tutorial time in core subject areas. Another group visited a suburban high school and reported on two levels of work there, content area literacy and interventions. The school uses the *Language!* Program for struggling readers and also has academic literacy classes. They also have a transition class for preparation for regular coursework, nine intervention courses taught by two teachers. Some additional FTE (Full Time Equivalent) was provided by the district. They use the *Reading Handbook* from Great Source Publications for curriculum. The literacy committee at this school had decided on six content area reading strategies. The group of observers noted that teachers were encouraged but not expected to implement them, that there seemed to be a lack of follow-up. The strategies included the well-known Anticipation Guide and other common strategies. They also noted the literacy initiative at this school is district-directed, but schools seem to have a lot of autonomy. Visitors also observed the *Language!* program curriculum, but were not highly impressed with it because it seemed inappropriate for high school students.

The next group reported on their visit to another smaller high school. They noted it to be an impressive program that has brought about lots of turnaround. Accelerated Reader is used as their incentive program. Students who had failed the state reading assessment test were placed in the Accelerated Reader program taught by four committed teachers. They have subsequently reduced the number of intervention courses because of their success. They also require summer school for those behind in reading and math. They put into place a promotion and retention policy, so students must maintain freshman or sophomore standing for multiple years. Work sample responsibilities were distributed schoolwide and multiple opportunities were offered. Eighty percent of students passed the state reading assessment test. The intervention courses are taken in addition to required English classes, which provides greater incentive to pass because students lose an elective period. The principal also meets with every single student during sophomore year. The group discussed the lack of focus on motivation and content area literacy at this school. The school does use reading incentives for students to pass the state reading test, focuses on ELL students, does a wall of books, has cut out the things that were not working, and has put the money into the intervention program. The principal reported it was a challenge moving forward without staff consensus. However, the school had moved into the second position in the state with an “exceptional” rating on the Oregon Report Card.

The group from High School A also discussed their observations of how much work they have ahead of them and recognized the challenges in meeting the goals they have established. The previous two schools reported on were contrasted because one

relies more on staff commitment and buy-in, and depends on well-respected teachers to lead the efforts. The other sets higher expectations but without much staff buy-in. The next group reported on a visit to a high school in a more rural area. They observed that the literacy initiative there is a very top-down, district-wide effort. The school uses the READ 180 program, an additional program for transitional students, and 25-minute per day study periods for students to focus on reading. Administration and board members participate in the interventions. Staff have been trained in Student Owned Strategies for the content areas, have been provided with books, and have participated in faculty book clubs. Most teachers are supportive of the efforts. The 25-minute period was added to lunch period and required for those who were struggling. All teachers were assigned a study hall period, those who did a reading program for study hall were paid a stipend, and students received credit. The school had increased its reading scores from 45 to 70 percent passing over three years. They had an increased focus on writing as well. The principals do “learning walk” observations, similar to drop-ins, in order to observe the use of literacy strategies and provide feedback.

The next group reported on a visit to another large high school in an urban area. The library there does book clubs by means of wikis and blogs. The library was observed to be a popular and noisy place for students. The intervention program used is *Read Right*, an intensive intervention program that requires lots of staffing. It coaches students in fluency and is very scripted, but has shown some success. The program is predicated on the idea of building fluency first and then comprehension

will follow. There was lots of group discussion about this program, which is also very expensive. They discussed the merits of the district providing money to schools and allowing them to choose the program that works for them. At this particular school, strategies were not implemented schoolwide.

In general, the committee members at High School A showed great enthusiasm and willingness to explore what other schools are doing. Many questions were asked of those who reported on particular schools. There was also some comparison of the schools and their different programs, as well as comparisons with High School A. The next question posed to the committee was: how do we take what we have described and apply it to our school, picking those things that would work here? The goal would then be to prepare an action plan and a proposal for the school and the district. In the discussion, the Assistant Principal also reported on conversations with middle schools who want more rigor and better incentives than the state tests provide. They are going to look into a possible plan for summer school for struggling students between their eighth and ninth grade years as well as creating an intervention course in place of an elective. They will use the success rates of schools visited as rationale. The Assistant Principal will come up with a summer school plan by winter break. There was also some discussion of possible school board resistance and political factors involved and just what elements would receive support. The ripple effect would hopefully be that middle schools would do more in sixth and seventh grades to prepare students for state tests. It was recommended to also strategize other initiatives for the high school, identifying what is currently being done and what needs revamped. There was also

some discussion of matching students' credits earned to class standing. The Curriculum Director reminded the group of the ten recommendations in the district task force report, for example, a continuum of reading programs. The question of whether district funds, grant money or reallocation of funds were possibilities was raised. It was mentioned that the district leaders need to put more resources behind their literacy goals, and that there is a need for schools to present a united front, for example common intervention goals in both high schools in the district.

The suggestion was made to meet next as a subcommittee to decide which elements observed at other schools were most impressive and bring a list to the next meeting. The group also discussed future presentation to the staff on content area reading and vocabulary and a follow up on the THIEVES reading program. There was also a discussion of the need for more staff development time for literacy in the future. In general, the group expressed a feeling of a gradual shift in momentum and in increased focus on making literacy more an integral piece of the school's goals. The meeting concluded with an announcement of the date and time of next month's meeting.

The next observation conducted was during the afternoon session of a full-day Reading Apprenticeship training for second year participants in the program. It was held on January 10, 2008. The afternoon session began with a drawing for a prize. The Curriculum Director next discussed the relationship between reading and thinking as a promotion for a workshop in Think-Alouds to be offered. He referred teachers to the district's website for bibliographies and strategies. One of the literacy coaches

reviewed the four dimensions of Reading Apprenticeship on chart paper, placing one in each square: social, personal, cognitive, and knowledge building. Today's focus was on the cognitive dimension. He asked what is the difference between cognitive and metacognitive. Prize tickets were handed out to participants who volunteered responses. The discussion clarified the differences between the cognitive and content-building dimensions.

Participants were instructed to refer to Tab 7 in their resource binders. A research study with findings that show what improves reading for students was presented. The teachers read a couple of paragraphs and the presenter asked for a summary. The importance of not assuming that students know the strategies was stressed. The seven keys to comprehension presented in the study include: create mental images, tap background knowledge, ask questions, make inferences, identify main ideas, synthesize, and use fix up strategies. Teachers were then referred to Tab 8 in the binders which includes supplemental strategies promoted by the district. Directions were given to spend a few minutes looking through the strategies individually, choose one that is useful that each teacher can share with the group. Literacy coaches moved around from table to table monitoring and having conversations with teachers. The presenter then asked a few people to share a good strategy. A couple of teachers commented on the Who's on First strategy and the Open Mind strategy.

The Curriculum Director then asked for some rearrangement of the room into five areas for a rotation activity. Once the room was arranged, each of the five

presenters was assigned to a group for a fifteen-minute time period to present and model an activity. That presenter then moved on to the next group to present. The topics included predicting, clarifying, summarizing, creating mental images, and SQ3R. The presentations highlighted certain strategies, looked at examples, and gave suggestions for how to use them. The small groups with rotating presenters seemed an effective way to break up the material and engage teachers in small, collaborative groups, and also to cover a lot of material. The prediction group presenter, for example, passed out a reading passage and asked each person to do a silent activity. The passage was the same but there were three different color-coded sets of directions. Each set of directions presented the reader with a different purpose for reading, which was the point to be emphasized, that students need to have a purpose for their reading. The presenter also pointed out some prediction activities in Tab 8 of the binder. The presenter for the summarizing had group members complete a particular strategy called Dump and Clump. The clarifying presenter used two-column notes with quotes on the left and interpretive comments on the right, and sentence starters for Think-Alouds. He had the participants choose either “Salvador Late or Early,” by Sandra Cisneros, or the e.e. cummings poem “Anyone Lived in a Pretty How Town.” Both passages are written in unusual styles, and the writers break rules of standard English and use non-traditional language features. Teachers in the group took two-column notes. The presenter also suggested some guidelines for using the strategy. Another presenter used SQ3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) and used an excerpt from a textbook to illustrate the strategy.

Finally the Curriculum Director passed out information on how to deal with additional substitute days provided to support Reading Apprenticeship. He presented options for the substitute days or eight hours of pay. Participants were also asked for input on possible workshop topics such as differentiation, classroom management, cooperative learning, motivation, readers theatre, literature circles, vocabulary/schema building, and think-alouds. He asked participants to indicate their level of interest in each. Participants indicated the most interest in cooperative learning, vocabulary/schema building, and motivation. The training session was then concluded.

The next observation was of at Middle School B, where the literacy support teacher, Franklin, was conducting a reading test preparation lesson for eighth grade students in the school computer lab. About twenty students from three different teachers' classrooms were gathered in the lab for the lesson. These students had been identified by teachers as those who had scores close to passing on the state reading assessment test. This was the third day of a three-day unit.

The teacher began by asking for hands off the computers and everyone's full attention. He asked, "Why are we here?" Students identified themselves as those who came very close to passing the state tests. The teacher presented the purpose as being to review strategies for the test to make them more successful. Students were asked to identify some useful strategies. They responded with suggestions such as trying each answer choice in the blank to correctly identify vocabulary words, reading slowly, reading the questions first, not rushing through the test, avoiding distractions, and

taking a break. The teacher reinforced all these answers and discussed the importance of monitoring their reading and not guessing on answers just to get finished more quickly. After dealing with a discipline issue, the teacher then suggested students need to get a good night's sleep before taking the test.

Students were instructed to log into a program purchased by the school called "Study Island," a test preparation program that allows students to target and practice questions in particular strands of the state tests. If students did not know which strands were target areas for them, they were to log into the one on Conclusions and Inferences. Other students worked in the areas of Locating Information, and Literary Elements. The program brings up fairly short reading passages, not as long as those on the state test, followed by multiple choice questions. The program keeps track of their percentage score as they go along. Students began working, mostly quietly, while the teacher circulated to check his lists and determine areas classroom teachers asked them to work on. One student asked a question about inferences. The teacher stopped to explain to the whole group and gave a couple of examples of making inferences. Another student asked about the meaning of a word. The teacher again stopped to make a suggestion to the group for how to figure out word meaning. When students finished a section, they went on the Conclusions and Inferences. The teacher circulated and gave students suggestions and hints such as, "There is a clue in this sentence. Can you find it?" Most students focused very well and others were constantly distracted. Franklin stressed toward the end of the session how difficult maintaining concentration is, that reading is hard work, and that it is okay to take a

break. A few minutes before the end of the period, he said, “When you get done with the section you are on, you can stop.” Some students took note of their percentage scores.

The teacher made a couple of final comments including remember to read the question before reading the passage, and for vocabulary words try the answers in the sentence blank. He also stressed maintaining attention and focus, monitoring oneself, and not rushing at the end of the test. He reminded students that the test allows them to pause and come back to the section. The class period ended and students filed toward the door. This was a positive activity to allow students to practice with sample items in an area they need improvement in. It is also a low-stakes activity and follows a review of useful strategies for doing well on the state test.

Following completion of all observations in the district, I met with Peter, the Curriculum Director in February of 2008. He wanted to share with me a couple of recent reports he had prepared. He also informed me of several recent literacy events and evaluation elements in the program. The previous evening the district tournament of Battle of the Books was held, with 700 students participating in the finals from elementary and middle schools. This is one of the central elements of the motivational efforts in the district. Personnel tried very hard to make it a fun event, complete with prizes and medals. A short, appealing video was used at the start of the event and rules were explained. The video begins with cover shots of the books that were used in the contest along with video footage of students. The graphic on the video reads: “Many battles have been fought. Let the final battle begin.” The director reported that

students were excited, jumping up and down, and very enthusiastic. In addition, the mayor of the city, a state representative, and school board members also participated in the event. The video will be revised next year in an attempt to expand the motivation and increase the number of students involved.

Peter also showed his power point of a presentation of a district report on literacy. The purpose was to evaluate progress on the literacy initiative, to assess where the district is now. The goals from the initial task force report were summarized and condensed into ten elements. The district literacy team then evaluated each one, marking them as “not in place,” “partially in place,” or “fully in place.” While one was labeled “not in place” the others were identified as “partially in place.” In addition, Peter had measured the percentages met for each of the ten goals to gain more specific information about the extent to which each element was in place. The group was also asked to prioritize the goals from one to ten. The results of the prioritization varied greatly by grade level. An additional goal for the future is to hold meetings of the district literacy leadership team more regularly, once a month. In addition, middle school reading data was analyzed for 2006-07 to identify trends and indications. It indicates in part, an overall drop in middle school scores between seventh and eighth grade and some discrepancy between district and state reading scores.

The secondary literacy support teachers also completed an evaluation of the literacy goals and implementation with a reflection piece included in order to identify what needs to be done more effectively. Peter stressed the importance of their focus

on reading intervention. He has created a matrix of interventions for every school to show what's being done to help each particular group of students, to identify what types of interventions are needed, and to match students to interventions. He also briefly discussed summer school programs and which schools are looking at making these programs mandatory for those students below grade level in reading. The documents he provided are discussed further in the next section.

This final meeting demonstrated the district leaders' commitment to literacy, attempts to focus on both motivation and intervention for students, and attention to ongoing assessment and evaluation of current goals and programs.

Document Data: "A long term systematic and comprehensive effort"

This section provides selective description of the documents collected and coded as part of the study for District One. A list of all documents appears in Appendix D. Documents from District One include a six-minute CD about the district's literacy initiative, handouts for professional development training sessions, training agendas, the Adolescent Literacy Report of the 6-12 task force, documents pertinent to particular schools, research briefs, and information on reading intervention programs. Documents also include the Reading Apprenticeship Guidebook, *Reading for Understanding: A Guide to Improving Reading in Middle and High Schools*, by Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko, and Hurwitz (1999) and the supplementary resource binder for Reading Apprenticeship used by teachers in the training program. Documents were provided by the Curriculum Director, the district literacy support teachers, and some were collected by the researcher during observations.

The first document is a copy of the lengthy Adolescent Literacy Report published by District One. It is dated December of 2005. The report begins with an executive summary that overviews the district's actions so far in establishing a literacy task force, which looked at the current state of practice in reading, reviewed research, and completed the report. The summary states: "The task force concluded that the district is currently not effectively addressing the needs of adolescent readers. The task force also concluded that a long-term systematic and comprehensive effort is needed to ensure that all students attain literacy." It presents several key recommendations: implement a district-wide assessment system to identify student reading needs, support intervention programs, institute literacy and metacognitive strategy instruction across content areas in secondary schools, provide literacy coaches to support effective literacy instruction and reading specialists to work with struggling readers, and provide appropriate and differentiated professional development to all staff. The overview goes on to state the belief that literacy is the single most important outcome in K-12 education, and it notes that research indicates all students can learn to read when districts provide appropriate instructional programs to meet students' needs. The second page of the document lists the names and schools of each member of the task force.

The body of the report begins with an introduction and the superintendent's charge to the task force and then reports on current practice in District One Schools. It indicates survey information was used to compile this portion of the report and identifies several emerging themes: secondary schools use a wide variety of

instructional approaches and materials; there is a lack of a single program for literacy instruction; while schools have some non-readers, the larger group is struggling and weak readers, anywhere from 20 to 60 percent; and, some schools have made efforts to initiate literacy initiatives and others have not. Information also indicates student progress on statewide assessment declines between eighth and tenth grade, there is no uniform assessment system in the district, there is no system to provide teachers with appropriate data, teachers have various levels of expertise in teaching reading to learn, and the district's scope and sequence does not clearly define what elements of literacy are to be taught.

The next section of the report highlights literacy outcomes and patterns of practice nationwide, specifying the research reviewed by the task force, which includes the Carnegie Corporation, Alliance for Excellent Education, Scholastic, the International Reading Association, the University of Kansas, Brown University, University of New York in Albany, Johns Hopkins University, the Oregon Educational Media Association, Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, Book Magazine, Heinemann Publishers, Northwest Regional Education Laboratory, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Institute for Academic Excellence, American Federation of Teachers, Rand Reading Study Group, University of Minnesota, National Middle Schools Association, and Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development. A table is included that lists the specific documents the task force reviewed in its review of the literature. Following the table is a summary of the key points identified in the literature, which were grouped into major headings.

The major heading are: motivation to learn to read, curriculum, instruction, assessment, staffing for literacy, professional development, literacy media and technology, leadership, and English language learners. Each heading has one or more subpoints that specify a major theme from the literacy related to that heading; for example, the heading “Instruction” is followed by: provide continuous reading instruction throughout the secondary years, provide adequate time for literacy instruction, provide opportunities for independent reading, implement research-based literacy development strategies in all content areas, infuse literacy instruction in all aspects of the school curriculum, provide opportunity for collaboration and dialogue throughout the instructional day, and integrate test preparation into instruction. These subpoints provided the task force with goal statements related to key topics that are research based. The section ends with an “Important Distinction” between learning to read and “learning to read to learn,” which is important for the district in terms of recognizing that the majority of students need to improve their skills in reading to learn or academic literacy.

The next section is titled “Key Recommendations from the Task Force.” For students who are learning to read the report recommends 45 minutes of reading instruction daily at students’ reading level in addition to the regular language arts curriculum, adopting and using specific curricula with struggling adolescent readers that present a balanced approach, and using trained reading specialists to work with struggling readers. The report states “It is the consensus of the task force that having more continuity across schools and programs in the types of curricula used with our

lowest performing readers will benefit those readers.” The task force considered thirty different curriculum programs and then narrowed down to eight programs: Corrective Reading, the Reach System, READ 180, Read Naturally, Read Right Systems, Reading and Writing Sourcebooks, Reading Apprenticeship Framework, and Rewards. More detailed information about these programs is listed in the report’s appendix. For students “learning to read to learn,” the task force makes 21 recommendations related to research based literacy practices, assessment practices, professional development, and leadership for literacy. Some of the specific recommendations include: infusing literacy instruction throughout the secondary curriculum, exploring the use of literacy coaches, incorporating more high-interest, level-appropriate literature into subject areas, and increasing time spent reading. The assessment practice recommendations include a district-wide literacy assessment, appropriate placement for students, assessment information provided to teachers, professional development, and parent communication. It is also noted that professional development should be ongoing and sustained, that each secondary school should develop a school literacy plan, leadership should articulate a vision for literacy, each school should be assigned a reading/literacy coach to work with teachers, and it calls for more investment in library media centers and for the district to commit itself for the next five years to provide funding and support for these best practices.

The final section of the body of the report is an Action Plan for Moving Forward but articulates the action plan items for only the first two years, the 2005-06 and 2006-07 school years. Appendix items include a copy of the literacy survey used,

tabulated survey results, reviewed curriculum programs for each of the eight identified curricula which also specifies cost of the program, and a list of common strategies from *Mosaic of Thought: Teaching Comprehension in a Reader's Workshop*, by Ellin Oliver Keene and Susan Zimmerman.

The literacy initiative CD included in the documents is a promotional production designed to introduce staff and community members to the literacy initiative. It includes a basic description of the task force and goals it established and includes a message from the superintendent to assert the district's commitment to the literacy initiative. Another document is an e-mail from Peter, the Curriculum Director, providing requested demographic information on District One.

The next set of documents includes the agenda for the introductory training session for Reading Apprenticeship on August 23, 2007. The agenda indicates a getting acquainted activity, a review of the goals of Reading Apprenticeship and rationale, an overview of the Reading Apprenticeship framework, and description of a jigsaw activity that participants used with the text. The afternoon session agenda indicates a focus on developing the Personal Dimension, with a strategy activity, a Think-Pair-Share activity and a session on using Think-Alouds to increase metacognition. The final debriefing includes an evaluation activity, homework for participants, and a review of the second day's agenda. The agenda for day two includes the following: the Personal and Social Dimensions of reading, a Talking-to-the-Text activity, a review of the Personal Dimension, showing of a video, the Social Dimension of reading, cooperative learning principles, suggestions for using the social

dimension at the beginning of the school year, planning time for teachers, and a final debrief.

The agenda for the Reading Apprenticeship training on January 10, 2008 for wave two (second year) participants, refers to the textbook provided to participants, *Subjects Matter*. It also includes sessions on think-alouds, using technology to support reading, the cognitive dimension, the rotation sessions on cognitive dimensions, and discussion of substitute time provided and a debriefing. Times for each item on the agenda are included as are the particular presenters. It is designed as a one page overview of the topics of the training session and as a guide for the presenters to follow, with timelines, throughout the day.

Several handouts from the same Reading Apprenticeship session are included in the documents: a graphic organizer, a handout on story modules and comprehension activities from the website www.literacynet.org, a nonfiction discussion sheet and jigsaw. There is also a Reading Workshop Cycle handout that presents a four-part guide for designing lesson plans for a reading workshop: mini-lesson, summary of article topics students choose to read, 20-minute reading and journal writing, and 15-minute reports and discussions. A Metacognitive Notes, or “Double Entry Journal” handout presents directions for students using a piece of paper folded in half. The left column is labeled “I read” and the right column, “I thought/wondered.” Students then read a page from the novel or text and for each page find at least three words phrases, sentences, quotes, or ideas that are interesting or confusing, writing them down in the right left hand column. In the right column,

students explain why each one is interesting or confusing. There is also a handout included for teachers to use as a master to make “Think-Aloud Bookmarks.” Some reading selections are included from individual presenters’ mini-lessons during the rotation sessions. The Reading Apprenticeship Action Plan handout asks teachers to indicate in columns their objectives, participants, resources, and time frame. The Reading Apprenticeship Planning Rubric is also a tool to help teachers set teaching goals related to Reading Apprenticeship. It includes each of the four dimensions of Reading Apprenticeship down the left hand column, and for each one teachers are indicate strategies they plan to implement by January of 2008, strategies they plan to implement to strengthen the dimension, what obstacles they foresee, and what other resources or needs they have. Finally, the QAR (Question Answer Relationships) handouts include a description of the four types of QAR questions and directions to students for using a color coding system to identify the different types of questions.

The next two documents relate to High School A. The first is a graphic overview of the school’s literacy committee. It includes goals in the three key areas of Reading Incentives, Reading Interventions, and Content Area Reading. The goal related to reading incentives is to “put in place a reading incentive program to increase the reading volume of all students at [High School A].” Subgoals include reviewing the literature on reading incentives, building on the work already done at the district level, and applying for grants to help fund programs chosen. The goal related to interventions is “To develop a multi-tiered reading program that meets the needs of a wide range of students.” The subgoals include visiting schools using innovative

models and programs, mapping what currently exists or doesn't exist, reviewing the literature on adolescent literacy, identifying and purchasing programs and materials to facilitate implementation, and presenting a plan for meeting the literacy needs at the school to the school staff. The goal related to content area reading is to "increase the use of content area reading strategies throughout the school." Subgoals include introducing one content-area strategy to the whole staff once per trimester, providing release time for all staff trained in Reading Apprenticeship, and increasing the number of staff members receiving such training. This document provides clear, specific goals and directions to guide the committee in its work. The other document related to High School A is the literacy team roster which includes the name of each member of the committee, their subcommittee assignments, their telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.

Another document included is the program for the Battle of the Books contest held for participating elementary and middle schools on February 28, 2008. It includes a description of Battle of the Books, the evening program's agenda, and important notes. It also shows the room assignments for each participating team. Several documents are also related to the "Update on the 2007-08 Literacy Initiative Goals, dated February of 2008. This project to update the task force's original work and revise the literacy initiative goals was organized by the Curriculum Director. The secondary section of this report specifies that for the 2007-08 school year, the district will continue to implement the recommendations of the Adolescent Literacy Task force by working with each secondary school to do all of the following: develop and

implement a plan that provides a full continuum of reading interventions for students at risk of reading failure; refine the implementation of READ 180; continue implementation of Reading Apprenticeship; improve the use of reading assessment data to inform instruction; work to develop the role and effectiveness of each school's literacy team; strengthen content area reading strategies throughout schools; improve the effectiveness of literacy support teachers in all schools; increase training opportunities for teachers to improve writing instruction and assessment; maximize the use of staff development opportunities to support the goals of the task force; support school and district-wide reading incentive programs and activities; and support other literacy activities, such as family literacy nights and student literacy teams. Where appropriate, sub-goals are included along with brief comments related to what specific schools are doing, reporting on the activity of the district literacy support teachers, and providing other specific details.

A document titled "Summary of K-5 and 6-12 Literacy Task Force Recommendations: Where Are We?" lists each of the original recommendations and then identifies each as being not in place, partially in place or fully in place. Interestingly, only one is labeled as "not in place," which was "investing in school library media centers and specialists," none are indicated as fully in place, and all the others are labeled as partially in place. Another document is titled "Middle School Reading Data, 2006-2007: Trends and Indications." It provides a summary of where District One students' reading achievement is in comparison with other districts in the state, noting an "eighth grade dip" as a constant trend. Figures by school are

indicated. It also indicates a significant gender gap, showing that in high-poverty schools, the decline was greater among boys than girls, yet noting that girls also fall behind in eighth grade. Other points in this document comment on the achievement gap for special education students and among other subgroups.

An accompanying bar graph shows comparative reading data for eighth and tenth grade by subgroups including male, female, white, Hispanic, limited English proficient, economically disadvantaged and special education. It also displays the data so as to compare District One scores with average state scores. Another line graph shows comparison reading performance of three middle schools, grades six seven and eight, for both male and female. It is an effective visual presentation of the eighth grade dip referred to earlier. Another similar graphs show the data for district reading achievement by gender, grades three through ten, comparison scores for District One reading scores by percent meeting or exceeding the standard. Another document is a chart of the Intervention Programs used in the district and what skills, strategies and knowledge each one includes. It also indicates what types of students each program serves. A handout regarding reading intervention programs notes “initial observations and considerations.” These points include that there are currently a number of intervention programs in most schools, yet it is not clear how they work and support each other, some students needing intervention are not getting it, that the language arts program can better support struggling readers, comprehension and vocabulary need to be the focus areas rather than decoding, an eighth grade reading class might be beneficial, and summer school programs might be recommended for

struggling students. Another document is a “Thumbnail Sketch from the Principal’s Partnership Research Brief *Summer School*.” It is a report of synthesized research by the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory. The document summarizes some research on the benefits of summer school programs for students. The final documents are the Curriculum Director’s power point slides which summarize the above “K-12 Literacy Task Force Recommendations: Where are We?” document. It provides percentages of implementation so far for each of the task force recommendations and also addresses the literacy leadership team, school libraries, motivation programs, reading specialists, literacy coaches, professional development, literacy plans, literacy teams, the assessment system, and reading interventions.

APPENDIX B:
DISTRICT TWO DATA

Interview Data: "Cheerleaders for literacy"

The research in District Two began with an interview with the two district literacy specialists who oversee the literacy program in secondary schools. Katherine and Beth were asked to describe the district's goals or strategic directions related to secondary literacy. They noted that the goal is to develop a common literacy model K-12 with core standards that identify what students will know and be able to do at each level. They also commented on the history of the district's secondary literacy initiative, which goes back about ten years. Originally, the focus was on middle schools and was then expanded to include all secondary schools. The initiative began with middle school principals but at that time was not a full-scale strategic plan which is just now in the development stages. Literacy leaders were established for all secondary schools, individuals who were full time teachers but who were paid a stipend to receive training, distribute information, and conduct literacy leadership activities in their schools. Part of the goal was also to build communication and have some common training provided. This original format will be revised and more clearly articulated for the 2008-09 school year, once a common literacy model and core standards for each grade level have been identified. The district is also in the process of hiring full time Instructional Coaches for middle and high schools, part of whose work will likely include literacy. The superintendent's Strategic Plan for District One

includes the identification of a common literacy model and core standards as part of its focus on student achievement, which will soon be in place in District Two.

Katherine and Beth also described the professional development to support secondary literacy. They stated that literacy leaders from all secondary schools meet as a cohort group on a regular basis to share information, provide leadership skills, talk about best practices in secondary literacy, and take these best practices back to their schools. In addition, at the middle school level, a common model of writing instruction, the writing workshop, was chosen. The program is *called Teaching the Qualities of Writing*. Middle school language arts teachers are receiving training and materials specific to the writing program. They have received two to three full days of training in the writing workshop approach. Katherine and Beth also provide support for the READ180 program, which is in place in all secondary schools. Their methods include providing one-on-one assistance, technical support, and conducting support meetings for READ 180 teachers on a monthly basis to share strategies and timely information relevant to the program. Katherine and Beth are available to work with individual schools as needed. They noted that literacy coaching is minimal, although it is forthcoming with the hiring of instructional coaches for the 2008-09 school year. They reflected that the district has started on a small scale with literacy and is working its way to a more large-scale approach. These programs have always depended on the availability of funding.

They also noted that web resources are being developed for the district level for READ 180 teachers. In addition, a summer institute is conducted each year where

mini-courses are offered for teachers who choose to come. The district's approach to professional development has always been very site-based. Katherine and Beth stated their belief that this approach is waning and that the literacy program will become more centralized and mandated district-wide with the superintendent's new strategic directions. They noted that material such as textbooks adopted are often supposedly mandated, yet teachers may or may not choose to use the materials. Katherine observed, "There was a mandate to attend the writing professional development sessions and quite honestly, about ninety-five percent chose to, and there was another five percent that didn't, either [because they were] retiring, or they had made deals with their principals and didn't attend." While the mandates in District Two have been flexible up to this point, that is likely to change.

Katherine and Beth were asked for any evidence of the impact of the programs on curriculum, teaching practices, or student performance. They noted that there is evidence in the READ 180 program. The data management portion of READ 180 allows for frequent identification of student reading lexile scores, which have indicated large numbers of students improving in reading. Lexile scores are collected for every student in the program twice a year. They are then given to the district's testing and assessment coordinator who tracks the growth. While many of these students have significantly increased their lexile scores, they noted, many are still not able to pass the state assessment tests because their skills were so low originally. Whereas before READ 180 was implemented, there was little or no means of support for struggling students, READ 180 has shown remarkable success, especially at the

high school level. They were also hoping to see evidence of writing improvement from state test results but that has not yet happened. They noted because of this they are going to look at getting more evidence of improvement through formative assessment in writing. They plan to collect writing scores in certain grades, perhaps grades three and six. They believe this will help teachers target their instruction more specifically and hopefully raise writing scores on the state assessment tests.

Regarding success with the literacy leadership program, Katherine and Beth noted hearing from teachers about strategies shared that they implemented in their classrooms successfully. They have received some anecdotal information about the writing program in middle schools, that students are more excited about writing. At the end of training sessions, they noted that they always ask teachers to complete an evaluation of the training, which generally shows positive comments, especially in terms of connections and sharing between schools which had not happened before. They asserted that the program is strong enough that funding, always tight, has continued. While the district has decreased funding for elementary level literacy, they have maintained or increased it for secondary, which they see as evidence that it is working, and is recognized and supported by administrators. Whatever types of training or professional development they conduct, they always follow up with a survey to provide feedback at the end. They are also looking at the possibility of an online survey for teachers to gather information about implementation of the writing program and to evaluate the training they received. They stated READ 180 is the program “we have the closest take on,” because of lexile level data collected by each

school. At the final literacy leader meeting of the year, the literacy leaders are surveyed about what worked for them and what they would like to see more of. Katherine and Beth admit that their evaluation methods could be more thorough, and are “not real strong in methodology.” There is no district means of evaluating the work of literacy leaders at this point.

Katherine and Beth were asked how the district works with and supports individual school literacy leaders. They noted that it is supported financially, “which is gigantic: it wouldn’t happen otherwise.” They noted the importance of communication between schools which has been facilitated by the process. Katherine observed there has always been a huge lack of communication in the district between schools, and this program has helped improve that. When they plan agendas they always include collaborative time, a chance for people to get to know each other and hear what is happening in other schools. Each building also has Teacher Leaders, who meet together as cohort group, and provide similar benefits: “It gave a chance for everybody to glean from each other the very best of what they had, or to hear ‘Ain’t it awful!’ and problem solve.” They noted that feedback from principals has also been positive. They have never heard one complaint about the expense of the program or the time committed to it. They said most of the work with literacy leaders and support for them comes in the form of the cohort meetings and group time. They are available to work with individual literacy leaders as needed, but that is not very often requested. They noted this may be partially because secondary teachers tend to be more reticent in requesting individual help or assistance.

I asked them to identify a couple of examples of individual schools requesting assistance. They said usually these requests are related to providing materials such as videos, writing materials, or something for a specific teacher. They have done trainings in individual schools for writing and speaking assessment. Because the district requires work samples in speaking and diversity, those are both areas where schools have requested training or materials, or for training in scoring of the work samples. Some READ 180 teachers request individual assistance. They have had teachers request information on how to exit students from the programs, and about the computer system which is part of READ 180. They have also provided support for middle school writing teachers after they have gone through the writing workshop training, and funds are available for school teams to do site-based professional development. One member of the team was assigned to be facilitator, and they have worked to support the facilitators, helping them plan budgets, set up observations, and giving suggestions for how professional development could be structured in their building. In general, trying to build leadership within the individual schools is another part of the support Katherine and Beth provide, in addition to coming up with supplementary texts and materials to go along with the program.

At the time the interview was conducted, Katherine and Beth both observed that an “advent of change will be happening” in the district. They see their work as to present a “teacher voice” to administrators. Administrators depend on them for that more now than ever. They also recognized their own positions may be changing in the future. The Curriculum Director has told them that more of their time will be spent in

committees, providing input to administration, and presenting information district wide. They noted that their voices can still advocate for teachers and students and they can provide valuable input about what will or will not work: “Sometimes we serve as a liaison between administrators and teachers. We hear from our literacy leaders, our teacher leaders, from our READ 180 teachers, and they say ‘Administration needs to hear this from the curriculum department’ and so we take that back to [the Curriculum Director] or to principals or whatever audience is needed.” Helping facilitate communication is a big part of their work as they see it. They noted they are also expected to be the ones who can provide quick resources, who are only an e-mail away, and to resolve individual problems in a quick fashion: “If there wasn’t a position like ours, there would be less communication and more confusion, because oftentimes we can head off problems.”

Interviews were also conducted with the literacy leaders in each school included in the study, High Schools A and B and Middle School A. Larry is the literacy leader at High School A. He is also an English teacher at High School A, which is considered a low-performing school by state standards, with large percentages of minority and ELL students. He described his job responsibilities as varied. He is consistently asked to review school data, related to both students and teachers. As an example, in 2006-07 he was asked to collect information about where work samples in reading and writing were used across the curriculum. He has compiled data and evaluated it consistently. He is also asked to present the data to the staff and help interpret it for them. As a staff, they have tried to emphasize the use of

reading schoolwide, more during the first semester of the year than second. He is also sometimes asked to put together presentations for groups of parents. During 2006-07, they did presentations on state testing for students and parents. It involved producing videos for students encouraging them use good test taking skills.

Larry said the responsibility that is least possible but most important for him is the time he spends one-on-one with others working on materials to support literacy. Some departments put together writing expectation guidelines for students which were distributed at a “literacy night” where parents were invited. He noted attendance at this event was low the first year, so they decided instead to go to existing parent groups to distribute the information. He observed, “one of the great frustrations of this position is there is no year-in, year-out definition. What I did last year was very different from what I did this year.” He said his role is a “semi-literacy leader.” He frequently works at mentoring new teachers, with literacy and in other areas. Some of his job ends up being literacy coaching but most of it ends up something else. One of his accomplishments was working with the English department to retrain the whole staff in doing writing work samples. They worked through a training process in the English department first, and then took it to the whole staff, in small groups, department by department: “Oftentimes, I’m asked to sit in on any sort of literacy related meetings” for designing new curriculum or creating programs such as a freshman writing lab. The purpose of the writing lab was to supplement the regular freshman English curriculum and assist those students below grade level in writing skills. He noted these students are often different from the READ 180 students, but

are students who have demonstrated they are behind in writing skills. Many of them did not meet the eighth grade benchmark, which was indicator for being assigned to the lab.

Larry thinks of his role as less of a leader and more of a participant in a team. High School A has received a large federal Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) grant to promote school improvement, and some of his work has revolved around that grant as well. Through the grant, they have received support for some formative writing assessment, which he has been involved in analyzing. He also designs the literacy portion of the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP), which is done in collaboration with others as well. Sometimes his work may be with a team of teachers or the English Department. He also noted that his work tends to be more “frontloaded” toward the beginning of the year and during first semester. A lot of his activities during second semester become “filling up time in a faculty meeting” or working with individual teachers on particular issues.

Regarding the methods he has used to work with teachers, Larry said that because he has full time teaching responsibilities, there is not any type of formal meeting time. When working with teachers, he is fortunate that the school has a very strong English department with teachers who are motivated to work together and with the school as a whole, so he often works through them to get the literacy message out to the whole staff. “It’s almost a church-like thing, in terms of missionary work. I bring an idea to the department, the department hammers it out, plays with the ideas.” As an example, he indicated a discussion in the department about students being weak

in the area of word meaning, as reflected by state test strand data. The department then discussed how they could begin to address the problem and come up with some solutions. Their message was eventually shared with the whole staff. Larry said, "I prefer to be an equal resource and treat all of my colleagues as knowledgeable masters of their profession. When I have an idea I like, I bring it to the team and say, 'Here's the idea I have. What do you guys think of it?'" He mentioned the school is already structured into Professional Learning Communities, at this stage somewhat experimental, one of which is a sophomore team, which meets together and shares ideas regularly. Larry's role is more sharing with teams of individuals rather than giving directives: "I really do believe in accountability, but I think real accountability comes to colleagues and your students, not to some director or leader. Giving a group of teachers homework for which, in their classroom, they may or may not be accountable is ridiculous." His hope is that PLC's, which are cross-curricular, will also help to build a sense of accountability. Larry mentioned sending out questionnaires to every staff member at the end of the first six-week grading period to find out what they were doing with literacy in their classrooms. He said the results indicated everything from serious effort to show implementation of literacy practices to very minimal attempts.

Larry was asked what things are most important in doing his job effectively. He said the most important one for him is having a voice in building leadership so that the literacy message is taken seriously. He would like to have more of a voice with administration and leadership than he currently does. He noted, "I'd love it if they

would formalize my role a little bit more.” He believes that one of the primary missions of schools is literacy, that students must be able to read and write and that has to be a part of everyone’s curriculum. That also needs to be part of the school’s vision, and not just something on paper: “I’m guilty of this too. I’ll write a really nice policy or goal statement for our school, and it goes in a little book, and teachers are supposed to look at it. But having that real and consistent voice I think doesn’t happen a lot.” He mentions the importance of having time to facilitate discussions among teachers, which having PLC groups has helped to encourage. At one point, he met with PLC groups to focus on some writing skills with them. He identified things that were important to English teachers, for example, students consistently writing complete sentences, and then asked for teachers in other areas of the curriculum to help support this goal. Without real discussion in the groups and generating of ideas, the content area literacy loses its significance. At times, he has run into resistance from teachers in certain areas who aren’t concerned about literacy: “The consistent facilitation of those discussions taken seriously is a critical role, and I feel that the voice of leadership and consistent facilitation are what happens least, yet are the most important elements for doing the job.” The other important role for him is sharing, which includes going to the literacy leader meetings, and going to workshops and bringing back ideas to share about vocabulary or writing. It’s important to keep literacy issues fresh in people’s minds. He noted a lot of times, there is a large amount of teacher expertise in the building, but it is a matter of finding a platform for it.

I asked Larry to identify what particular elements are included in his work, the first being professional development. He said this is a part of his work but not as much as he would like because it was often merely being asked to do a presentation at a meeting. It is not what he considers ideal professional development where teachers are actually learning and implementing new strategies. He has done almost no individual coaching, and very little lesson planning with other teachers outside of work within his own department. Working with school data is an important part of his daily work. He does not do observations in classrooms or demonstration lessons. He does work with small groups of teachers fairly consistently, through PLC groups and other groups. He said the most significant aspect of his work is as a facilitator, to encourage discussion about literacy issues: "I guess part passionate cheerleader for literacy, but also I have some expertise in this area, so use me, but also discover what you can do yourself as teachers, so that it's not just me saying you've got to try this." He says it's important for teachers to become accountable to themselves and to the team when they are trying something new and added that some attention to literacy practices in the classroom is better than none at all: "I'd really like to have a seat in leadership so that when we're making big schoolwide decisions, it's not literacy as sort of an addendum, but schoolwide decisions are made with literacy as a consistent focus."

Larry was asked to comment on challenges he faces. He noted teacher time is the biggest one, the lack of time for coaching and facilitation, and teachers finding time to spend on literacy: "I really feel that our buildings are here for essential

reasons, getting kids to read and write and speak well enough so they can move on to another level, whatever that next level is, and when I look at the utilization of time, I think it's often not our focus. So I see that as a primary challenge." He noted the school has undergone a lot of reform through grant money which has facilitated structural reforms but not necessarily changed teaching practice or student performance. In fact, Larry said structural changes can get in the way of significant changes in practice. During 2006-07, a lot of time was spent discussing and designing career academies, and not enough time talking about literacy or thinking skills. Another challenge is the way that professional development time tends to be used. One or two people presenting to a whole staff without much facilitation of discussion is not useful professional development. He talked about the importance of consistency, regular attention to literacy. Their original school improvement plan goal was thirty minutes of time in PLC groups on a monthly basis devoted to literacy, but he noted that it was not supported or enforced by administration.

I asked Larry what he has done that he thinks is most successful. He said that his best success comes when time is given for discussion and reflection with teachers addressing specific issues. He referred to the professional development time on writing assessment the previous year as successful. The review and breaking into small discussion groups worked well. Teachers were reviewing, discussing and scoring sample student papers: "I think that was the most effective use of the literacy leader position in terms of design, coaching, facilitating the discussion." There was also some accountability built in for writing assessment within departments. He said

his other success has been with addressing data, although it is a hollow victory because often a successful presentation or message is not always followed up on or implemented. He does feel successful in helping others to understand what the data indicates and how they reflect student performance. He is in favor of implementing “power standards” in order to limit what they do but do them really well, make the standards a part of every lesson every day. Literacy is, of course, a major part of those power standards.

When asked about his typical workday, Larry said he has no special time set aside for literacy leadership. The school has used some FTE to provide instructional coaches and part of his time has been spent working with them on literacy issues. He typically does most of his work with teachers in after school meetings often on Monday afternoons when the teacher workday extends until 4 p.m. In the previous year, he would often present information at staff meetings, but now it is more often meetings with small groups of teachers in departments or PLC groups. He mentioned the focus during 2006-07 was on writing, so a typical day might include ten minutes with one group or two hours with a small team of teachers. He has regular monthly meetings with new teachers as well, and tries to focus part of that time on literacy. They have addressed writing assessment issues, how to meet the needs of TAG students and special needs students, or questions that specific teachers bring to the group.

Larry noted that High School A had been very deliberate in targeting certain student populations. English language learners are a significant population at the

school, and one of the key issues has been identifying appropriate placement for those students when they transition from the ELL program to mainstream classes. He noted that for the CSR grant, there are actually two literacy plans, one for the general population and one for second language speakers. However, among the general population there are also large numbers of struggling students. The ELL students are also a diverse group: some are highly-literate in their primary language, and others not at all literate. The ELL curricula have now been mandated by the district, but many students transitioning out of ELL are still struggling. The freshman writing lab has been another way to target a particular group of students. READ 180 meets the needs of the lowest levels of readers, but students who are not eligible for READ 180 still may not be able to pass state assessment tests. The freshman writing lab is still in its infancy, but will become more formalized as time goes on. Schoolwide, freshman and sophomore students are more targeted which is a natural result of state testing happening at sophomore level.

Regarding working with resistant teachers, Larry referred to accountability to the department. He said he does not see many resistant teachers, although some departments as a whole may be resistant to literacy: "I like getting in there and converting a few folks and getting those people nodding along, and then folks who are more reticent at least have to make the pretense of dealing with literacy." He mentioned great success happening within the social studies department, whose department head has been a great cheerleader for literacy and takes it seriously. He said resistance is a challenge, giving an example of a former mechanics teacher at the

school who was a great teacher, yet often said, “I’m not asking you guys to teach a kid to change oil; why do I need to get kids to put a comma in the right spot?” Larry said some teachers are always going to be resistant to content area literacy, and his response is our state and our taxpayers don’t have changing oil as a content standard, but they do include reading and writing: “When it comes right down to it, changing minds and philosophies is hard.” He observed that young teachers are often more willing and open to incorporating literacy, probably because of the focus on it in their teacher preparation programs. He finds the hardest teachers to work with are those who agree and commit to doing something, but then don’t follow through.

Larry observed that he has worked with only a small percentage of the whole staff, perhaps ten percent individually, and more often works in large or small groups. When he was instructional coach the previous year, he worked with three or four people on a regular basis, but he has mostly worked with individuals when they have come to him with requests.

When asked about forms of district support he receives, Larry said he has found that the district literacy specialists have provided central leadership and done a good job distributing resources. He suggested the full day meetings of the cohort groups should perhaps be divided up into middle and high school groups, and he thinks many of the activities are oriented more toward middle school level. He would like to see more focus on content area literacy and more resources provided to support content teachers: “I know what my department’s doing; but when I go out to social studies, sometimes it almost feels like I’m winging it.” He finds resources on the

internet and from doing research, and he mentioned that the district specialists have come to the schools to help with writing training for ELL teachers. They have also come out to work with READ 180 teachers and in the development of the freshman writing lab. He would also like to see more building level administrative support for him as literacy leader, giving him a voice at leadership meetings, more like department coordinators have. He also said there is a lack of financial support from the district level, that the individual schools should be provided with a budget for literacy.

I asked Larry to further describe his relationship with building administrators and its importance. He noted, "I tend to be the guy who gets asked to take care of something instead of being a natural leader. Something will come up in leadership meetings at which I am not present and they'll say 'That's something the literacy leader could do.'" He provided an example of the recent work with motivating students for testing where he was asked to prepare videos for students to watch on the daily announcements. He described his relationship with building administrators as "distant." A lot of times they communicate to him through department coordinators or refer the department coordinators to him. If he asks for times to present to the staff or PLC groups, he does find that the building administrators are supportive. He noted that "Our comprehensive school reform has an enormous outline and list of activities we were supposed to be doing this year, but those were completely lost to other issues." This has left him in the position of having to advocate for time at meetings and so forth.

Larry described some of the strategies he has helped teachers to incorporate, which he noted he has done through departments and at their request. He said vocabulary has been the recent focus, and he has promoted teaching vocabulary contextually. Rather than teachers making lists of words, giving them to students and telling them to learn the words, and then quizzing them, he has tried to encourage a different approach involving students identifying the words in their reading and teaching them strategies to guess or figure out the meaning based upon context. He noted a lot of work has been done in this area among the sophomore team members. They have also used SAT prep roots vocabulary lists. In writing, he has encouraged giving students strategies for revising and editing their writing. He has encouraged them to teach editing for both content and style at the same time: “If we want kids to write a certain way in content areas, we better demonstrate that to them using student work.” When he was asked to describe literacy leadership in one word, he replied, “As it is, fractured.”

Larry also noted his emphasis on collaboration, saying that the most important thing literacy leaders can do is to get teachers concerned enough about literacy to collaborate with each other: “A lot of folks throw their hands in the air and say, ‘Why can’t these kids . . .?’ It’s through collaboration that we prevent the throwing the hands in the air and saying why can’t they, and instead saying ‘Where is the kid now? What do I need to do to take them to the next step?’” They asked everyone in the English department to articulate what skills students needed by the end of each year, and looking at the list, it was very fragmented in terms of what teachers expected. This

motivated him to generate cross-curricular teams as part of the school reform plan, so that there is some responsibility for literacy schoolwide: “We’ve got to make it all of our school’s job.” He notes this also spreads expertise: “I don’t want to be the one department that deals with literacy. It’s got to be a group effort, especially in environments with students coming from poverty and from diverse cultural backgrounds.” He notes students at High School A do not come from homes where literacy is used on a consistent basis or is a natural part of their lifestyle, so it is the school’s responsibility to provide that, and not just the English department’s.

The next interview conducted was with Steven, who is literacy leader at High School B. He is also a social studies teacher. High School B serves an upper middle class area of the city, although the student population does include some diversity in terms of minority students and special needs students. He describes his role as serving on the district literacy cohort committee and serving as a liaison between the literacy cohort and the building. He stated that he fills a lot of different roles, working as one-on-one advisor to other teachers, doing staff development presentations on literacy, reading, and writing across the curriculum. He has also worked with the Curriculum Assistant Principal in focusing the staff development plans and teacher goals related to literacy, so each teacher’s goals include one related to literacy.

Steven stated that he has worked with teachers in meetings, with individual departments, and some one-on-one. He has often done research for teachers and then provided them with strategies, but he has not spent a lot of time coaching them on individual strategies. He noted the time in front of the staff is an important element in

his work as well as support from the administration. He said some teachers are reluctant to pay attention to issues of literacy, when they see them on a staff meeting agenda, for example, but that when the administration is supportive, the staff will usually buy in.

I asked Steven to specify what elements are a part of his work as literacy leader. He noted that he does have some responsibility for professional development, he has done a limited amount of individual coaching, he has spent some time working with teachers on lesson plans, and he has definitely worked with data and used it to help focus the literacy goals. He has not done observations in classrooms, but has demonstrated lessons for the whole staff in meetings. He has also occasionally worked with small groups of teachers in department groups. I asked what he sees as the more important or significant aspect of his work. He noted that as a content area teacher outside of language arts, he is better able to emphasize literacy and demonstrate that it is important to include literacy strategies in other content areas, “to spread the word across the staff that literacy is not just a language arts classroom thing; it’s a schoolwide effort, an emphasis that needs to be there.”

When asked what challenges he faces, Steven noted that getting staff buy-in is the largest one. He stated teachers are overwhelmed with content that they are required to teach, and often they think they don’t have time to include literacy, so he tries to give them lessons that can be easily incorporated without taking time away from content. The other struggle is time with the staff that is meaningful as opposed to just five minutes at the end of the staff meeting. He has found that the administration is

supportive of his work: “I think that’s one of the reasons our administration likes me as a literacy leader. I’m not necessarily a literacy professional but I speak well in front of the staff, I’m willing to do it, and I give them meaningful things.” He noted it is important to not push the staff, but make it important enough to them so that they are willing to take the time to use some effective literacy strategies. He said his most successful effort has been in helping teachers with ideas that can be adapted for a variety of content areas. He provides strategies to teachers, on a weekly basis during the previous school year, and on a monthly basis during the current year. He tries to get a feel for what they want and need, and come up with strategies to provide them with some opportunities to incorporate literacy. He has received positive feedback from staff verbally, although not a lot of sharing of what they have done or how, but he does have a sense that strategies are being implemented schoolwide: “I don’t have any data other than just verbal evidence.”

I asked Steven to describe a typical workday. He noted that most days a portion of his preparation period is spent looking at some literacy strategies and trying to find one that would be useful for the staff. He communicates with the staff by e-mail, reminding them about upcoming state tests or other important issues. He also occasionally provides time to talk with individual teachers about a strategy. He noted that he teaches full time, but is also provided an additional preparation period as department coordinator, so he finds himself juggling department concerns with literacy issues. He stated that High School B has not targeted a specific population, nor has he attempted to target strategies and ideas to specific groups of students.

Regarding working with resistant teachers, Steven noted that he tries to use the “overflow of information” method, continually spreading information. He also uses humor and cynicism in his e-mails and staff development time, and he is frank about telling people that the administration is watching and people next door are watching in an effort to get people to be more concerned about incorporating literacy. He said he has worked individually with about twenty percent of the staff, many of them in very limited ways: “That’s mostly due to the fact that I have responsibilities others than literacy within the building. I’ve focused mostly on social studies teachers in my department, because it’s [literacy] a natural in both social studies and health.”

In terms of district support, Steven mentioned the district literacy leader cohort meetings as valuable form of support. He feels that they could meet more often and the funding could be greater: “Sometimes I think we should utilize the professionals we have. I think the intention is there but there’s a lack of funding, and I think part of that is again across the content. It’s hard to get literacy pushed because of the content that teachers have to teach.” He stated he has not had the district literacy specialists come to High School B, nor has he relied on them for materials: “I have done it mostly on my own, other than what I’ve gained at literacy leader meetings.” He did say he has shared several of the resources from meetings, but he has not relied on the district specialists directly.

Steven notes that in High School B the administration is one hundred percent behind the literacy efforts. They have emphasized that literacy should be used across content areas, but nothing is specifically stated, for example that all teachers must

have a literacy-related goal in mind when they plan. They support all of Steven's activities which has increased awareness of literacy, "but until there is sort of a written rule that all teachers must have a literacy goal, it will still be mostly in my hands."

I asked Steven to describe the kinds of strategies he helps teacher incorporate. He said that he emphasizes reading a great deal, such skills as breaking down reading into meaningful chunks, and getting away from recall questions and into higher-level analysis. He has also spent some time on vocabulary development, provided some strategies such as vocabulary mapping, and conducted word of the week activities. In the previous year, he moved into more focus on writing, providing staff with sample writing prompts. He has used graphic organizers to help students organize and plan out their writing. He noted also that the English Department uses Jane Schaffer writing, a particular writing methodology or technique that helps students to write analytically by providing a format and developing the piece with details and commentary. As literacy leader, he has tried to avoid using prescribed formats for writing and focused on using prompts and activities to get students writing in the content areas. When asked to describe literacy coaching or leadership in one word, he chose, "Persistence."

Steven also noted when he gets feedback from teachers on strategies they have used, he often sends it out to all staff to show them how easy it is or how successful. He noted that for each day that the school did the word of the week, the culinary arts teacher took the word of the week, used it in her content area and taught it to students. He let all staff members know about that to encourage others to do similar activities.

He has also asked other teacher to present during staff meetings on strategies they used in order to emphasize the use of the strategies, and he has also tried using rewards such as free coffee coupons to the school's coffee shop for teachers who have used the strategies.

The next interview was conducted with the three literacy leaders at Middle School A who share the literacy leader responsibilities at their respective grade levels. Kayla, Kendra and Gloria are all language arts teachers at Middle School A, which serves a middle-class area of the city, and has an increasingly diverse student population. They described their job responsibilities as being to direct, plan for, and support literacy improvement at whatever level it is happening. They work on continuing the initiative and improving it, providing resources for staff across the curriculum, which they do by making themselves available. They have worked with teachers on implementing the writing workshop approach that is now district-wide and have tried to be visible to the staff so that they feel the literacy leaders are advocating for them within the school and at the district. They believe it is a great advantage to have one of them assigned at each grade level so they are able to represent the unique needs of each grade and facilitate teachers in supporting reading and writing. Sixth grade teachers began implementing the new writing curriculum, seventh grade teachers will continue it, and eighth grade teachers work together to prepare students to take state tests. They see themselves as part of a continuum, an important part of the alignment that is in place.

The three literacy leaders have used several methods of working with teachers. Rather than traditional presentations during inservice time, they have decided to use the time to model literacy. For example, they presented a lesson to the staff on how to read the ingredients list on a box for nutritional information and then talked with them about what are tools to use to work with students. They also created a simulation where staff members were asked to read pieces of professional research and respond to extremely difficult questions. This was set up to be extremely frustrating and intended to help teachers understand what struggling students often feel like in their content area classes. Then the staff discussed ways to help students be more successful with reading difficult material. They have also focused on literacy “across the board,” literacy in content classes, what literacy means, and applying writing and reading in all areas. They also asked staff to participate in formulating a whole staff goal related to literacy as a means of encouraging buy in. The goal was later revised somewhat. They have surveyed the staff about their feelings on literacy to help them plan inservices, to find out what the staff wanted to pursue and learn more about. They have also tried to showcase the staff; for example, a P.E. teacher who included a reading assignment. And a math teacher who had students create children’s books for teaching how to add, subtract, multiply and divide fractions complete with artwork: “They were just awesome examples of how to do literacy across the curriculum.”

When asked what elements are most important for doing their jobs effectively, they noted having a staff willing to listen and be open is important in addition to a supportive administration. At times, they have had an activity scheduled for the staff

which has been cancelled or set aside, which is frustrating for them: “We need our efforts to be valued. And we need to be able to meet with each other too.” They noted that they each have different responsibilities within their respective grades, but it is important for the three of them to be able to work together as well, which they were able to do more in the fall of 2006-07 than spring. They agreed that if they have difficulty communicating with each other they are less on top of things: “It would be nice to have a dedicated time for looking at test data and planning, because all of us have full teaching loads as well.”

In terms of what elements are included in their work, they noted that they do prepare professional development for staff as well as do individual coaching. They have also worked with teachers on lesson planning, not so much individually but within their grade level teams. Some grades have mapped out their entire first semester writing curriculum together. They also work regularly with school data. They have not done observations in classrooms, only done demonstrations during staff inservices, and they work with small groups of teachers in grade level teams but on a variety of issues, not just literacy. They stated that their most important role is in “teaching teachers to become better teachers.” Kayla noted, “The more I have gotten into literacy, it is just focusing on what is the most effective way of teaching kids, and it doesn’t have to be just reading and writing, but it’s broader than that. Our goal is to teach kids how to learn so when they get out in the real world, no matter what professions they look at or what interests they have, they know how to acquire information and how to use it.” They also observed that they try to show teachers that

there is not just one way to teach something, but a variety of ways that can make their teaching more effective.

Regarding challenges they face, they unanimously agreed that time is the biggest challenge. They are good at generating ideas, are enthusiastic and willing, but still have difficulty carving out the time to put it all together: “You could put your heart into school twenty-four hours a day and still feel like you didn’t have quite enough time.” With the appropriate opportunity to plan and prepare “we could be pretty stunning.” They noted also how difficult it is to function as literacy leaders and also teach, much like trying to do two jobs at the same time. Their work also seems to be “seasonal” in the sense that there are times when they spend large amounts of time working on literacy matters. They noted that they all have very high expectations for themselves, which puts additional pressure on them: “It’s frustrating to know what we need to do but not have the time to be able to put it together because we are doing so many other things along the way.” Kendra noted, “All of us have our fingers in a lot of pies around here, and maybe we need to start taking some of our fingers out.”

I asked them to comment on what they have done that has been most successful. They noted that raising awareness is an important thing. They noted a remarkable unity among the staff around literacy. They also included the staff inservice described earlier as one of their biggest successes. There is a sense now that all the teachers are working together toward a common goal. The staff has also worked together to come up with writing conventions standards that everyone could support. They also mentioned the success of the Roots program, which involved intensive work

on Greek and Latin prefixes and suffixes. They noted that much of their inservice time during the 2006-07 school year was focused on literacy, which the staff was very open to and engaged in.

The literacy leaders stated that a typical day involves a planning meeting where they each take a portion of the responsibility, and sometimes they meet in the evening. They also frequently take work home, so a lot of what they accomplish does not happen during the school day: "You do your regular duties that you need to do and then find a way to work it [literacy] in." They also spend time on the internet researching something or finding resources.

As far as targeting particular groups of students, they have worked on students whose reading scores are just below passing in an attempt to get a few more students "over the edge." They noted that this requires work with the staff also because those are the students who benefit from the most consistent teaching approaches. When asked about how they try to work with resistant teachers, they noted they make a conscious effort to draw attention to those who have tried something in a particular area. For those teachers who might be resistant, they try to include examples for their content areas, how strategies could be applied in science, math, art and so forth. They are also very willing to provide help. Kayla noted that she has worked with a P.E. teacher and a shop teacher during the year, which required giving up her preparation time: "But if they say it turns out well, then they can use it again next year, and we can bring it back to the staff, so I think it's kind of a carrot and a stick." They noted that reluctance is a natural response to learning new things, and that the most important

thing is to provide encouragement and allow them to come to terms with it in their own time: “I need to be happy with what steps they make, and if they’re coming to the meetings and not sabotaging my efforts by correcting papers while I’m presenting, then I should be happy with that as well.” A big part of what they try to do is build rapport with the staff: “It’s making contact with people, especially those who are new. Not necessarily coming in as literacy leaders, but as ourselves.” They find the staff appreciates how much work they put into it and understand that if it’s important to them, they are more willing to work harder.

Kayla has been at Middle School A for much longer than Kendra and Gloria, so she has had more time to work with a larger number of staff. Kayla estimates out of sixty-five staff members, she has worked with about sixty percent over the course of a few years. For the current school year, she estimates probably thirty-five percent. Kendra estimates that she has worked directly with only about ten percent of the staff, and Gloria, who is fairly new to the school, says she has worked largely with her own grade-level group of teachers. They also noted, however, the benefits of having three literacy leaders rather than just one, as most schools do, because they can reach a larger number of people.

In terms of district support, the literacy leaders noted that they appreciate the regular literacy leader meetings and the training sessions for the new writing curriculum, including the money that came along with that program. They noted the district specialists are very quick in responding to requests for help or materials: “They have been great.” Each of the sixth grade teachers received \$400 as part of the new

writing curriculum; half was to be used to purchase materials and half was allotted to staff development. Gloria asked for help from the district specialists in terms of selecting materials to purchase, and noted that she was able to bounce ideas off them and have them provide recommendations. The specialists also provided a video which was used at an inservice session on reading strategies.

Regarding their relationship with building administration, they noted that it has changed a little over the last few years, partly because their principal of nine years will be retiring soon: "On the whole, we have received some support, go ahead, and a 'we support you' attitude from the administration. On the other side of that, it hasn't always been the case." They noted they have managed the leadership program themselves, advocated for literacy, made plans, and then requested time to make them happen. They noted that many times administrators have many issues on their minds, and literacy may not always be their top concern. They have to be fairly persistent in making sure that administrative promises for time are fulfilled: "We don't feel like we're stymied or stopped, but we do feel frustrated sometimes because of the system." They noted, both administrators have missed a couple of their inservices: "It was frustrating to feel that they were not on board with the rest of the staff because they missed that. They didn't purposefully miss it, but I think it caused some of the disconnect with them."

We discussed what types of strategies they have helped staff members to implement. They noted that during 2006-07, reading was their focus. They conducted an inservice on pre-reading strategies and a subsequent one on during-reading

strategies, and a brief follow up to include post-reading strategies. They have also done a lot of work with the writing assessment traits, and worked on grade level alignment of standards: “Two years ago we had a very focused effort to align our curriculum with the new state standards. We actually had a focused inservice on aligning the curriculum.” It has necessitated people taking a look and their curriculum and evaluating their work in their own classrooms. When asked what single words best describe their work, they variously mentioned the following: *ongoing*, *involved*, *essential*, and *advocate*. They feel that they do a good job of facilitating collaboration. At inservices, staff members are grouped, sometimes by content areas in order to collaborate. The members of each grade-level team also work very closely together. They have worked with groups of special education teachers as well: “We’ve been more encouraging of collaboration this year. The elective teachers need to be targeted and often feel left out when the focus is on the core content areas.” They also noted that the district is in a period of transition currently which may lead to them being better received and supported.

The next phase of interviews in District Two was with teachers at each of the schools. The first one was with David, an English teacher and department coordinator at High School A. When asked how important literacy skills are for students in his content area, his obvious answer was that they are very important. He noted their efforts at High School A have been to convince teachers in other areas to focus on strategic reading and writing skills. They are moving slowly but have also made some progress through the PLC groups. When asked about what challenges with student

literacy he faces, he noted large class sizes and large total numbers of students in his class load. He also added that pressure resulting from high-stakes tests, and lack of funding to purchase diverse texts needed to encourage reading, which is especially true for mainstream classes, is a challenge. The transitioning of ELL students into regular English courses is also a major challenge at High School A. David notes that he communicates with and works with the literacy leader, Larry, on a regular basis, that he is a valuable member of the English department, which does make use of his expertise. He observed that if the literacy leader has appropriate skills and the opportunity, he can be very effective. He said Larry has been very beneficial in helping to emphasize strategic skills, but has not had the opportunity to work effectively in other areas due to the restraints on his schedule: “Therefore, the process has moved slowly over the past year. One of our goals for next year is to increase his involvement with other core departments and our instructional coaches.”

When asked about particular strategies he has learned from the literacy leader, David noted that Larry is very data-oriented and effective in presenting information to the staff. He is adept in breaking down the data and creating methods to address areas of concern. They have not worked together on any specific strategy or technique, but primarily work on strategies to benefit other teachers and improve student test scores. In terms of collaboration, he noted that they meet on a regular basis to collaborate within their department areas and PLC groups, which is “a work in progress.” He does not believe that his own teaching has changed significantly as a result of working with the literacy leader, but is aware of the value of Larry’s work for many of the schools’

teachers. In terms of academic improvement observed, he noted that their test results continue to fluctuate: “The emphasis that we have placed on our focused power standards for ninth graders has indicated preliminary improvement in both writing and reading skills, but we are waiting for additional data.”

The next teacher interviewed was a health teacher at High School B named Joelle. She described the importance of literacy and her work with the literacy leader, Steven. She noted that literacy skills are very important in her content area, that she has been working on college preparation portfolios with her Health Occupations classes, “and I am amazed at how poorly some students still write at the upper levels. So we’re writing essays and I’m asking them to use different prompts which they can choose from, and then they write about it, and it’s amazing to me how much I have to go through with them.” She notes some students’ writing is nearly incoherent. She thinks that being able to write well is a critical college skill, and that in order to write well they have to be able to read effectively and comprehend the material: “I think it’s really important, and the more improvement they have in their literacy, the better it’s going to go for the rest of their education.”

In terms of challenges with literacy, she notes that students come from so many different backgrounds. Some might be second-language speakers, which presents problems for them in writing. Some students have attended different schools, come from different family backgrounds, and place importance on different things, so in general so many diverse students and levels in one classroom makes it difficult to create assignments that are challenging to everyone. She also noted that in many

classes, the textbooks aren't very current so they may have outdated material or be unappealing: "Some of the classes I teach, I don't have a textbook so then it's creating an assignment where they are learning information from notes, then they do a writing assignment or create something."

Joelle notes that 2006-07 was her third year of teaching at High School B and Steven had been literacy leader since she arrived: "He's done a great job I would say at staff meetings. There have been times when he'll do literacy prompts, offer up ideas that would work in a variety of different settings." She notes he also sends frequent e-mails to suggest something she might use in her classroom. She notes one group of teachers who normally have lunch together every day, which Steven attends. During lunch, he is often asked questions and given feedback on the ideas. Steven has also published a book about writing strategies in social studies, which Joelle purchased and has used to learn about some new strategies. She noted that she taught in another district for three years before coming to High School B where they didn't have a literacy leader, "so it's nice to have someone that will give techniques and ideas about assignments." He is always responsive to questions asked of him. She also noted that in the health department one of their goals during the year is to increase literacy and improve writing skills, and she has worked very hard to incorporate some different strategies into her curriculum.

I asked Joelle if the literacy leader had been helpful and worthwhile. She replied that he has been very effective: "I think he does a great job of having good ideas or researching ideas and then he's able to explain how you could use this across

the curriculum.” The ideas he provides can easily be used in many different areas. One strategy she has used is having students create a public service announcement. She notes that in Steven’s history classes, students do these on historical topics, while her students who were studying tobacco, alcohol and other drugs, were assigned to find something they were interested in and wanted to learn more about, do some research, and write a public service announcement for the class. She also had students create brochures during a contraception unit. She notes she had not been very good about giving Steven feedback after trying particular strategies other than general statements such as, “Oh, I tried this and it worked really well.”

When asked about collaboration with other teachers, Joelle stated that she works with teachers in the health department closely. They decided to use literacy as one of their professional development goals. She has talked with teachers who teach similar classes about the strategies they have used. They also met regularly with their administrator. She notes there are other ways in which the school has encouraged collaboration by forming groups of teachers. Joelle said she thinks her teaching has changed as a result of working with Larry: “I think it still has a long way to go. There are a lot more improvements that I could make. This semester was the first one that I’ve really started trying to incorporate more of these strategies.” Before, she didn’t necessarily have literacy in the forefront of her planning and teaching.

Regarding academic improvement in students as a result of new strategies, Joelle said she has found that some students seem to better enjoy learning with projects such as making the brochures, perhaps because they were allowed to use

some creativity. Rather than just writing down answers to questions, students were able to “put a little more of themselves into the assignment.” She said she was impressed with the work students completed on the brochures. She also noted a timeline she has used in her Health Occupations class where students researched major medical advancements throughout history. This is also a strategy that Steven recommends. Students have to choose a certain episode in the history of medicine and place it on the timeline using a date, an example, and an illustration. They can also include advancements that are possible in the future, such as a cure for AIDS: “It gets them thinking outside the box a little bit and finding out what has happened in history, and then they are responsible for that specific time period and present it to the rest of the class.”

Joelle concluded her comments by noting that the current year had gone well in terms of the strategies she has tried, but that she also hopes to implement more. Having literacy ideas presented continuously throughout the year keeps it in the forefront of her thinking, “so I can continue to keep making an effort.” She notes teachers are aware of the need to keep improving literacy, but that often it’s easier to just stick with what they’ve been doing for a long time. This makes the presentation of continual new ideas important.

The next teacher interviewed was Louis, who is an industrial arts teacher at Middle School A. Because he teaches an elective course, his observations about the importance of literacy were very valuable. He stated that literacy skills are very critical in his subject area. He observed that people look at his area of industrial arts

and technology as something kids who don't read and write well will want to be a part of. Yet he pointed out the field requires a lot of both reading and writing. Students have to read instructions in order to get checked out on a piece of equipment. He also uses power points with quite a bit of reading material: "They have to come to me and I quiz them on the information they read before I will check them out on it." He also noted the importance of being able to read blueprints, being able to visualize and then actually materialize a product from looking at a planning sheet: "It's critical that the student knows how to read, knows how to write to become successful in this area."

I asked him to describe the kinds of writing his courses involve. He stated they keep a daily written record of what they do in class, sort of like a journal. They keep track of their attendance, and what they accomplish during each period. Students also keep track of their cleanup assignments each day. He noted that there are several projects that involve writing, such as one used in his intermediate level classes called the Tot Toy, where the students design and build a project for pre-school children. When these projects are completed, they actually take them to a local pre-school and watch children play with them. Part of students' grade is based on how many children play with their toys. As a follow up, they have to complete a piece of writing from the perspective of the toy. It explains how they came about as a toy, how they were built, and their reactions to being played with by the children: "Did the student like me? Why did the student like me? Was I colorful and adventurous?" He also scores and enters these assignments as writing work samples.

When asked about challenges in literacy, he noted a number of students each year struggle with reading and writing due partly to the stereotyping that places those students in his classes. He observed that the technical aspects and both writing and reading are difficult for students. They are not accustomed to the style of technical documents and he has to teach this on a regular basis. He stated he has worked with one of the school's literacy coaches, Kayla, about three or four times. She helped him develop the writing assignment portion of the Tot Toy project. Louis notes that her help was very effective because she was able to help him structure the writing to make it more meaningful for students: "It helped students go beyond the normal thinking of what am I doing and why am I doing it?" Having to write in the voice of the toy was a change for them. Kayla worked with him on first, how to present the assignment to the students, how to get them to think from the perspective of the toy, and then second, with the outlining and actual writing of the papers.

When asked about collaboration with other teachers, he noted that he has not collaborated much with others in terms of literacy, but has worked some with math teachers because his area involves a lot of mathematics, "which to me is a part of literacy." He said students need to be able to recognize and know how to solve the math problems in his classes. Louis also remarked that the inservices on reading strategies were effective and helpful. His Tot Toy project was actually a spin-off from that training. He also noted that his teaching has changed because he is finding ways to include literacy and that he is definitely more conscientious about it, trying to make sure that students are able to communicate in both reading and writing. His students

did much better work with the Tot Toy project than they have on other work samples in the past because of his work with Kayla. The papers were much more detailed and in-depth, “with more thought behind them.”

The final interview conducted in District Two was with the Principal of Middle School A. Darla described the schoolwide goals related to literacy and how they have tried to meet them. She stated as part of the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan, the major focus has been on reading and writing improvement, with a greater emphasis in these areas in the last two years because of the demands of Adequate Yearly Progress. Principals agreed to forego a social studies adoption in order to purchase the new *Teaching the Qualities of Writing* program. She reviewed the training process that language arts teachers have gone through with this new writing curriculum. She stated, “When I came on board nine years ago, every staff person had been trained to score writing samples and they did three work samples per year. We did early release and everyone scores work samples.” Over time, it was decided that each department would score its own work samples. As work samples in more areas were required, there was less focus on writing.

Darla also mentioned the benefits of having three literacy leaders in the building, one at each grade level. They help guide the language arts department and set goals for the building. One was to make conventions a part of every written assignment, “so even though you may be doing a science lab, you would make a portion of that grade based on capitalization, punctuation, that sort of thing.” The staff agreed to that and also placed posters in every classroom so that a schoolwide attitude

would develop that conventions was not just in language arts classes, that reading and writing was a part of every subject. Darla also reviewed the recent trainings in reading strategies. She had prepared a schoolwide staff development plan that required everyone to participate, so each teacher was asked to try one or two of the strategies and then report back to the group: "It got pretty contagious." She noted that they have some inservices going throughout the year that are not just limited to language arts: "We've done it schoolwide. So I've been pleased with the attitude of the staff being willing to do that." They also asked everyone to write a reflection after each inservice and have tried to keep literacy in the forefront of everyone's mind.

Darla commented on the forms that professional development has taken in her school. She noted that the writing training has made up much of the professional development this year with language arts teachers being pulled out several days for trainings. She also mentioned the in-house literacy trainings in reading, one with a guest presenter. She has also done a couple of inservices and shared strategies she has found at conferences, for example, on summarizing and questioning: "We spend a half day on that and people reported back to me, after they used one strategy, how it worked. And I modeled them for the staff." She stressed the attempt to try to find ideas for people so they don't have to try to find them for themselves. They do not have formal PLC groups at Middle School A, nor have they jumped on the smaller learning communities bandwagon as many schools in the district have.

Darla was asked what she sees as the central role of the literacy leaders. She said they have offered to go into classrooms and work with teachers. They have

provided help to teachers in using the reading strategies, and they function as the cheerleaders for literacy. Her philosophy has been to “hire good people and then get out of their way.” Darla said they often request time at staff meetings, and she does not try to micromanage their activities. She stated, “I think the three currently serving as literacy leaders are the most talented and the most passionate people about literacy and they also do a good job of relating well to other staff and being very helpful.” She noted that the school now has a lot of new staff members, and the literacy leaders are always helpful to them: “My expectation is that they would meet on a regular basis, communicate with each other, and they always seem to have activities they want to have on the agenda for staff meetings and inservices. I give them the power to do their job. I support them through budget, time, that sort of thing. If they want something specific that they think is going to enhance literacy, then I take their recommendation.”

Darla stated her belief that the most important element in building schoolwide literacy is to start slow. In order to gain buy-in for one hundred percent of the staff, many of whom do not see their job as teaching literacy, you have to start slow, set some goals as a group, and try to make them as painless as possible. She also noted the importance of recognizing and providing for those teachers in non-core areas. She noted the enormous amount of writing in science courses and recalled her years as a home economics teacher and the struggle of grading poorly-written research papers. She said it is important to have people outside of the language arts area demonstrating their commitment to literacy.

Darla noted that for improving instructional strategies collaboration is essential. Elementary and middle schools are more child-centered institutions than high schools, so there is naturally more collaboration: “My number one priority is to hire somebody who can relate to the kids and then if they have a degree in history or whatever, then I expect them to stay at least a couple days ahead of the kids. But they have to be able to teach the kids and relate to the kids.” I asked Darla how they will know that their literacy-related goals have been met. She responded, “I don’t think they are ever met. I think we strive for as high as we can get.” She noted that they have benchmarks, such as wanting all students to have a reading lexile level of at least 1100 before they go off to high school and to pass the eighth grade assessment tests. She also noted that when a school has changing demographics, it is important to always maintain a desire to do better: “If we get eighty percent this year, we want eighty-two or three next year. I don’t think you ever decide it’s enough. It’s ongoing.”

Observational Data: “A high level of engagement”

This section includes descriptive reports of field observations that took place in District Two between May of 2007 and February of 2008. Observations were conducted at district meetings and training sessions, and at individual schools whenever possible. The first observation conducted was at the cohort meeting of the district literacy leaders in May of 2007. This was the group’s final meeting for the 2006-07 school year. It included about 30 literacy leaders and began with a community building exercise called finding “uncommon commonalities.” The meeting

room was arranged in table groups, and the literacy leaders were seated by school or level. The arrangement allowed for interaction and collaboration across levels and schools. Katherine and Beth, the district literacy specialists, were facilitators for the group. The agenda for the meeting included the following items: literacy leader roles, school sharing, preparing for next year, writing, and book talks. Following the warm-up exercise, discussion of the superintendent's new strategic direction began. The plan focuses on improving student achievement, leadership development, public engagement, and effective organization to support student achievement. There was much discussion among the group about the impact of the strategic plan, which reflects a movement away from site-based management to district-based leadership.

Table groups were first asked to brainstorm and compile a list of all the literacy activities and roles they had played during the year. After individual brainstorming, and group shared at table groups, each group reported the contents to the whole group, and the facilitators compiled lists which it was stated would be used as talking points to encourage support for the program. There was some discussion about the roles that literacy leaders play in contributing to overall school improvement and time was provided to revisit the job description. The group discussed whether to add roles to the job description, delete roles, and possible ways to demonstrate that literacy leaders are fulfilling their responsibilities. Each group collaborated to make revisions in the job description. One important point of discussion was the extent to which literacy leaders roles varied depending on the structure of their individual schools, level, school culture, nature of leadership, and so forth. The groups developed

a number of ideas for better defining the roles and responsibilities of literacy leaders. It was acknowledged that time during the meeting may not permit coming to agreement, but the facilitators collected the groups' summaries to compile and send out by e-mail.

Each literacy leader then shared perspectives about their building's programs to show how things work in the individual schools, identifying commonalities and differences. Concerns were expressed about the job description being either too general or too specific, and a general feeling emerged that leaders need to have some individual freedom to adapt their roles within their building and not be locked into a specified role. Some discussion about the district moving toward a more complete coaching model followed, and the differences between the literacy leader positions and literacy coaches were also highlighted.

Another point of discussion was the inclusion of a formative assessment system in the superintendent's strategic direction, and the importance of literacy leaders having a good understanding of formative assessment. The facilitators noted that they will be training literacy leaders in formative assessment so that they are prepared to take it back to their schools and inservice their staff.

During the meeting it became clear that the district literacy specialists spend a large amount of time planning for the meeting and carefully coordinating materials and use of time. They also obviously attempt to promote open dialogue and collaboration among members of the group. Because the group is a diverse collection

of mostly long-time teachers and building leaders, they are respected by the facilitators for their knowledge, talents, and insight and are clearly valued and listened to.

Five minutes was set aside following the discussion to generate ideas about ways to communicate with the district specialists and school leaders and principals about the roles of literacy leaders. Discussion followed about use of a periodic activity report or log as a means of documenting the daily work of literacy leaders in their schools. The group seemed in agreement that there is a need to document their work and communicate that to the district and building administration. It was suggested that it might be a monthly report or checklist, perhaps submitted to the district specialists online. This first segment of the meeting provided a good opportunity for the group to focus on their roles, responsibilities, and new directions for the future.

An announcement was made about a secondary school leadership meeting on Wednesday, May 16 for all middle and high school literacy leaders and teacher leaders. The purpose of the meeting would be to provide input into the selection of a formative assessment system, which the district plans to purchase and begin implementing in a pilot program during the next school year. A handout was also presented to the group advertising the Summer Institute for teachers on June 18. Other announcements included information about summer professional development opportunities

The next section of the meeting was devoted to school sharing time. The facilitators provided discussion questions and suggested meeting in middle and high

school groups. Literacy leaders were asked to share changes in school schedules or structures for the next school year and their impact on literacy and to share any other upcoming events or happenings. The group decided to spend the first fifteen minutes of their time meeting in feeder groups (high school literacy leaders and literacy leaders from the feeder middle schools). This allowed these leaders to discuss articulation, programs currently in place, and plans for the following year. Afterwards, middle and high school groups met in common groups to discuss current school schedules, programs, and plans. This discussion focused largely on the often controversial topic of school bell schedules and restructuring to accommodate smaller learning communities, with not much focus on literacy. Following the sharing time, literacy leaders were asked to choose a young adult book from the collection provided which they would be allowed to keep for their classrooms. They were given an assignment to read some of the book during lunch break and prepare a one-minute book talk for the group.

After the lunch break, the group spent time focusing on goals for next year and an area of focus. Each table group was to select a recorder and focus on goals and meeting times for next year. Each group was asked to try to make a decision at the table. In the discussion that followed, questions were raised about the role of literacy leaders in supporting the Qualities of Writing curriculum training for middle schools. There was a general feeling of confusion about how the training sessions have been conducted and a feeling that literacy leaders needed to have more connection to this process and more familiarity with the program and materials.

The next topic of discussion was about goals to target for next year. A suggestion was made to focus on vocabulary and the reading/writing process, as well as a scope and sequence for genres in writing. The literacy specialists were very interested in taking direction from the group and were receptive to all ideas, obviously anxious to find ways to meet the needs of the group. The facilitators often summarized their perceptions of comments with, “What I hear you saying is . . .” Both facilitators listened intently, not just the one currently facilitating. The decision was made to use a combined focus on reading and writing, rather than one or the other for the next school year. They also agreed that they wanted to focus on content area literacy and materials to support content teachers, not just the language arts curriculum. A suggestion was made to better familiarize literacy leaders with several programs being used in schools: Fletcher’s *Teaching the Qualities of Writing*, Foursquare Writing, Jane Schaffer writing, and Step up to Writing.

Next, time was provided for literacy leaders to engage in a writing activity. The leaders had previously been provided a copy of Fletcher’s book, *How Writers Work*. They used chapter thirteen of the text and an additional strategy from the book *Notebook Know How*. The leaders were asked to use the young adult novel they had chosen earlier and make a list of intriguing lines or phrases from the book. Next, take one of the lines and use it to start a piece of writing. The purpose of the activity was to model for the group a particular strategy that could be used in the classroom. The lesson involved studying language, talking about what makes language powerful, and ways to illustrate for students how writers write. All the literacy leaders and the two

facilitators participated in this process, writing quickly in notebooks or on laptops. The exercise also helped reinforce the idea that writing teachers should be writers themselves. It provided them with an opportunity to engage in a reflective activity, something they seldom have time to do. When writing was finished, a couple literacy leaders volunteered to share their pieces of writing with the group. Discussion followed about the benefits of this type of exercise and ideas for classroom application, teaching content area writing, use of models of writing, and writing strategies.

Book talks were the final activity. Literacy leaders presented the one-minute report on the books they had chosen. They provided a synopsis of the books and comments about which students would enjoy reading the book or how it could be used in the classroom. Much like the rest of the day, there was a lot of interaction among the literacy leaders based on both professional and personal connections. An announcement was made about Teachertube.com as a possible resource for teachers, and the meeting was concluded.

The next observation was conducted at the cohort meeting of literacy leaders in the fall of the 2007-08 school year. This was the group's first meeting of the year and it was also facilitated by the literacy specialists, Katherine and Beth. The agenda included the following items: strategic plan update, literacy leader responsibilities, book talk, Title IIA funds, discussion, share a lesson, and wrap-up. The meeting began with a warm-up activity which involved matching literacy leader names with schools. It provided a way for people to better learn names and where colleagues work

and get to know each other. Folders for each school were handed out. They included materials for the day as well as writing contest information for students.

Next was a review of the superintendent's strategic plan and a discussion of the formative assessment system. The selection process for a formative assessment system was nearing completion. Discussion revolved around pilot school sites and whether assessments would be paper and pencil or computer. There was also discussion of beginning the process of articulating core standards in the areas of math, science, and literacy, which is directed by the strategic plan. It was noted that the state was planning to do this process in 2010 but District Two would be doing it first. Committees for this core standards articulation would be formed soon. Questions about the program model for ELD students were also raised, which there seemed to be little information about at the time. Another initiative from the strategic plan is to develop a common literacy model which will identify common K-12 literacy standards and instructional methods. A committee is also being formed to design this model. The Academy of Teaching and Learning, a district program to coordinate professional development district-wide online, was also discussed.

Discussion turned more specifically to the two committees being formed, one to identify core standards in literature, reading and writing, and the other to create a common literacy model. Clarifications were made about who is needed for which committee and levels of expertise. Some discussion took place at each table group. Members were asked to write down recommendations of names from their respective

schools for each committee. The committees will be charged with simplifying and clarifying the state standards in reading, literature, and writing.

The next topic was literacy leader responsibilities. A list of eight responsibilities for literacy leaders was presented in draft form. The facilitators pointed out that we need to come to some agreement and also create accountability to make sure principals understand the role of the literacy leaders and support them. There was some discussion of the need for a form or checklist to record the work of the literacy leaders. Small groups then discussed. The discussion in small groups was very animated as they worked on revising the list. Each group then shared its suggestions using the document camera to suggest revisions and additions. Discussion continued about how difficult it is to specify roles when school populations and programs are so diverse. Some leaders work more with data, some have responsibility for READ 180, some are on school leadership teams, and so forth. This was clearly an important effort to refine and specify the roles and responsibilities of the literacy leaders. Each group was asked to leave the revisions in the folders for compiling; they would then be accorded out to everyone.

A guest presenter, a middle school librarian, presented book talks on several recent young adult novels and discussed the importance of teachers and librarians helping to match up students with books. She also handed out the Young Readers' Choice Award nominees for 2008 and discussed the history of the awards. She also offered to make available a list of good books for struggling readers. The book talks

were interesting and entertaining, but perhaps not the most effective use of the group's time, and seemed to be not directly related to literacy leaders' roles.

Attention turned back to the topic of literacy leader roles, specifically accountability and possible use of a form for reporting activities. The group contributed ideas about whether it should be a data table, log, journal, narrative, or something else. Small groups discussed and then reported back to the whole group. Again, the need to allow for flexibility was brought up. Leaders were asked to reflect on the suggestions and the group will come back to this topic at the next meeting.

Next, the district's Professional Development Director presented information about his position as one new to the district, the strategic plan, and professional development district wide. His role is to streamline all elements of professional development in the district to best support classroom instruction. He discussed the availability of Title IIA professional development funds and the new process for applying for those funds. He also discussed the standards of the National Staff Development Council, which support PLC's, continuous instructional improvement, and resources to support learning and collaboration (www.nsd.org). He noted the state has been critical of District Two's use of Title IIA money because some grants served only one person and some were not closely connected to core academic standards. A new district application form is now available which he discussed. There was animated discussion about changes in the process, the amount of money, how schools should think about using it to support professional development, the timeline, how to write the grant, and how grants will be approved.

The meeting then transitioned into a working lunch. A handout was presented for lunchtime talk with questions to guide the discussion. The questions included one about movement toward a common literacy model and asking each school to specify the amount of literacy instruction in their schedule. Another was regarding sharing responsibility for completing work samples. A third was to share a snapshot of what writing instruction looks like in your building. The fourth was to make a list of suggestions for use of upcoming afternoon literacy leader meetings, and the final one was suggestions for a list of items and links to be included on a literacy leadership website. After lunch, whole group discussion followed. The discussion showed inconsistency from school to school about how much time is spent on literacy instruction and lack of knowledge about how much content literacy is happening. Each group reported, providing a good opportunity to share ideas among the group. It allowed for literacy leaders to hear what other schools are doing and take ideas back to their schools. Some leaders shared writing ideas they are using in their schools such as “punctuation across the curriculum,” daily grammar, and so on. Ideas were also generated for upcoming afternoon meetings and the groups made requests for focus topics.

The next item was a presentation by Beth on using models of writing as a means of helping students write in essay form. A sample lesson was presented. Beth handed out a set of professional essays. Literacy leaders were directed to read the essays and “read as a writer,” noticing use of language and stylistic techniques. Leaders were also asked to take notes on form and characteristics of the essays. After

the individual work time, table groups discussed the characteristics of the essays they read and worked together to come up with a list of effective qualities of an essay. Whole-group discussion followed. Each group added an idea to the combined list. The presenter suggested that this strategy could be used with students, having them generate a class list of effective qualities of writing. Literacy leaders also shared their thoughts about the process, advantages for high and lower-level students and comparison of student and professional writers. The suggestion was made to use the *New York Times* website to find sample essays. Finally, a drawing was conducted to give to each literacy leader a copy of one of the books presented in today's book talk. The meeting was concluded.

The next observation conducted was at High School B in October of 2007. It was an observation of a whole school staff meeting, which included a presentation by the school's literacy leader, Steven. Steven first introduced himself to the group and provided an overview of his role as literacy leader. Using the overhead, he presented a list of "barriers to content area understanding." His presentation included several topics: text features in informational text, the importance of prior knowledge, content knowledge, thematic knowledge, and the need to focus on content-specific vocabulary strategies. Steven then presented a "Teach the Text Backwards" technique. Instead of the traditional method of assigning students to read the text, answer the questions, and then discuss and do expansion activities, Steven recommended reversing the steps. First, do an activity to activate background knowledge, discuss the material, using visuals and appealing to different learning styles, present review questions but a

limited number of them, and then assign reading of the text. The audience was asked if they had questions, but none were presented.

The audience at the staff meeting was very receptive and attentive, but passive. The literacy leader shared with me that the presentation was briefer than he had planned for, partly because time was short and the meeting was nearly over. It is likely that the lack of discussion or questions was due to the time. With more time the presentation might have included some examples of applications of the strategy presented and a discussion or activity to allow for staff members to collaborate and process the information, as well as applying it in their own content areas.

The next observation took place at Middle School A at a training and work session for the language arts teachers conducted by the school's literacy leaders in October of 2007. When I arrived, work was already in progress. The agenda stated that the purpose of the inservice was to compare and discuss school data from state writing assessment, looking for trends and inconsistencies, to identify a single writing strand to focus on for the year, score papers in the specified strand, compare and discuss scores, and refine the definition of the strand. Then, each grade level group would share their new definition on a poster and the focus for the year would be written into the teachers' goals for evaluation. When I arrived, teams were in grade level groups. They were using the state standards newspapers. Each had identified a specific strand to focus on. They were also reading and scoring papers and comparing their scores for calibration purposes. One group was attempting to refine and clarify the strand of "sentence fluency" and then apply their discussion to particular writing

assignments. Part of their purpose seemed to be to focus on a process for conducting writing assignments with students, including ideas for teaching the particular trait from the state scoring guide, and ways to help students rewrite papers.

One group was discussing how to teach ideas and content in such ways as showing versus telling and using details. Teachers offered examples of different lessons they had used and ways to identify and work with students who need more work in the area. There was also some discussion of ways to use the scoring guide in order to establish student grades. Each group began making a poster that identified key characteristics of sentence fluency, which was the focus strand. Some debate and discussion was going on about what should be included, what are the key characteristics, and so forth. There was a high level of engagement and everyone was participating, in addition to a positive sense of fun. This was followed by a whole-group presentation of each group's work. The sixth grade group began presenting, emphasizing the importance of teachers calibrating their scoring and their attempt to clarify the scoring guide and pull out key characteristics. The seventh grade group reported on their discussion of the scoring guide and how to distinguish between sentence fluency and conventions. They also came up with examples to use with students; for example, a way to teach simple versus complex sentences. The eighth grade group also presented a list of descriptors, focusing on sentence variety, sentence beginnings, repetition of words, dialogue, rhythm, and readability.

Some whole group discussion and questions followed. Some of the discussion focused on the language and word choice used in the groups' descriptions. Some

focused on the specific language used in the state scoring guide and making sure that the language in the posters correctly reflects the intention of the scoring guide. Some changes in language were made on the eighth grade poster. The work session was clearly an attempt to get everyone on the same page in terms of understanding the particular trait. It was also an attempt to clarify the expectations for each grade level, and a discussion of ways to convey the expectations to students. Next, the whole group discussed the professional development and evaluation plan for the year, which requires each teacher to establish goals for the year. This will be the first of a three-year evaluation plan for this group. The teachers will use this activity and their scoring and work with students in writing as their goal for the year. The general goal is to improve student writing at each grade level. The specific subpoints identified included use of work groups, study groups, a focus on literacy in all grades, the use of data, and a plan for tutoring of students. Each teacher will fill in the timeline as they go through the year for scoring, work groups, and so on. At their next meeting, they will analyze the new work sample data to check for improvement. Also, the literacy leaders shared that the groups had also compared work sample data with state test data. A tutor had also been hired to work independently with struggling students.

The final field observation in District Two was during a core standards committee meeting in February of 2008. This committee was established earlier in the school year with representatives for grades 6-10 from each secondary school. A similar committee was working separately on the same process for grades K-5. They were assigned to work as a committee for one year to narrow the state standards in

literature, reading and writing to core standards aligned for each grade level. (Discussion of the final core standards is included in the next section.) This full-day meeting consisted of about twenty teachers, representing every high school and middle school and including the two district literacy specialists, Katherine and Beth. A facilitator from a local ESD had been hired to lead the group through a process for identifying core standards. Field notes were taken during the late morning and afternoon sessions of the group. Level groups had generated ten core standards and then the whole group looked at all the drafts in order to make revisions and finalize the core standards. The groups included sixth, seventh, eighth, and CIM level groups. The morning session was to be focused on reading standards and the afternoon session on writing and literature. In a previous meeting, the group had prepared a draft of the identified core standards; the purpose of this meeting was to revise and finalize the standards.

As I arrived, groups were meeting by level and using the state standards newspapers to determine what might be missing from the revised core standards at each level for writing. The agenda posted for the day included individual reflection time, grade level analysis, omissions, gaps and overlaps, and whole group discussion to create consensus. There was some discussion about whether too much emphasis was being placed in one area or another. High school teachers expressed concerns about not enough emphasis placed on conventions, that some of the identified core standards were too similar, and whether emphasis should be placed on research skills. Middle school teachers asserted that conventions were being taught but that students

were still not learning them. A debate about what is taught versus what is learned ensued. It was noted that the writing workshop curriculum being used at middle schools includes mini-workshops for students to teach conventions at the end of the writing process.

There was also discussion of content area teachers and how they can best teach conventions, using editing rules, checklists, and so on. The group also referred to test data from all schools which show that conventions is the lowest area of performance for students as evidence of need for more focus on conventions. Reference was also made to the K-6 core standards already completed, which group members had copies of, in considering the secondary core standards. The group also discussed the need for more clear delineation of specific conventions skills. One teacher remarked on students' inability to construct complete sentences. It was agreed that later grades should build upon earlier standards. The elementary literacy specialist was also present and reminded the group that research clearly shows that teaching of isolated grammar and conventions, not embedded in authentic writing tasks, is not effective. The team checked the consistency of standards across grade levels from grade four through CIM.

There was some discussion on how the writing program supports what's in the standards and what conventions skills content area teachers can be expected to know. For some teachers, they see it as not their job focus on conventions. The point was made that individual schools need to come to common agreement on what to evaluate. Literacy programs should be connected to core standards, making sure that the

standards are addressed. There was also discussion of specifying a focus area for each grade level and the need for training for teachers, deciding which skills are key. Other ideas included creating posters for each classroom, maintaining consistency, and requiring students to revise their writing. Discussion followed about creating posters to be disseminated district wide and about how to get schools to take ownership of the revised standards. The high school group shared ideas for which ones could be pulled out. The group stressed the need to keep in mind that those who will be implementing it are not necessarily language arts teachers. Content area teachers will need specifics. One teacher gave a specific example from her classroom of a writing assignment, with students using a revision strategy to focus on organization. There was also some discussion about modes of writing stressed at particular grades. It was noted a balance is needed between content and conventions, yet data indicates the challenge for students is in sentence fluency and conventions. One teacher pointed out the challenge is to get students to care enough to utilize conventions they have learned. Prior to lunch, the district leaders focused on a list of follow up things they would need to do, including designing posters.

Following lunch break, the facilitator asked a general question: “Are you comfortable with what we have decided in terms of conventions?” Some discussion followed. It was noted that good writers re-write and teachers need to return papers to students and have them rewrite. The facilitator asked, “Are there other concerns that surfaced in your discussion?” The discussion turned to research skills. Sixth grade teachers were asked to report. Questions were asked about whether middle school

students should learn paraphrasing skills, and if sixth graders are ready for writing with sources and using citations. There was discussion about where report writing and persuasive writing are most appropriate developmentally. One teacher commented there was good progression from sixth to eighth in the standards. The decision was made to pull out one standard at grade six related to persuasive writing. The eighth grade group reported no need for changes. The whole group was asked if they had feedback. The seventh grade group raised a question about a fifth grade standard as too comprehensive: do students need an introduction to complex sentences and clauses, or is it better focused on later. Discussion came back to the need for conventions to be taught in the context of real writing. The sixth grade group raised the issue of expository writing not being included, and whether it should be included in addition to persuasive and narrative writing.

The group also discussed whether some standards should drop off as students move through the levels. It was noted that eight of ten standards are the same at fifth and sixth grade. A question was raised about CIM level: is something not there that should be? There was much discussion about possible other standards that could be included, such as technical/business writing. Some groups felt the list was complete as it is. Discussion came back to applicability to content-area teachers. It was decided that sixth grade would delete two standards, which was the only final change.

The group then turned to the literature standards. They referred to fifth grade identified standards for reference. Personal reflection time of ten minutes was quiet, followed by group discussion and then whole group work. I observed the CIM group's

discussion. The CIM group discussed the rationale for what should and should not be included in comparison with other grades' core standards. They discussed whether listening to literature should be included as a core skill at tenth grade. They also discussed one standard in the state standards which was included at every grade except fifth. It was suggested some standards should be included at all grades. Another concern was that sixth grade state standards don't include literary terminology. The presenter explained the need to start with CIM level as the end point. What's not being met? The high school group was concerned with group overlap and omissions. They identified a gap in sixth grade for literary devices, and that one standard did not seem to fit. The sixth grade group explained that it was included in an umbrella term in another standard. Sixth grade teachers do reading, writing, and social studies in blocks, thus the need to keep the standards general. They are not as specific as the CIM standards which are taught by literature specialists. Reference was made to a huge debate about poetry at the last meeting. Three of the nine standards it was thought were already included in the reading standards. The sixth grade group suggested they could add one standard and delete another. There was good discussion and participation.

The CIM group raised concern about the standard, "listen to the text and make connections," which they argued is implied in the other standards. Others defended it in terms of research on the importance of listening as beneficial to struggling readers, ELL students, and for building reading fluency. They pointed out that it includes listening and reading. Lots of rationale was presented for including listening to build a

love of reading. The presenter also noted that the standard addresses multiple skills and content to “enhance the study of other subjects.” The CIM level asked the eighth grade group why main idea and sequence of events is included in reading standards. Discussion followed and it was decided not to change anything on the standards as revised for this item. The eighth grade reported they were okay with them and had already worked on articulation. Presenters mentioned that the state would be taking a look at what districts are doing to consolidate the standards, making this district ahead of the curve. Grade seven reported no concerns for literature. Grade six noted that inferencing was left off of grade ten. It was decided to replace “identify and analyze unstated reasons” with “making inferences.”

The facilitator next asked, “Are we ready to lift the lid?” Group members were asked to show consensus on every decision with thumbs up or thumbs down. More questions were raised about the implementation of the core standards in the schools. Each group was asked to give input. One recommendation was that the implementation in schools should not be done by the language arts teachers, and concerns were expressed about presenting versus implementing the standards. There were also concerns about how to present the standards in a way that doesn’t turn people off. The facilitator noted the importance of layering content with reading and writing with the premise that reading and writing are process. Suggestions included incorporating the standards into teachers’ professional development goals, tying them to the school improvement plans, and making sure administrators support them. It was also noted that the same thing might not work at every school, yet the message

delivered needs to be consistent from school to school. It needs to be authentic with teachers part of the process. The presenter stressed K-12 is a system and we all have an important part to play. She also cautioned against use of value-laden words, such as “upper level,” and “lower level.”

District leaders announced that today is the final meeting of this group, although it was originally hoped that another meeting would take place to include all core standards representatives, K-CIM but the superintendent had moved up the timeline for completion. The next step will be the district getting the information out to principals and schools and designing the core standards documents. The group discussed ways to make the documents more user friendly? Separate pages are currently used for 6, 7, 8 and CIM core standards and the previous and successive grade standards are listed on the back for reference. There was discussion about the format of the final documents, how to list the standards, what to call them, what the title on the page should be, and whether to use numbers or bullets. Some suggested making posters for classroom walls and including core standards in school handbooks. The group could not reach consensus on formatting. There was also some discussion about part of the audience being the community. The meeting was concluded. The final core standards are discussed further in the next section, the description of documents for District Two.

Document Data: “Visions and expectations”

This section provides selective description of the documents collected and coded as part of the study for District Two. The documents were provided by

Katherine and Beth, literacy specialists, some by school literacy leaders, and some collected by the researcher during observation sessions. A list of all documents appears in Appendix D. Documents from District Two include job descriptions, agendas, training materials and handouts, communique, forms, reports, lists of materials, flyers, survey results, goal statements, and standards documents. The first document included is the official district job description of the literacy specialists or “instructional specialists.” It indicates that their primary function is to provide training to district teachers on effective strategies in literacy instruction and that their supervisor is the Director of Curriculum. The specific responsibilities include planning and conducting inservices, consulting with principals and teachers, conducting demonstrations, providing information, developing instructional programs, identifying resources, assisting and training teachers, and other duties as assigned. An addendum for the school year 2005-06 is attached which specifies responsibilities for the literacy specialists specific to the 2005-06 school year and includes budget items. The specific points indicate that they will meet regularly with literacy leaders “to develop leadership skills, share literacy strategies and theories, state requirements, current literacy research, and collaborate to improve literacy instruction across the content areas in all secondary schools.” Other points indicate they will meet monthly with READ 180 teachers, meet monthly with Teacher Leaders, provide inservicing to individual buildings, support literacy leaders individually, work with teachers on content area literacy, and work in partnership with building administrators.

The next document is a list of secondary literacy leader responsibilities, which has subsequently undergone revision. This earlier draft specifies that literacy leaders will attend district meetings, provide resources for their buildings, provide ongoing inservice, create or maintain language arts curriculum alignment, support the school improvement plan, pass on literacy ideas from district to staff, implement new ideas gained from other literacy leaders, serve as a liaison between administrators and staff, and support the READ 180 program in their buildings. These job descriptions are useful for indicating the district's vision and expectations for these staff members and providing a basis for evaluating the work of the literacy specialists and leaders.

Several documents relate to the writing workshop training sessions for teachers. The first is an agenda for Day One of the training, titled "Lessons that Change Writers." It indicates the plan for an overview and rationale, a description of the writing framework, a "notebook lesson," an introduction to the materials in the program, study of lessons by trait, and school team planning time. The next document is a description of the funding available for seventh and eighth grade teachers to support the new writing curriculum. It states "In order to support the professional development of your seventh and eighth grade teachers, the following funds are available: for each team, there is approximately \$400 per member to continue this development." It then states that each team is to determine how the money will be spent. Parameters specify that materials must be related to *Lessons that Change Writers* or the writing workshop model and contribute the development of the entire team. They also indicate that only in-district activities can be funded, materials

purchased may be up to fifty percent of the budget, and each group's facilitator must submit their request to the literacy specialists. Preliminary and follow up procedures for using the money are also attached and they include information on observations, substitute costs, purchasing materials, and planning meetings. The next document is a handout on using *Teaching the Qualities of Writing* with special populations. It was obviously an activity used at one of the training sessions to help teachers identify appropriate lessons for their students. Another handout from the training session is included with descriptive information about how the writing process works in the classroom, such topics as providing choice for students, conducting conferences, and doing mini-lessons and demonstrations. The next document is a proposal for sixth grade teachers in the writing training. It specifies that a facilitator for each building will be recruited first for sixth grade, and then seventh and eighth. This is intended to promote and fund teachers meeting as a group within their own buildings.

The next document is a research brief which includes a number of quotations and policy statements regarding writing instruction from a publication called *Writing and School Reform*, from the National Commission on Writing, May 2006. Statements pulled from the documents include: "The best hope for improving both writing and schools generally lies in high-quality professional development." The next document is a "Writing Update for Middle School Principals." It is intended to share with the principals information about the program, materials, and training sessions, and the plan to extend the training sessions to seventh and eighth grade teachers. It specifies for them parameters of the extra funding available for those teachers involved.

Another handout used in the writing training includes discussion questions such as, “Is there a scope and sequence for the writing curriculum in your building?” and “How much time is scheduled exclusively for teaching and crafting writing?”

The next set of documents is more general materials relating to best practices in teaching. One document is titled, “Best Teaching Practices, What to Look For.” It includes a list of bulleted points with items such as: the classroom is well-organized, students remain focused, the teacher uses the full instruction time, and so forth. It is likely intended for an administrator conducting observations or a participant in a peer coaching program. The next document is an observational protocol for a peer coaching session that includes points for a pre-conference, observation, and post-conference. Another document specifies contrasts between coaching and evaluation in terms of timing, climate, format, purposes, and so on. Other documents include strategies to use when consulting, a handout on active listening, a handout on roadblocks to listening, and a description of an instructional coach position, probably an early draft form. Another form lists types of verbal and non-verbal feedback most often requested by teachers. There is also a visual on “learning-focused conversations.” A list of mentoring questions, a conceptual framework for differentiated coaching, a continuum of interaction, components of professional practice, and a scoring guide for the components are all included. It is clear that many of these documents relate not specifically to the work of literacy leaders but other associated activities such as mentoring and coaching.

The next document is an agenda for a training session the literacy specialists conducted at High School A on scoring writing. It includes the following points: the parts of the writing scoring guide, discussion of the differences between scores of three and four, a focus on conventions, scoring of sample papers, and independent practice. The next two documents are lists of sample writing prompts and recommended strategies for teaching writing. Another document is a November 2006 agenda for the *Teaching the Qualities of Writing* training. It includes sharing of experiences, discussion of conventions, conferencing, the writers workshop and other tools. The next is a planning sheet for the sixth grade writing group which asks teachers to describe specific activities of their sixth grade team, list specific dates for the activities, list the teachers involved, and list group needs. The next is a handout titled “Essential Characteristics of Writer’s Workshop” which defines essential qualities such as choice, time, teaching, talking, units of study, publication, high expectations, and structure. Another handout lists best practices for teaching conventions. Also included is an agenda for the sixth grade writing training sessions, a description of the next steps, a writing workshop observation and reflection form, and a team meeting summary form. There is also a copy of the agenda for the writing training session for eighth grade teachers, which includes an introductory activity, an overview, lesson sharing, a video, a journal writing activity, school planning time, a wrap up and a to-do list.

The next set of documents relates to the READ 180 program. The first is a list of internet links to research and published material that supports the READ 180

program, plus some links to sites for writing instruction. Another document is the agenda for the READ 180 teachers meeting in January of 2006. Activities described are updates on writing training, updates from schools, technical updates, and discussion. The next agenda is for the February 2006 READ 180 meeting. It specifies web resources, book talks, guest presenters, teacher share time, and talk time as the activities. The next is a form for READ 180 teachers to include requests for agenda items for the final meeting of the school year. Another document includes results of lexile level data from a group of READ 180 students over a three year period. It shows average lexile scores of 370 in the fall of 2003 and average scores of 747 in the spring of 2006, which is impressive growth although over a long period of time. The next document is titled “A Global Look at the Current State of READ 180.” It includes summary points about the program to date, including provision of new materials, low class sizes, inclusion of a writing focus, continuation of support meetings, and concerns about the effectiveness of the program. Another sheet is a “numbered heads” activity for READ 180 teachers. It asks the teachers in groups to discuss areas of the READ 180 program that could be strengthened, as well as the observation form for READ 180 classrooms used by administrators.

The next several documents are various communique from the literacy specialists to different groups. The first is an e-mail to language arts teachers announcing an upcoming visit of an author and consultant who worked with sixth grade teachers during writing trainings and conducted classroom demonstrations. It includes an invitation for these teachers to attend one of the events. The next is a

message is to principals, teacher leaders and literacy leaders regarding the plan for writing training sessions for the following year. It explains that training begins with sixth grade teachers participating in a three-day training and presents the schedule of the sessions. The next message is to middle school literacy leaders regarding the middle school principals' request to adopt new language arts materials. This describes the beginning of the process that resulted in the adoption of the writing workshop training and instructional materials. It asks the literacy leaders to complete a survey to provide information. Another message is to middle school language arts teachers regarding the upcoming adoption which also includes the request for survey information. The next message is written to principals to announce the planning for a "literacy consortium" meeting to be held with principals, teacher leaders, and literacy leaders introducing the meeting organized to plan and create a vision statement for literacy for the 2006-07 school year. It states that half day substitutes will be provided and also announces the date, time and location.

The next documents include materials and resources for literacy leaders. Some of them are reference materials for the literacy leaders. The first is a list of all pieces of literature taught in grades ten through twelve at each of the district high schools. The next is a list of suggested resources dated 2007 and including websites, professional books, and trade magazines. Another list shows reading and language arts materials in use at all district middle schools. Another document is a description of the district's shared literature collection from the library media program. It specifies that sets of books are available for classroom use and presents guidelines for use of these

materials. Another document is a flyer for a guest teacher/consultant who was in the district to model writing workshop strategies. It specifies times and locations. Another flyer announces a special workshop on conducting writing conferences. Another presents a description of a workshop taught by Katherine and Beth called "Reaching for the Reluctant Student: Reading Strategies for the Secondary Content Areas." Another similar description advertises a course in "Creating Your Writing Workshop." The next flyer advertises a special presentation by the author of *Notebook Know-How* and includes a registration form for the event. A copy of the survey of the middle school language arts practices sent to all middle schools is included.

Many documents relate to literacy leader meetings and events. One is a planning sheet for the 2006-07 year which asks literacy leaders to consider their visibility, meeting structures and content, and schedule for the following year. A flyer for the Literacy Leadership Consortium is included and the agenda for the Consortium includes: the plan for the consortium, a presentation by the assistant superintendent, purpose and process, the goal of establishing a vision and plan for literacy, description of materials, collaborative planning time, school sharing and an evaluation. Literacy leader meeting agendas are included for meetings in January and February of 2007 with materials from the meetings. The materials include small group discussion questions. A list of items to do for the literacy specialists is also included, demonstrating the planning process involved in their work. Lists of award-winning young adult books are also included. A schedule of meetings for the 2007-08 school year is also included. A copy of the literacy leader responsibilities is included along

with an addendum that includes specific examples of literacy leaders' work at individual schools. These examples include distribution of teaching ideas; facilitating professional development; working as a liaison to staff, administration, community, and other schools; and funding and developing new programs. This presents a somewhat expanded description of the specific roles literacy leaders play.

Other documents collected include a variety of items provided by the literacy specialists. One is a list of ideas for promoting content area literacy in schools and one is a handout from a model lesson on the features of an effective essay. Also included is a copy of District Two's Strategic Plan.(See Appendix H) It is a visual which includes specific goals for improving student achievement, leadership development, public engagement, and effective organization to support student achievement. Two of the items on the strategic plan specifically relate to literacy: "Clarify what students will know and be able to do district-wide in literacy, math, and secondary science" and "Develop and articulate a common literacy model." These points led to the work of the core standards committee and the common literacy model committee.

A few documents relate to particular schools. One is an agenda for the writing inservice conducted by the literacy leaders at Middle School A, which was described in the last section on observational data. It specifies their process during the inservice to identify their objective, work in grade level groups, refine writing strand definitions, share them, and write their professional development goals for evaluation. Another is an e-mail communication to the researcher from the English Department Coordinator

at High School B describing the Jane Shaffer writing technique used at High School B. Another is a content area writing assignment designed by Steven, the literacy leader at High School B, for weightlifting classes. It gives instructions for students to design their own workout which includes ten separate activities and provides directions for them. There are also handouts from materials Steven presented to the staff at High School B, barriers to content area understanding, and Teach the Text Backwards strategy.

Several documents are included for the literacy leaders January 2008 meeting. The agenda includes welcome, update on the strategic direction committees, small group work time, review of books on CD. Handouts from this session include professional titles for content area literacy, a textbook jigsaw activity, inquiry charts, a writing activity, a list of common teaching strategies, strategies for differentiating in the content areas, a list of titles being considered for purchase, and a handout on think-alouds.

The next documents relate to the district core standards committee. The first is an e-mail from Katherine and Beth to all committee members announcing the next meeting of the group and specifying times and locations. It includes directions for securing substitutes and materials to bring, and includes a list of all the members of the committee. The next document is a copy of an early draft of the identified core standards for literature, reading and writing, for grades six through eight and CIM levels. A copy of the core standards for grade five is also included, which were used for reference by the committee. A copy of the final "Comprehensive K-12 Literacy

Model” designed by the literacy model committee is also included (See Appendix I).

The final core standards documents are also included for grades six through CIM level. The literature standards include ten core standards in the areas of: listen to and read literary text, demonstrate general understanding, develop an interpretation, and examine content and structure. The reading standards include ten core standards in the areas of: decoding and word recognition, listen to and read informational and narrative text, vocabulary, read to perform a task, demonstrate general understanding, develop an interpretation, and examine content and structure (for informational text). The writing standards identify core standards in the areas of: planning, evaluation and revision; writing; narrative writing; persuasive writing; and research report writing. Sixth grade’s writing standards also include: summaries, business letters, job application letters, resumes, and technical writing. CIM standards also include core standards specific to conventions and grammar, and research reports/multimedia presentations. These core standards will become part of the focus for training of classroom teachers during the 2008-09 school year.

APPENDIX C:
CONSENT FORMS

Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership
Graduate School of Education
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Portland, Oregon

Dear Prospective Subject,

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Greg W. Berry, a doctoral student from Portland State University in the Graduate School of Education, department of Curriculum and Instruction. The researcher is conducting this study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in Educational Leadership. The study is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Samuel Henry, Associate Professor of Education. The researcher hopes to learn about district wide approaches to improving the literacy learning of secondary students through a comparative case study of two Oregon school districts. You were selected because of your position as a district administrator, program specialist, secondary school principal, school literacy leader or coach, or classroom teacher who has worked with a literacy leader or coach.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to do the following depending upon your position:

- District administrator or specialist: participate in one audiotaped interview session with the researcher of approximately one hour in order to provide information about the district-wide approach to literacy learning in secondary schools.
- Secondary school principal: participate in one audiotaped interview session with the researcher of approximately one hour in order to provide information about your school's approach to literacy learning and your work with the literacy leader or coach.
- School literacy leader or coach: participate in one audiotaped interview session with the researcher of approximately one hour in order to provide information about your work in your school and with your staff. Also, be observed in a number of different work situations (conferences, modeling sessions, staff development presentations, group or individual meetings) for approximately four hours over a period of two months.
- Classroom teacher: participate in one audiotaped interview session with the researcher of approximately one hour in order to provide information about your work with the literacy leader or coach and its effect on your teaching.

Note: Audiotapes of interviews will be fully transcribed by the researcher. You will have an opportunity to review the transcript and suggest any necessary revisions, changes, additions, or clarifications to the transcript in order to insure that the transcript accurately reflects your responses. All data and records will be kept on file for three years following completion of the research, as required by federal regulations, and then will be destroyed.

Your participation in this study will inconvenience you by taking up a small amount of your time, but it does not involve any other potential risks or discomforts. You may not receive any direct benefit from taking part in this study, but the study may help to increase knowledge in the field of secondary literacy which may be of benefit to teachers and students in the future.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be linked to you or identify you will be kept confidential. Your name and identity will be kept completely confidential. You will be identified in the dissertation report by a pseudonym only. The audiotaped recording of your voice will be erased following completion of the study. Information collected from you in audiotaped form or through observation of your work will not be reported to your supervisor or evaluator in any way. The list of names and contact information which includes your name will be kept in a file in a locked file cabinet at the home of the researcher.

Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to take part in this study, and it will not affect your relationship or standing with Portland State University. You may also withdraw from the study at any time without affecting your relationship or standing with Portland State University.

If you have concerns or questions about your participation in this study or your rights as a research subject, please contact the Human Subjects Research Review Committee, Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, 111 Cramer Hall, Portland State University, (503)725-4288 or 1-877-480-4400. If you have questions about the study itself, please contact Greg W. Berry at 883 Norwood St. S.E., Salem, Oregon, 97302, (503)391-1366.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the above information and agree to take part in this study. Please understand that you may withdraw your consent at any time without penalty, and that, by signing, you are not waiving any legal claims or rights. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this consent form for your records.

Signature _____ Date _____

Introductory Script: Telephone or e-mail

Dear _____,

I am a doctoral student from the Graduate School of Education at Portland State University. I am contacting you to request your participation in my dissertation research study, which is a study of literacy leadership in secondary schools. You have been recommended to me by a district official in charge of literacy programs in your district. This project has the potential to make a significant contribution to the field of literacy research and improving teaching and learning in secondary schools. If you agree to participate in this research project, your confidentiality will be protected and your name and school will not be identified. Your participation in the research process would involve one audiotaped interview lasting approximately one hour. If you are a literacy coach or leader in your school, you would also agree to be observed on a couple of occasions in the course of your daily work, for example during meetings, conferences, or in classrooms. If you agree to participate, you will be presented with and asked to sign an Informed Consent Letter which explains the specifics of your involvement in more detail. Please let me know if you are interested in participating in this project. For more information, you can contact me by phone at 503-391-1366 or by e-mail at gwberry@uci.net.

Thank you for your consideration.

APPENDIX D

LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

District One

Literacy Initiative, 2007 (CD)
Demographic Data
Reading Apprenticeship Training Handouts
High School A Literacy Committee Task Force Goals
Reading Apprenticeship Agenda, 8/23/07
Adolescent Literacy Report: 6-12 Task Force, 12/05
Battle of the Books program, 2/28/08
Update on Literacy Initiative Goals, 2/08
Summary of Task Force Recommendations
District One Middle School Reading Data, 6/07
Middle School Reading Data visuals
Adolescent Literacy Intervention Programs: Skills, strategies and knowledge taught
Reading Intervention Programs—Initial observations and considerations
Thumbnail Sketch from Principals' Partnership Research Brief
Prioritization of Literacy Recommendations, 2/08
K-12 Literacy Task Force Recommendations: Where are We? 12/07

District Two

Instructional Specialists job description
Secondary Literacy Leaders Responsibilities
Secondary literacy program job description and budgets for 2005-06
Agenda: Lessons that Change Writers—Day One
Seventh and Eighth grade writing continued professional development plan
Using Qualities of Writing for Special populations
Writing training handouts
Writing update for middle school principals, with handouts
Peer Coaching/Instructional Coaching documents
Components of Professional Practice handouts
High School A training in scoring writing, with handouts
Qualities of Writing Training agenda, 11/06
Essential Characteristics of Writers' Workshop
Best Practices for teaching conventions
Agenda for sixth grade writing trainings
Sixth grade writing: Continued professional development plan
Writing workshop observation and reflection form
Writing workshop team meeting summary form
Eighth grade writing training agenda, 1/09

READ 180 research
READ 180 meeting agenda, 1/24/06
READ 180 meeting agenda, 2/2/06
READ 180 meeting agenda, 5/10/06
A Global Look at the Current State of READ 180
E-mail to language arts teachers
E-mail to principals, teacher leaders, and literacy leaders
E-mail to middle school literacy leaders
E-mail to middle school language arts teachers
E-mail to principals
List of high school literature taught by school
Literacy leaders suggested resources, 2007
Reading/literature materials in use in middle schools, survey results
District AV and shared literature collection
Flyer for Writing Workshop in Action demonstration
Flyer for Writing Conferencing workshop
Flyer for *Notebook Know How* author Aimee Buckner presentation
Literacy leaders planning sheet for next year, 2006-07
Survey of middle school current practice and projected needs
Flyer: Literacy Leadership Consortium, 5/17/06
Literacy Leadership Consortium agenda
Agenda for literacy leader meeting, 1/11/07
Agenda for literacy leader meeting, 2/27/07
Literacy leader meeting handouts, 2/27/07
Agenda for literacy leader meeting, 5/06
Schedule of meetings for 2006-07
Draft of literacy goals for 2007-08
Literacy leader school sharing/talk time handout
Memo from High School B teacher, 6/11/07
District Two 2007-08 Strategic Plan
Literacy Leader planning sheet for next year
Literacy leader responsibilities and sample contributions
Middle School A writing inservice for language arts teachers, 10/12/07
High School B writing assignment for weight lifting class
Agenda for literacy leader meeting, 1/09/08, with handouts
E-mail to teachers on Core Standards Committee
Core Standards in Literature, Reading, and Writing by grade (draft)
Comprehensive K-12 literacy model
Core Standards in Literature, Reading, and Writing by grade (final draft)

APPENDIX E

LIST OF ORGANIZATIONAL FILES

District One:

Interview Transcripts
Field Notes Transcripts
Documents

District Two:

Interview Transcripts
Field Notes Transcripts
Documents

General Files

Signed Informed Consent Forms
Copies of Interview Questions

APPENDIX F

LIST OF CODES AND THEMES

District One: List of codes

Literacy goals
Task force
Best practices
Recommendations
Content-area
Professional development
Reading Apprenticeship
Literacy coaching
Literacy leadership
Training
Assessments
Intervention
READ 180
Read Naturally
Placement
Job-embedded coaching
Book clubs
Professional Learning Communities
Late starts
Collaboration
Data
Motivation
Middle schools
Competitions
Reading incentive
SSR
Parent nights
Literacy teams
Student teams
Participation
School support
Inequities
Reluctance/resistance
Strategies
Implementation
State tests
Anecdotal evidence

District initiative
Survey
Oral fluency
Vocabulary
Comprehension
Z-scores
Meetings
Brainstorm
Other districts/schools
Field trips
Coaches meetings
Financial support/funding
Capacity building
People
Helpfulness
Disagreement
Literacy support teachers
Time
Release/sub days
Responsibilities
On-demand tasks
Solicitation
Checking in
Support
Teacher needs
Classroom visits
New teachers
Mentoring
Materials/resources
Co-teaching
Relationships
Organization
Credibility
Trust
Listening
Lesson plans
Data system
Test scores
Struggling readers

Observations
Informal
Modeling
Demonstrations
Collaborative teams
Communication
Classroom practice
Delivering
Ambiguity
Role-definition/roles
Constraints
Magic
Daily work
Targeting students
ELL students
Resistance
Openness
Percentage of staff
District support
School-based coaching
Administrative support
District connections
SOS (Student-owned strategies)
Optimism
Sharing
Atmosphere
Job descriptions
Small-group
Availability
Priorities
Flexibility
Non-evaluative
One-on-one
Textbooks
Planning
Pre-reading
Follow-up
Timeline
Trickle down
Mandate
Resources
Think-alouds
Notetaking
Similarities/differences
Research

Skills
Essential
Navigating
Welfare reading
Stratified intervention
Committee makeup
Incremental
Special education
Freshman team
Focus
Instructional leadership
Conflict
Preparing students
Common language
Infrastructure
Placement
Technical reading/writing
Nonfiction
Roots/suffixes
Low skills
Non-readers
Reading Counts
Technology
Writing
Syntax
Lack of reading
Grammar/sentence structure
Metacognition
Teaching tools
Talking to the text
Questioning
QAR (Question-Answer Relationships)
Discussion
Standards
Presenters
Change in instruction
Bloom's Taxonomy
Change
Academic improvement
Building approach
Expectations
Culture
Battle of the Books
Mastery
Literacy skills

Levels of literacy
Identifying skills
Active reading
Graphic organizers
Transition to high school
Academic literacy
Assumptions
Test-taking strategies
Monitoring students
Discipline
Study Island
Strands
Conclusions
Inferences
Locating information
Literary elements
Concentration
Scores
Diversity
Rationale
Goals of Reading Apprenticeship
Reading Apprenticeship binder/
resource notebook
Four dimensions of reading
Apprenticeship
Classroom application
Activities
Reader identity
Trends in reading
Reading process
Approach to text/purpose
Pre-teaching
Think-pair-share
Sociocultural
Confusion
Challenging text
Think-Ink-Link
Types of questions
Thick and thin questions
Reflection
Goal setting
Self-assessment
Obstacles
Problem-solving
Action plan

Commitment
Professional library
Multi-tiered program
Timeline
School visitations
Exploration
Challenges
Summer school
Subcommittees
Momentum
Open Mind strategy
Presentation
Prediction
Two-column notes
SQ3R
Workshops
Evaluation
Follow-up report
Sub days
Cooperative learning

District Two: List of Codes

Standards
District history
Building leadership in literacy
Strategic plan
Cohort group
Professional development
READ 180
Web resources
Summer institute
Site-based
Mandates
Formative assessment
Writing
Teacher feedback
Survey
Evaluation
Financial support
Communication
Collaboration
Feedback
Planning
Group/cohort time

Materials
Trainings
Building support
Voice/leadership voice
Change
Liaison
Resources
Data
Presenting
Frontloading
Videos
Writing expectations
Parents
Frustrations
New teachers
Literacy coaching
Writing assessment
Benchmarks
Action plans
Documents
Time
English department
Missionary work
Shared activity
Vocabulary
Teams/teamwork
Directives
Accountability
Professional Learning Communities
Administrative support
Discussion/sharing
Content-area
Facilitation
Lesson planning
Observation
Demonstration
Small groups
Passion
Cheerleading
Best practices/effective teaching
Formal leadership role
Bias
Structural changes
Classroom changes/application
ELD/ELL

SIOP
consistency
Power standards
Instructional coaches
Meetings
Word of the day/week
Convention (writing)
Fluency
Goals
Freshman lab
Focus on freshmen/sophomores
Target population
Resistance
Elective teachers
Changing minds
Percentage of staff
Literacy specialists
Articulation
Standardized role
Budget/funding
CSR grant
Support
Testing
Videos
School reform
Reading comprehension
Fractured
Research
Strategies
Buy-in
Full-time teaching
Information
Humor
Persistence
Rewards
Grade-level
Alignment
Modeling
Simulation
Challenges
Real-world application
Choice
Roadblocks
Awareness
Roots program

Rapport
 Advocates
 Ongoing
 Involved
 Essential
 District transition/restructuring
 AYP
 Posters
 Reflection
 Student-centered
 Class size
 Student needs
 Ideas
 E-mail
 Individual needs
 Informal
 Creativity
 Struggling readers
 Technical writing
 Student improvement
 Job description/literacy specialist
 Peer coaching
 Writing training agendas
 Textbook adoption
 Vision
 High school literature
 District AV/Shared literature
 Workshops
 Visibility
 Schedules
 Literacy consortium
 Community building
 Books
 Jane Shaffer writing
 Focus strands
 Core standards
 School improvement
 Building perspectives
 Documentation of work
 Roles/responsibilities of literacy
 leaders
 Feeder groups
 Writing programs
 Book talks
 Interaction

Literacy model
 Diversity
 Flexibility
 Adult learning
 Application process/Title IIA
 Consistency
 Teach the text backwards strategy
 Staff response
 Writing strands
 Writing assignments
 Scoring guide
 Debate
 Participation
 Expectations
 Tutoring
 Work samples
 Literature standards
 Grade-level analysis
 Research skills
 Writing workshop
 Isolated skills
 Authentic writing
 Staff agreement/consensus
 Pre-writing
 Revision (writing)
 Models of writing
 Progression
 Literary terms/devices
 Listening skills
 Posters
 Implementation
 Standards document

District One Themes
 (with number of codes)

 Literacy coaching characteristics and
 responsibilities (65)
 Instructional strategies (59)
 Collaboration (55)
 Reading Apprenticeship (46)
 Forms of literacy leadership (45)
 Best Practices (45)
 Resources (42)
 Goals (38)

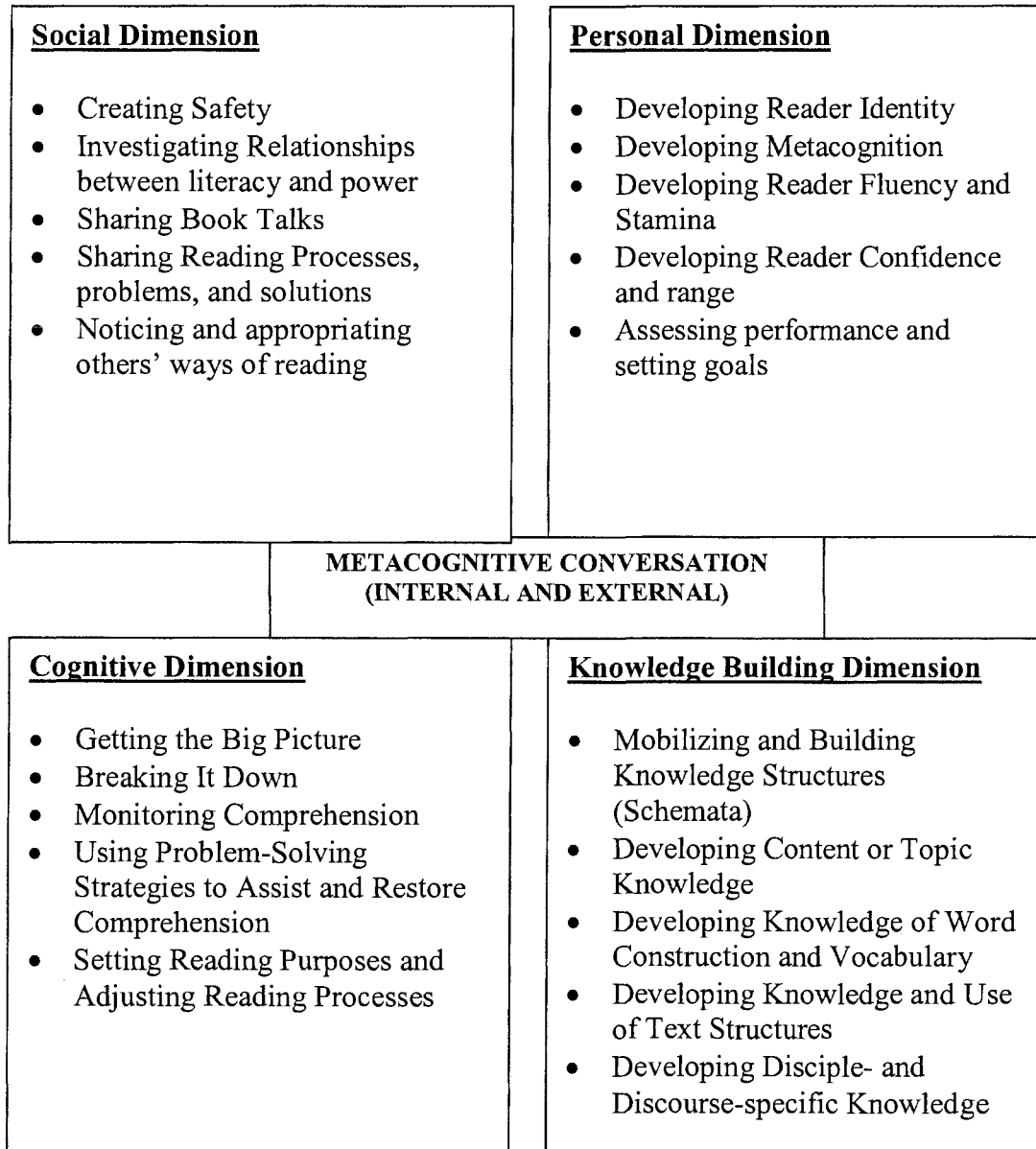
Assessment (36)
Student literacy skills (32)
Professional Development (31)
Challenges (30)
Intervention (29)
Reading Incentives (26)
District and school-level support (25)

District Two Themes
(with number of codes)

Professional development (96)
Writing (73)
Leadership and change (72)
Roles and characteristics of literacy
leaders (71)
Instructional strategies (60)
Standards and assessment (59)
Collaboration (55)
Time (40)
Goals (39)
Resources (35)

APPENDIX G:

THE READING APPRENTICESHIP FRAMEWORK



(Schoenbach, Greenleaf, Cziko, & Hurwitz, 1999)

APPENDIX H

DISTRICT TWO STRATEGIC PLAN

(Updated for 2008-09)

Improve Student Achievement

1. Implement the formative assessment system and data warehouse.
2. Implement core standards in literacy, mathematics, and secondary science
3. Implement the common literacy model, including the comprehensive program model for English language learners.
4. Enhance the Academy for Teaching and Learning, design and implement professional development for classified staff.
5. Design and develop differentiated instructional strategies for all students with emphasis on ELL, TAG and special education.

Leadership Development

6. Raise student achievement through the use of research-based leadership skills.

Public Engagement

7. Implement external public engagement plan and develop a plan for internal engagement for staff and parents.

An Effective Organization to Support Student Achievement

8. Continue to expedite hiring process, focus on diversity and quality.
9. Expand the quality assurance model and develop staff awareness.
10. Continue to implement best practices for business services.
11. Implement the plan to meet deferred maintenance and student enrollment needs.
12. Develop a plan to align transportation services with district priorities.
13. Implement plan for improved substitute coverage.

APPENDIX I
DISTRICT TWO COMPREHENSIVE K-12 LITERACY MODEL

Comprehensive K-12 Literacy Model

Department of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment has created an interactive Comprehensive K-12 Literacy Model for educators in the district. The literacy model reflects current research and best practices for teaching literacy.

Comprehensive K-12 Literacy Model

