Coaching for Confidence: An Examination of the Relationship Between Literacy Coaching and Teacher Efficacy in Middle School English Language Arts Classrooms

Gayle N. White-Wallace
St. John Fisher College

Follow this and additional works at: https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/education_etd

Part of the Education Commons

How has open access to Fisher Digital Publications benefited you?

Recommended Citation
White-Wallace, Gayle N., "Coaching for Confidence: An Examination of the Relationship Between Literacy Coaching and Teacher Efficacy in Middle School English Language Arts Classrooms" (2011). Education Doctoral. Paper 12.

Please note that the Recommended Citation provides general citation information and may not be appropriate for your discipline. To receive help in creating a citation based on your discipline, please visit http://libguides.sjfc.edu/citations.

This document is posted at https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/education_etd/12 and is brought to you for free and open access by Fisher Digital Publications at St. John Fisher College. For more information, please contact fisherpub@sjfc.edu.
Coaching for Confidence: An Examination of the Relationship Between Literacy Coaching and Teacher Efficacy in Middle School English Language Arts Classrooms

Abstract
The focus of this study was to portray the work of middle school literacy coaches as agents to increase teacher efficacy. Coaches and teachers in New York school districts participated in the study, which attempted to add to the research on teacher efficacy and coaching by authentically examining the experiences and perceptions of coaching. Data was collected using the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale, interviews, focus groups, observations notes, and researcher notes. This study revealed that participating in the coaching experience increased teachers’ self-efficacy and that the teachers valued their literacy coach to provide resources, model lessons, assist with lesson planning, and most of all, provide classroom support with instructional strategies and classroom management. Teachers found that the coaching process provided the needed resources, collegiality, and expertise needed to support the execution of new instructional strategies and programs. The coaches in this study identified many improvements in teachers’ instructional delivery as they participated in the coaching process. Teachers indicated that the most important aspect of the coaching process was the character of the literacy coach. Literacy coaches who possessed good listening skills, patience, and were personable made the coaching process more effective. Thus, teachers expressed the impact of coaches’ personality on the success of the coaching process. The main findings of this study were that teachers perceived literacy coaching as a useful form of professional development. Teachers believed the coaching process strengthened their ability to deliver innovative instructional strategies, increase student engagement, and maintain classroom management.

Document Type
Dissertation

Degree Name
Doctor of Education (EdD)

Department
Executive Leadership

First Supervisor
Jerry Willis

Second Supervisor
Donna L. Marable

Third Supervisor
Velma Whiteside

Subject Categories
Education

This dissertation is available at Fisher Digital Publications: https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/education_etd/12
Coaching for Confidence: An Examination of the Relationship Between Literacy Coaching and Teacher Efficacy in Middle School English Language Arts Classrooms

By
Gayle N. White-Wallace

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Ed.D. in Executive Leadership

Supervised by
Dr. Jerry Willis

Committee Members
Dr. Donna L. Marable
Dr. Velma Whiteside

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education
St. John Fisher College
August 2011
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, friends, colleagues, and most of all the teachers and coaches that have shared their passion for education with me. Throughout my lifetime there have been many people that have surrounded me and supported me in all endeavors. To my parents, Wilmat and Glenniver White, thank you for making education the number one priority. Most of all they helped me understand that I was destined to be successful. To my aunts and uncles, you have played a major role in my life. Thank you for your continuous support and encouragement. I thank you for always making me feel like I can do anything. Aunts Cynthia and Frances, I owe you for always being there to lend a critical ear and give me pieces of your wisdom. To my friends and sorority sisters, you have always understood and been the shoulders and ears that I have needed. To my sister Leslie, thank you for always holding me accountable for my actions. Knowing I was your role model shaped the many decisions I have made. Most of all I would like to thank my husband, James D. Wallace Jr., who stood by side throughout this journey. There was not a day that went by that you did not believe in me. Thank you for being patient and steadfast through this journey. Thank for all of your love and support.
Biographical Sketch

Gayle N. White-Wallace currently serves a literacy coach in a suburban public school district located in New York. Mrs. Wallace earned a bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education and Early Childhood Education from Temple University in May 2000. In May of 2002 she earned a master’s degree in Curriculum and Teaching from Fordham University located in Bronx, New York. In addition, Mrs. White-Wallace attained a master’s degree in School Supervision and Administration from Mercy College located in Dobbs Ferry, New York. In May 2009 she entered the St. John Fisher Executive Leadership Program. With the guidance of chair Dr. Jerry W. Willis she completed her doctoral degree in August 2011.
Acknowledgement

It is with the deepest admiration and appreciation that I acknowledge all of the people that took the time and energy to ensure that I completed this labor of love. First, I would like to thank my dissertation chair Dr. Jerry Willis for guiding me through each and every decision necessary. He ensured that this work reflected my vision. Thank you, Dr. Willis, for reading and honestly critiquing each and every draft that I wrote. I am a better writer and thinker because of you. I am grateful to my mentor and committee member, Dr. Donna Marable. Thank you for answering the phone during the waking hours of the night and traveling for hours to meet. You have steered me in the right direction since ninth grade, and eighteen years later you continue to be an influential force in my life. I would be remiss if I did not thank my committee member Dr. Velma Whiteside. Without you my dissertation would not have made it onto the shelves. Your tenacity and thorough review of each and every word fine-tuned my eyes to details. To my academic advisor Dr. Claudia Edwards, thank you for keeping me focused and ensuring that I met all milestones and deadlines. I am forever indebted to my statistician Mrs. Pamela Kuhens, my editor Bruce, and Ms. Stephanie Carnes, my transcriber. Without my technical support my data would have remained intangible ideas. Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Ronald Valenti and Dr. Michael Robinson for believing in my abilities to be successful in this process by giving me the chance to be a part of this program.
Abstract

The focus of this study was to portray the work of middle school literacy coaches as agents to increase teacher efficacy. Coaches and teachers in New York school districts participated in the study, which attempted to add to the research on teacher efficacy and coaching by authentically examining the experiences and perceptions of coaching. Data was collected using the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale, interviews, focus groups, observations notes, and researcher notes.

This study revealed that participating in the coaching experience increased teachers’ self-efficacy and that the teachers valued their literacy coach to provide resources, model lessons, assist with lesson planning, and most of all, provide classroom support with instructional strategies and classroom management. Teachers found that the coaching process provided the needed resources, collegiality, and expertise needed to support the execution of new instructional strategies and programs.

The coaches in this study identified many improvements in teachers’ instructional delivery as they participated in the coaching process. Teachers indicated that the most important aspect of the coaching process was the character of the literacy coach. Literacy coaches who possessed good listening skills, patience, and were personable made the coaching process more effective. Thus, teachers expressed the impact of coaches’ personality on the success of the coaching process.

The main findings of this study were that teachers perceived literacy coaching as a useful form of professional development. Teachers believed the coaching process
strengthened their ability to deliver innovative instructional strategies, increase student engagement, and maintain classroom management.
Table of Contents

Dedication ........................................................................................................................... ii

Biographical Sketch ........................................................................................................... iii

Acknowledgement ............................................................................................................. iv

Abstract ............................................................................................................................... v

Table of Contents .............................................................................................................. vii

List of Tables ...................................................................................................................... x

List of Figures .................................................................................................................... xi

Chapter 1: Introduction ....................................................................................................... 1
  Problem Statement .................................................................................................. 1
  Theoretical Rationale .............................................................................................. 9
  Study Significance ................................................................................................ 10
  Purpose of the Study ............................................................................................. 10
  Research Questions ............................................................................................... 11
  Definition of Terms ............................................................................................... 11
  Chapter Summary ................................................................................................. 12

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature .................................................................................. 14
  Adolescent Literacy .............................................................................................. 16
  Middle School Literacy ......................................................................................... 18
  Adult Learning Theory ........................................................................................... 22
  Self-Efficacy .......................................................................................................... 26
Professional Development .................................................................................... 38
What Do We Know About Coaching? ................................................................. 42
Literacy Coaching ............................................................................................. 44
Coaching and Teacher Self-Efficacy ................................................................. 57

Chapter 3: Methodology .................................................................................... 59
Setting ................................................................................................................. 67
Research Participants and Context ................................................................. 69
Data Collection Process .................................................................................. 74
Data Management ............................................................................................. 77
Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis .................................................. 78
Concluding Statement ...................................................................................... 80

Chapter 4: Results ............................................................................................ 81
The Survey Data: Preliminary Analysis ............................................................ 82
Teacher Efficacy Data ...................................................................................... 82
Interview Data .................................................................................................. 93
Summary of Findings ....................................................................................... 115

Chapter 5: Discussion ....................................................................................... 116
Implications of Findings .................................................................................. 119
Recommendations ............................................................................................ 129
Limitations of Study ......................................................................................... 131
Conclusion ....................................................................................................... 133

References ....................................................................................................... 137
Appendix A ....................................................................................................... 148
## List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.1</td>
<td>Types of Data Collected</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.2</td>
<td>Data Sources Correlated to Research Questions</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.3</td>
<td>Survey Multiple Choice Items: Respondent Demographics</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.4</td>
<td>Survey Multiple Response Item Frequencies</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.1</td>
<td>Subscale Summary</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.2</td>
<td>Efficacy in Instructional Strategies</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.3</td>
<td>Efficacy in Student Engagement</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.4</td>
<td>Efficacy in Classroom Management</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.5</td>
<td>Paired Sample Correlation</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.6</td>
<td>Paired Sample Test</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.7</td>
<td>Test Between Subjects</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.8</td>
<td>Test Within Subjects</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.1</td>
<td>The Literacy Coaching Continuum.</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2.2</td>
<td>A Closer Look at the Literacy Coaching Continuum.</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.1</td>
<td>Efficacy in Student Engagement Score Distribution.</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.2</td>
<td>Efficacy in Instructional Strategies Score Distribution.</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.3</td>
<td>Efficacy in Classroom Management Score Distribution.</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.4</td>
<td>Sub-Scale Mean Scores.</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1: Introduction

Problem Statement

The field of education has been stripped of its true essence. Education in the United States can be defined in three words: standards, assessment, and accountability. Legislation such as The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), A Nation at Risk Report, and the recently released A Blueprint for Reform: The Reauthorizing of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act have emphasized the educational crisis that faces the United States. NCLB has reshaped the manner in which the United States approaches education. This 2001 legislation has shaken the very core of school systems across the country. School districts are hypnotized by standardized test score results and school report cards which state the academic standing of students. NCLB has thrown the educational world into a frenzy as educators search for effective programs, “highly qualified” staff, and resources that will result in students meeting standards.

Schools across the United States anxiously await the release of their school report card. This document reports the success of a school solely on their standardized assessment scores. Student demographics, teacher qualification data, and standardized assessments scores are included in this report. The very essence of U.S. schools has been reduced to data fact sheets.

Law makers, corporations, politicians, and policy makers supported NCLB in an effort to ensure that America regains its “rightful” place at the top of the international market. The United States is ranked 14th in reading skills, 17th for science, and 25th in
mathematics internationally by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (HuffPost, 2011). In citing these statistics, concerns were raised about the economic future of the United States for the 21st century and beyond.

Currently, school systems throughout the U.S. are engrossed in the Obama administration’s “Race to the Top” initiative to become high-achieving schools. This is only the latest in a long list of national reform efforts. During the Bush administration legislation such as NCLB created policies, procedures, and parameters for schools districts across America that proponents believed should improve the quality of public education. These anticipated improvements were geared to prepare all students to compete in a global society (Olson, 2002).

President Obama’s release of the Blueprint for Reform reiterates the need for an overhaul of the United States’ educational system. Similar to NCLB, this document supports increased spending on education. This spending should be geared to creating college educated citizens who are ready to meet the demands of the future. President Obama emphasized the need for educational reform as the United States fell in position to number 10 of 32 developed countries. President Obama emphatically believes that if we continue to be out educated by other countries, the United States will be forced out of the competitive arena.

According to the 2009 National Assessment of Education Progress, 75% of eighth graders performed at or above the basic level, 32% performed above proficient, and only 3% percent of these eighth-graders read at an advanced level (NAEP, 2009). These statistics translated into one in four adolescents who were unable to do the following:
locate, recall, integrate, interpret, critique, and evaluate what they have read (NAEP, 2009).

These statistics have also illustrated the critical situation that American middle schools are currently facing. Middle school literacy recently moved to the forefront of educational concern. Research has been geared to early elementary and elementary reading. Teaching reading in Grades K–3 is supported by research, practice, and policy (Nichols et al., 2007). However, middle school and adolescent literacy have not received much attention. Upper elementary and middle school students have become the children left behind. They have missed the opportunities to become engaged in quality reading instruction that integrates comprehension, thinking, critical analysis and meta-cognition from text (Blanton et al., 2007).

Middle school achievement is the bridge between elementary and high school. It is one of the most important times during an individual’s educational career, as it is where children acquire skills for success in adult literacy (Burns, 2008). Students that have struggled with reading in middle school enter ninth grade reading below grade level. Competence in reading directly correlates to high school performance, graduation rates, higher education performance, and adult literacy. The United States Education Department released staggering statistics in 2009 indicating that 14% of adults in the United States were not literate in English, which means one in seven Americans were illiterate (Britt, 2009). According to the same study, 32 million adults had low literacy skills (Britt, 2009).

School districts across the United States have tried to increase student proficiency in literacy, but have failed on many fronts. Both teachers and administrators have
searched for best-practices and research-based programs to increase the proficiency of students in the area of literacy. However, educators were unable to solidify a proven method of instruction, educational program, or infrastructure that guarantees a consistent increase in student performance.

The concept of 21st-century learning has required teachers to continually develop themselves as professionals through self-reflection, enrollment in higher education, and engagement in various professional developments. Standards-based reform in education has placed an increasing emphasis on improving literacy instruction and student reading achievement (Elmore & Rothman, 2000). One reason for this emphasis was the soaring number of students who ended their formal education without basic literacy skills. Over the last 15 years, the level and range of literacy skills required to function in American society has increased, while the current level of literacy achievement has, at best, remained stagnant, and the achievement gap between students of different demographic groups persists (RAND, 2002). As a result, teachers were forced to abandon rudimentary skill and drill reading instruction to include research-based strategies in critical reading.

Twenty-first century concepts of learning demand that instruction must change to address the new multi-literate world. The new multi-literate world presented a variety of opportunities for students to be critical readers. Literacy education must provide students with a solid foundation to critically read nonfiction text, read for pleasure, read various forms of print presented in technology, and critically think across genres. Therefore, teachers must be equipped to prepare students at all levels to thrive in this increasingly global and technologically advanced society. In today’s globally charged and connected world, literacy is of the utmost importance. It is more important than ever that students
have literacy skills and strategies to be successful consumers and producers of information, moreover, successful and productive citizens.

Adolescent literacy continues to be a concern, and it may even be considered an ongoing crisis (Conley & Hinchman, 2004). The United States of America is in the midst of many educational reform efforts. Ineffective, they exhaust financial resources needed to better prepare our education professionals and thus increase student achievement. Langer (1999) found that typical secondary school instruction did not engage students, used obsolete instructional strategies, and failed to focus on literacy strategies that developed an understanding of material. High-stakes testing has changed the attitude toward education. It has monopolized instructional time, influenced the framework of curriculum, and stifled the creativity of teachers. This compromises literacy instruction for students in middle school.

Research found that an integral part of improving literacy rates was to increase teachers’ knowledge of reading (Hollimon, 2009; Snow & Moje, 2010). Many approaches that attempted to solve the literacy problem in American schools focused on teachers. Staffing schools with “highly qualified” teachers was at the forefront of educational reform aimed at raising literacy skills. It created a demand for quality staff development for education professionals. School districts across the United States continue their search for professional development that will lead to increased teacher knowledge and increased student achievement in literacy.

The solution has been to use professional development that will help teachers to assist struggling readers and to engage students in reading (Blanton et al., 2007). Appropriate professional development for teachers should be motivational, encouraging
teachers to more effectively engage students in learning situations (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Bandura, Guskey, Goddard, Showers and Joyce were researchers who believed that self-efficacy, “the belief that an individual has the ability to carry out certain actions that will result in a desired outcome” (Bandura, 1997), coupled with meaningful professional development would lead to high student achievement (Guskey, 2002).

Despite the importance of teacher self-efficacy there was little research on how to support and encourage a sense of self-efficacy among practicing teachers. It was surprising that little is known about how to develop or support efficacy (Woolfolk & Hoy, 2003). An important problem exists when identifying the type of professional development that positively affects both teachers and students. Bandura (1997) suggested that the creation of learning environments that aided in the development of new skills rested heavily on the talents and self-efficacy of teachers. While increasing teacher skills was certainly important, Bandura’s efficacy theory highlights another very important goal of staff development, which is increasing the self-efficacy of teachers. Studies have shown a positive correlation between teachers’ perceived self-efficacy and student achievement (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Scribner, 1998).

Traditionally, schools invested in the improvement of their teachers by providing professional development experiences for faculty (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1996). The importance of professional development was documented throughout the literature. Professional development has been defined as any experience that has improved teachers’ knowledge and expertise. These experiences involved many different types of formal or informal methods of teacher learning. (Guskey, 2000).
Literacy coaching is becoming an integral part of current professional development practice. Many states, foundations, and firms fund coaching projects to help secondary education recover from its crisis (Snow et al., 2006). Literacy coaching is a model of professional development nestled within other research topics such as teacher efficacy, teacher preparation, coaching, and mentoring. Literacy coaching targets teacher effectiveness through engagement of the adult and intrinsically supports their needs as a learner. Traditionally educators have usually relied on a one-shot model of professional development that does not enhance the efficacy of the teacher or the content area that was targeted. One shot professional development was structured on presentations by experts in workshops and conferences with little follow up to ensure the transfer of knowledge and application of practice (International Reading Association, 2004).

There is still very little research on how specific distinct features of professional development directly affect teachers’ self-efficacy. This study will contribute to the knowledge of how ongoing, job-embedded professional development impacts teacher self-efficacy by examining a contemporary form of professional development called literacy coaching.

**Literacy coaching in American schools.** Professional development for teachers was foundational in literacy reform. In response to the high demand for quality professional development across the country, school districts have invested fiscal resources to create positions for literacy coaches. Literacy coaching was designed as a vehicle to improve teacher quality, thus increasing students’ academic achievement and standardized test scores. Coaching is a popular model of ongoing professional development aimed at providing long-term support for teachers in learning and
implementing new instructional strategies (Poglinco et al., 2003). Coaching is quite different from other forms of professional development because it is job-embedded. Proponents believe that participating in coaching facilitates reflective learning opportunities, exposes teachers to best practices, and provides instructional support within real-world school contexts. In a typical literacy coaching project, this study coaches collaborate with teachers throughout the school year, addressing issues of teacher learning and classroom practice identified by the teacher, coach, or administrator. Despite the increased popularity of coaching and the great potential of professional development it has presented, there is little research documenting its effectiveness (Neufeld & Roper, 2003). In 2006, the International Reading Association (IRA) put forth standards for secondary literacy coaches. The IRA document outlined the requirements of secondary literary coaches, stating they, must be skillful collaborators, skillful job-embedded coaches, skillful evaluators of literary needs, and skillful instructional strategists (IRA, 2006).

Although literacy coaching was suggested as a means to increasing capacity there is a lack of research substantiating effectiveness. As noted in the IRA’s standards for secondary literacy coaches:

Ideally, before hiring new secondary literacy coaches, schools and districts would be able to consult a solid body of empirical research suggesting whether secondary literacy coaches were effective and what array of factors influences their effectiveness. Unfortunately, given the current demands of No Child Left Behind policies and the ever-present achievement gap in middle and high schools
around the United States, waiting for that body of research to be produced before committing to coaching is neither feasible nor wise (2006, p. 45).

This study addressed this limitation in the existing literature by looking at the ways literacy coaching has impacted teachers.

**Theoretical Rationale**

The proposed study was grounded in the theoretical construct of Bandura’s (1997) social cognitive learning theory - explicitly, his concept of self-efficacy. In addition, the study explored the practice of literacy coaching as a form of professional development. Bandura’s studies in regard to self-efficacy (1986, 1997) suggested that multiple factors affected the sense of efficacy of an individual. Bandura stated that efficacy is influenced by behavior, cognitive factors, personal factors, and the environment. Bandura organized these factors into two groups: outcome expectations and efficacy expectations. The degree to which the teacher believed the environment can be controlled defined the outcome expectancy. Bandura’s model supports the belief that a targeted action produces a specific outcome. The notion that the teacher is personally capable of successfully executing actions that would result in the desired outcome defined teacher expectation (Bandura, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984).

Teacher efficacy expectations explained the confidence teachers possess when carrying out their duties. According to Bandura, individuals who were confident in both areas of expectation were ensured greater success in their endeavors (Bandura 1986, 1997).

According to the literature, there are a number of factors that impact a teacher’s sense of self-efficacy. One of these factors is professional development. When
professional development is relevant to the teachers’ day-to-day situations, proponents believed it would enhance teacher motivation and increase effectiveness. The anticipated and end result increased the teacher’s capability to engage students more effectively in the learning process (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984).

**Study Significance**

McLaughlin (1986) identified the teacher as the most important resource in the schools. Therefore, developing teachers is important reading education reform. However, educational reform rooted in high-stakes testing and standards has increased focus on teachers’ performance. New legislation has provided funding for resources devoted to professional development. However, as noted earlier, appropriate selection and use of professional development resources called for research on the impact of different forms of professional development. Studies have reported a link between teacher self-efficacy and successful reform efforts, as well as instructional effectiveness (Hipp, 1996; Pajares, 1996). If teacher efficacy impacts student achievement it is natural that the variables of professional development be studied in relation to teachers’ efficacy.

**Purpose of the Study**

The central purpose of this study was to investigate whether or not literacy coaching in three similar middle schools contributed to the self-efficacy of the English Language Arts (ELA) teachers. This study also examined the effects of coaching on teachers’ instruction. In addition, this study examined whether or not literacy coaches increased teacher efficacy in the discipline of ELA. Data was collected using field observations, interviews, the administration of the Ohio-State Teacher Efficacy Scale survey (OSTES), research notes, and focus groups.
Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to answer the following questions.

1. Does teacher self-efficacy increase as a result of literacy coaching?

2. What aspects of the literacy coaching experience do teachers and coaches perceive as being the most influential and useful as well as being the least effective or useful?

3. Is there a change in delivery and execution of ELA instruction as a result of participating in the literacy coaching professional development activity?

This study had several purposes. First, to identify the degrees of teachers’ perceived efficacy. Second, to identify specific characteristics of the literacy coaching process that influence teacher efficacy. Third, to analyze and understand how coaching effects ELA instruction.

Definition of Terms

Adolescent Literacy—The “purposeful social and cognitive processes of reading that discover ideas and make meaning. It enables functions such as analysis, synthesis, organization, and evaluation. It fosters the expression of ideas and opinions and extends to understand how texts are created and how meanings are conveyed by various media and brought together in productive ways.” (NCTE, 2006, p. 5).

Professional Development—The systematic efforts to bring about change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and in the learning outcomes of students (Guskey, 2002).

Personal Teaching Efficacy (PTE)—A teacher’s belief that he or she can influence student learning (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993).
**General Teaching Efficacy**—A teacher’s belief in the power of teaching to overcome external student factors (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993).

**Teacher Efficacy**—A teacher’s belief in his or her ability to have a positive effect on student learning (Ashton, 1986).

**Self-Efficacy**—The belief that an individual has the ability to carry out certain actions that will result in a desired outcome (Bandura 1997).

**Chapter Summary**

Literacy is a critical and fundamental aspect of preparing students for future learning and successful adulthood. Students, families, communities, and neighborhoods cannot thrive without high rates of literacy (Morelle, 2010). Every day 3,000 students drop out of school in the United States (Joftus, 2002). This is partly attributed to their reading deficiencies and it also means those 3,000 students cut themselves off from opportunities to develop their literacy skills. In 2004 there were 8 million adolescents in the United States who were struggling with literacy (Biancrosa & Snow, 2004). Put succinctly, this nation is facing an educational crisis. Many of our students are unable to master the skill of reading by eighth grade. For the past 20 years, research has been devoted to early childhood literacy. Funding and research has been centralized in kindergarten through third grade reading instruction. It was assumed that if students master reading in the early grades it will transfer to upper elementary, middle, and high school. However, studies have shown that students encounter the “fourth grade slump” because they were unable to master nonfiction and high level texts (Chall et al., 1990). This slump led to disengagement and decreased efficacy in students. Students that fell behind in the middle school years did not catch up to peers. Further they showed lower
motivation for participating in reading activity across the content areas (Blanton et al., 2007).

As a result, middle school literacy has catapulted to the forefront of educational research. Middle school literacy can be the most difficult time in a child’s academic career. Reading in the middle school curriculum requires students to comprehend higher level texts and employ a variety of effective reading strategies. Middle school literacy is supported by elementary literacy skills. Students that do not have a strong literacy foundation find it more difficult to succeed in middle school. This results in middle school teachers providing remediation to middle school in addition to teaching middle school literacy skills. “The success of this agenda ultimately turns on teachers’ success in accomplishing the serious and difficult tasks of learning the skills and perspectives assumed by new visions of practice and unlearning the practices and beliefs about students and instruction that have dominated their professional lives to date” (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011, p. 1).

This study explored the practice of literacy coaching and its effect on the concept of teacher efficacy in teaching adolescent literacy by analyzing and understanding the ways in which literacy coaching affected English Language Arts Instruction in 3 urban middle schools. This research was presented as a mixed method study that attempted to capture perceptions of literacy coaching in an authentic manner. The researcher captured teacher perceptions of literacy coaching in an authentic setting by conducting a phenomenological study using a mixed method design. Chapter 3 contains a description of the study that included focus groups, interviews, observations, and field notes. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study and conclusions are offered in Chapter 5.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Many school districts faced by fiscal challenges are not equipped with the resources to implement quality, ongoing professional development and new initiatives. School districts across the United States have continually struggled with finding meaningful and effective professional development. The use of literacy coaching as a form of professional development may become a practical alternative for providing meaningful professional development resulting in increased teacher efficacy and student achievement.

The demand for literacy skills for students has increased over the years based on legislation and standards-based reform. Literacy has become the foundation of educational success. Political initiatives such as NCLB and Race to the Top require school districts to pour a large number of resources into reading instruction. These resources target elementary school literacy instruction. However, nationwide data suggests that as a country we are failing our adolescent students in the area of literacy instruction. Students at the middle school level that fall below grade level in reading manifest difficulties not only in reading, but also in other content areas. Professional development provides a crucial link between setting high standards and boosting student achievement (Elmore & Rothman, 2000).

Literacy coaching is a component of contemporary professional development approaches. Its popularity is attributed to the inclusion of teacher collaboration, job-embedded approach, teacher reflection and inquiry, change, and connections between
professional development goals and teachers’ day-to-day work (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1996). Coaching provides long-term support for teachers within real-world context and situations. Job-embedded professional development fosters meaningful support and guidance.

McLaughlin (1986) stated the most important person in the school is the teacher. However, school districts continually fail at improving their teachers as professionals. Research supports the idea that the teacher must be confident and empowered in order to be successful. Confidence and belief in oneself is defined as self-efficacy. This dissertation was formulated around the social cognitive learning theory of self-efficacy and the phenomenon of literacy coaching. Research was conducted linking teacher efficacy, reform efforts and instructional effectiveness (Hipp, 1996). Teacher efficacy has a direct impact on student achievement in the classroom (Armor et al., 1976; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Dembo & Gibson, 1984; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). However, variables such as support and professional development experiences play a role in the degree of efficacy that a teacher may possess. Professional development impacts efficacy. Low teacher efficacy in urban school districts is a result of the lack of professional development, limited school budget, lack of materials, deficiency in teacher support, and poor leadership. This study will detail how a professional development model called literacy coaching increased teachers’ self-efficacy in middle school literacy initiatives.

During this era of high-stakes accountability, the coaching process aims to stretch beyond ineffective staff development days and one-shot professional development sessions by engaging teachers in what research has identified as effective professional development. This study explored the phenomenon of literacy coaching by researching
the relationships, cultural effects, and academic effects of literacy coaching on middle school ELA teachers. Most of all the study explored how coaching affected the efficacy of teacher participants.

**Adolescent Literacy**

Adolescent literacy has become a crisis in American Education. Reports disseminated by the NAEP and an influential work entitled “A Nation at Risk” reported dismal statistics for middle and high school students, revealing that many of America’s students are struggling readers. These documents stated that “about 13 percent of all 17-year-olds in the United States could be considered functionally illiterate” and the “functional literacy among minority youth may run as high as 40 percent” (p. 11) This data raised concerns about adolescents’ ability to read and be productive citizens.

Adolescent literacy has moved toward the forefront of educational reform because of studies such as those mentioned above. It has gained increased attention as additional studies have illustrated that quality reading instruction in grades kindergarten through third grade does not guarantee that students will be successful the rest of their educational career. Snow and Moje (2010) call this the “inoculation fallacy,” referring to the myth that suggests early reading is a “vaccination” that permanently protects against reading failure (Snow & Moje, 2010).

According to Burns (2008), reports that have continually stated American schools are in crisis do more damage than support the cause. Students have been labeled by their high-stakes test scores, and terms such as “struggling readers” coupled with those standardized test-scores tend to decrease the efficacy of students. Hearing failure messages attributes to low-achievement and disengagement of students (Burns, 2008).
Alvermann (2002) affirms those students who have been labeled “struggling” exhibit literacy skills outside of school. As a society we want our students to be highly literate in school and out of school. Research suggests schools should begin to change their approach to adolescent literacy to accomplish this goal. By including pop culture, computers, contemporary literature, cellular phones, and content-area text, student engagement will be increased (Burns, 2008, Faggella et al., 2009, Blanton et al., 2007).

In 1999 the International Reading Association (IRA) issued a position statement on adolescent literacy. This paper emphasized the need for increased attention on adolescent literacy. According to the IRA (1999), adolescents need to ready critically in order to survive in a world that will do more reading than any other generation in history. In addition, the IRA introduced the idea that adolescent literacy was just as important as early childhood literacy. In order for adolescent literacy to improve, teachers must be trained in the areas of reading and literacy.

The National Council of Teachers of English (2006) defined adolescent literacy as “more than reading and writing.” Adolescent literacy is quite different from early childhood literacy. Adolescent literacy is diverse in nature and requires multiple instructional approaches (Conley & Hinchman, 2004). In 1999, the International Reading Association (IRA) issued a statement highlighting the need for services in adolescent literacy, not just early-childhood literacy (Moore, Bean, Birdyshaw, & Rycik, 1999). This position was published approximately two years before NCLB. However, the legislation failed to provide enough funding for reading in grades four through twelve (Conley & Hinchman, 2004).
IRA outlined principles to describe adolescent literacy growth, and also differentiated between the literacy needs and development of students during their early childhood years versus students in their adolescent years. It has been frequently referred to as the “read to learn, learn to read” premise. IRA emphasizes that students learn to read in Grades K–3, throughout Grades 4–8 students read to acquire knowledge. As a result, students in their adolescent years must be engaged in various forms of literacy to learn new information. Teachers need to have a clear understanding of literacy strategies. It is important that teachers are able to teach students how to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate texts.

**Middle School Literacy**

Improving adolescent readers means directly improving instruction from fourth through eighth grade. Middle school literacy in particular is focused on grades 6 through 8. The abundance of literacy research has been concentrated in early reading education. Due to the negligence of middle schools, secondary teachers have received sparse and ineffective professional development in the area of literacy. Resources, instructional programs, and literature are also scarce in the area of middle school literacy. The assumption has been made that students are able to read and comprehend text by the time they enter middle school. Therefore, what little professional development and resources that have been offered addresses the use of on-level literacy materials, not remediation and literacy development.

Twenty-first century learning demands that literacy instruction must change. Students in middle school possess different skills and experiences, which require teachers to differentiate across multiple types of literacy. Langer (1999) found that middle schools
that are low-performing do not engage students. Langer’s research found a major reason that contributes to poor literacy skills in middle schools is disengagement. Many school districts have purchased pre-packaged instructional programs, workbooks, and kits to teach reading. This is a façade of learning, and Blanton et al. (2007) refer to this as the “appearance of learning.” These programs fail to engage middle school students in a variety of activities that will stimulate them both cognitively and socially, as social learning is an important part of adolescent literacy. Engaged learners learn better and retain more than those less engaged (Burns, 2008).

Adolescents need exposure to multiple forms of literacy that relate to their home, school and community. In particular, more work needs to be done to understand and support adolescents in classroom, school, and community contexts (Conley & Hinchman, 2004). Middle school teachers have been unable to meet the needs of adolescent learners. They have employed lecture, round robin reading, recitations, and dictation to impart literacy instruction. American education has been unable to remediate middle school learners. Relying on pull-out programs that provide early literacy strategies proved to be harmful for middle school students (Blanton et al., 2007). Unfortunately, early elementary reading strategies rarely have a place in middle schools. Middle school teachers must build on the experiences and the knowledge of middle school students in order to remediate (Pitcher et al., 2010). Intervention given to students must be aligned with the needs of the students, not state standards. State standards and high-stakes testing make it difficult to address student needs. Ehren (2009), in a study of adolescent reading, found that secondary teachers were reluctant to do anything that did not align with state
standards and high-stakes testing because it took time away from quality reading instruction.

Quality reading instruction for adolescents must have both critical and social aspects. Middle school students learn by participating in the reading activity, and learn reading strategies from modeling and interacting with texts and peers. These students learned from rich discussion and modeling of teaching (Alvermann, 2002). Unlike early childhood readers, middle school students’ reading knowledge must be embedded within the overall task. Reading instruction should not be explicit at all times. Teachers must create opportunities that require students to decide when and how to use their literacy skills. As explained by Blanton et al. (2007), basic literacy activities for adolescents should include cooperative learning, journal writing, computer games, web quests, and literature circles. Reciprocal teaching and Question-Answer-Response are critical reading strategies which engage students and increase critical reading skills.

Reading reform efforts to address the needs of adolescents have all required professional development for teachers. Professional development of middle school literacy teachers would increase their knowledge of adolescent reading, instructional strategies, differentiation, integration of technology, and intervention. Hiring literacy coaches is critical to a school level literacy action plan. When implementing new literacy initiatives in secondary schools, literacy coaches help provide qualified teachers that understand adolescent literacy needs (Forgeson et al., 2007).

Literacy coaches have been placed in middle schools to share their knowledge of literacy in order to strengthen the practice and knowledge base of content area teacher. Coaches involved in school-wide professional development plans focused on more than
the English classroom. Coaches are required to navigate across the various literacy settings. Students in middle school experience literacy in all subjects. Therefore, literacy coaches must support teachers in English classes, content area classes, and elective classes. Students in middle school encounter content area literacy, second language literacy, reading intervention, and English literature for varied amounts of time.

Coaches are faced with the arduous task of supporting content area teachers with reading instruction. Most teachers do not feel reading skills are taught in content-area classes, and that without more coordination and shared planning time, the development of school wide reading programs will continue to struggle (Gee & Forester, 1988). Coaches may also face issues of inadequate preparation of content-area teachers to teach reading, or of resistance to devoting class time to teaching reading skills and strategies in science, math, or social studies classes.

When reading is taught in middle schools, it tends to neglect higher-level thinking and reading skills, addressing instead lower-level skills in isolation (Langer, 2001). Coaches may have to make a concerted effort to provide support in the areas of questioning and critical thinking. This is the responsibility of all middle school teachers. Critical analysis is a school-wide reform that challenges coaches across the nation. Continuous professional development during department and staff meetings will help critical thinking become pervasive throughout the school building. The ultimate goal of the middle school coach is to prepare each teacher to teach reading.
Adult Learning Theory

In order to ensure that teachers acquire the skills knowledge to incorporate literacy strategies into their daily practice, the professional development that is offered by the coach must be relevant and meaningful to teachers. In the context of literacy coaching, teachers are the learners, and therefore adult learning must be considered as the literacy coach prepares and executes professional development. An integral part of being an effective literacy coach means understanding how adults learn best. The adult educator Malcolm Knowles (1977) developed the concept of andragogy, which is defined as the “art and science of helping adults learn” (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, p. 61).

The adult learning theory comes from the organizational development field, where the main goal was to provide employees with the tools they needed to perform better in the workplace (Kenner & Weinerman, 2011). In essence, adult learning theory was developed to make sure the needs of adult learners were met. In the field of education this directly related to professional development as a means to improving instruction. Literacy coaches must be well-versed in the adult learning theory in order deliver meaningful professional development to staff. The adult learning theory provides clear guidelines for increasing adults’ knowledge.

Staff development for teachers should incorporate instructional strategies consistent with adult learning theory by emphasizing the need for resources to support adult learners and instructional strategies specific to adult learning such as collaboration, reflection and problem solving around real life issues. Grant, Young, and Montbriand (2001) emphasized the need for continued support for the adult learner.
In 1974, Malcolm Knowles developed the theory of andragogy. Andragogy emphasizes the process of teaching over the content that is being taught, and suggests that the process should draw upon the experiences of adults. Pioneered by Knowles (1970, 1993), the theory identified characteristics of adult learning. Knowles (1978) asserted that adults possessed interests and abilities that were different than children.

Knowles’ (1978) adult learning begins with the contextual experiences of adults. Knowles understood that adults, unlike children, have accumulated life experiences which need to be connected to learning. Experiences at work, with family, during their childhood, and during recreation all contribute to how an adult learns. In essence, life is education and education is life.

Knowles (1978) identified the main components of adult learning as follows:

1. Adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs and interests that learning will satisfy; these are, therefore, the appropriate starting points for organizing adult learning activities.

2. Adults’ orientation to learning is life-centered, and therefore the appropriate units for organizing adult learning are life situations, not subjects.

3. Experience is the richest resource for adults' learning; therefore, the core methodology of adult education is the analysis of experience.

4. Adults have a deep need to be self-directing; therefore, the role of the teacher is to engage in a process of mutual inquiry with them rather than to transmit his or her knowledge to them and then evaluate their conformity to it.
5. Individual differences among people increase with age; therefore, adult 
education must make optimal provision for differences in style, time, place, and pace of 
learning.

The autonomy of the adult observed by Knowles led him to conclude that during 
adult learning experiences the literacy coach must provide opportunities for teachers to 
construct their own learning opportunities through facilitation and group interaction.

Most important to Knowles’ adult learning theory (1989) was the idea in which 
practical and relevant goals must be set and outlined from the inception of the 
professional development experience. Teachers as adult learners need to be motivated, 
engaged, able to self-regulate their learning, able to problem solve as a central focus of 
learning, and reflect on the learning experience. For adults to be motivated they must be 
engaged in a learning process where they focus on solving their own immediate 
problems. Lyons and Pinnell (2001) identify seven characteristics of teachers as adult 
learners including a vast knowledge base, experience, and a wide range of skills; acquired 
ideas, beliefs, and values; strongly held ideas about learning; a strong goal-oriented 
perspective in which the adult is focused on solving immediate problems; high 
expectations of the professional development experience; multiple commitments and time 
constraints; and motivation to learn.

According to Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998), high quality professional 
development programs for teachers should include teacher involvement in planning; a 
connection between the goals of the professional development program and the school’s 
goals; discussion and reflection; attention to the background knowledge of participants; 
and application of the concepts and practices learned in the classroom. All of this was
rooted in Knowles’ (1978) adult learning theory. Adult learning should consist of discussion and cooperative learning supported by lecture and meaningful projects. Adult learning must be purposeful and relevant to contextual factors. A democratic means of learning must be employed to achieve teachers’ engagement in the professional development process.

Literacy coaches implemented components of the adult learning theory by providing teachers with opportunities to learn in an environment where the particular needs of the adult learner were recognized and addressed (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Lyons & Pinnell, 2001; National Staff Development Council, 2001).

The history of teacher efficacy. In 1963, Bandura and Walters wrote Social Learning and Personality Development, broadening the frontiers of social learning theory with the principles of observational learning and explicit reinforcement. By the 1970s, Bandura became aware that a key element was missing from the social learning theory. In 1977, with the publication of “Self-efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change,” he identified the important piece of that missing element—self-beliefs.

The study of teacher efficacy is a little over two decades old and began with RAND researchers’ evaluation of whether teachers believed they could control the reinforcement of their actions (Armor et al., 1976). This early work was founded on Rotter’s (1966) locus of control theory, and it was assumed that student learning and motivation were predictors of teaching action.

Historically, the Bandura (1977) and Rotter (1966) traditions have influenced the study of teacher efficacy. Unfortunately, researchers’ interpretations of these theories
have resulted in significant inconsistencies in the theoretical formulation of teacher efficacy and the measure of teacher efficacy.

With the publication of *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory*, Bandura (1986) advanced a view of human function that accords a central role to cognitive, vicarious, self-regulatory, and self-reflective processes in human adaptation and change. From this theoretical perspective, human function was viewed as the result of a dynamic interplay of personal, behavioral, and environmental influences. For example, how people interpret the results of their own behavior informs and alters their environments and the personal factors they possess which, in turn, inform and alter subsequent behavior. This was the foundation of Bandura’s (1986) conception of *reciprocal determinism*, the view that (a) personal factors in the form of cognition, affect, and biological events, (b) behavior, and (c) environmental influences create interactions that result in a *triadic reciprocality*. Bandura altered the label of his theory from social learning to social *cognitive*, both to detach it from prevalent social learning theories of the day and to emphasize that cognition plays a critical role in people's capability to construct reality, self-regulate, encode information, and perform behaviors (Bandura, 2003).

**Self-Efficacy**

According to the Knowles andragogy and adult learning theory (1970, 1993), motivation and building social relationships are necessary elements for acquisition of material. According to Bandura (1997) intrinsic motivation in the form of self-efficacy drives the belief in oneself. This belief supersedes the actual skill of the individual.
Efficacy is an integral part of teaching effectively. Teaching middle school often can be perceived as difficult. Literacy coach positions were designed to support middle school teachers in their pursuit of engaging and standards-based lessons. In addition, coaching should increase teacher efficacy through providing strategies for self-reflection and self-motivation. If literacy coaches do not have confidence in their own content and pedagogical knowledge, then they will be unable to be an effective literacy coach.

Pang and Sablan (1998) asserted that teacher efficacy has been found to be a multi-dimensional construct that includes how confidently teachers view their personal abilities to be effective teachers and their expectations about the influence of teaching on student learning. As a literacy coach, it is imperative to understand the dimensions of teacher efficacy. To increase student ability coaches must first provide teachers with strategies to engage students and deliver instruction, then guide the teachers through implementation and self-reflection.

Bandura (1986) noted that a key assumption underlying self-efficacy was a difference between having the skills to perform a task and using the skills in a variety of circumstances. Bandura suggested two types of expectancies. These expectancies explain the actions of an individual. Bandura explains the actions of individuals through outcome expectancy and self-efficacy expectancy. Bandura further explained that outcome expectancy was an individual’s anticipation that a given action could lead to a certain positive or negative outcome, whereas efficacy expectancy was a person’s judgment of his or her capability to perform the skills required for the given outcome. An important goal of literacy coaches is to ensure that teachers possess the necessary skill set to deliver instruction and are able to apply those skills to differentiate instruction.
Pang and Sablan (1998) proposed that a teacher’s self-efficacy determines whether a teacher will be successful. Bandura (1986) asserted that perceived self-efficacy was defined as a person’s judgment of his or her capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances. Lee (2002) suggested that perceived confidence judgments concerning teaching competence are a reflection of teacher efficacy beliefs. Teacher efficacy was not concerned with the skills one has, but the judgments of what one can do with whatever skills one possesses. These judgments of personal efficacy were distinguished from response-outcome expectations. Bandura (1986) noted that perceived self-efficacy was a judgment of one’s capability to accomplish a certain level of performance, whereas an outcome expectation was a judgment of the likely consequence of such behavior will produce.

**Teacher efficacy.** *Teacher efficacy* is defined as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 2003). Efficacious teachers plan more, persist longer with students who struggle, and are less critical of student errors. Teachers who believe they will be successful on a given task are more likely to adopt challenging goals, try harder to achieve them, persist despite challenges, and develop coping mechanisms. Teachers who believe they possess the ability to affect student learning and achievement positively are more willing to implement challenging strategies to achieve with their students. Teacher efficacy contributes to student achievement because teachers with high efficacy use effective classroom management strategies and teaching methods, thereby increasing student results and quality of teaching. Research indicates that teacher efficacy is an
important influence on teacher performance. Therefore, it is necessary to develop ways of increasing teacher efficacy for in-service teachers.

Bandura (1997) proposed the notion “because self-efficacy beliefs were explicitly self-referent in nature and directed toward perceived abilities given specific tasks, they were powerful predictors of behavior.” Bandura has divided efficacy into four integral components: verbal persuasion, vicarious experiences, physiological arousal, and mastery experiences. Efficacy is a universal term for the psychological components of self-actualization, which determines self-confidence.

More specific to this study, Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk (1998) defined teacher efficacy as a teacher’s “judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated”. Teacher efficacy is measured and determined by various efficacy scales and measurements. These include, but are not limited to, the Gibson and Dembo Teacher Efficacy Scale, the Ohio-State Teacher Efficacy Scale, the Teacher Efficacy Scale, and the Science Teaching Efficacy Belief Instrument. These instruments measure teacher self-efficacy, student perception, instruction, and teacher expertise.

Assessments and evaluations in this field are constructed around the locus of control theory and the self-efficacy theory. Developed by Rotter in 1954, the locus of control theory suggests an individual believes they are able to control what happens in their life. This theory also assumed an individual is cognizant of what causes good or bad results in a general or specific area of their immediate world. The self-efficacy theory developed by Bandura in 1994 suggested a person’s belief about their ability in an action
was necessary to accomplish a specific or given goal. Both theories deduce that an individual’s innate belief has an influence on their confidence and performance.

According to the research (Goddard 2000), the Teacher Efficacy Scale is one of the most widely used measurement tools for measuring efficacy. Goddard’s utilization of both the locus of control theory and the self-efficacy theory in designing the Teacher Efficacy Scale provided more balanced findings when measuring implicit and explicit performance outcomes; the results were more well-rounded, valid, and reliable.

Goddard’s research in 2000 was disputed by Browers and Tomic in 2003. They studied the factorial validity of the Teacher Efficacy Scale using 540 practicing teachers. After eliminating three poorly loaded items, the model's fit improved significantly but insufficiently to reach the fit criterion. It was concluded that the Teacher Efficacy Scale in its current state is not suitable to obtain precise and valid information about teacher efficacy beliefs.

Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy sought to create the Ohio-State Teacher Efficacy Scale with the goal of increasing construct validity. After two trials they were successful. The Ohio-State Teacher Efficacy Scale measures the four constructs of Bandura’s social cognitive theory with a score reliability of .82.

Providing support to the construct of teacher-efficacy are the indirect investigations by Brookover et al. (1978). Also, Brophy and Everston (1977) studied social-psychological variables that set schools of similar socioeconomic standards and racial composition apart based on students’ academic performance. This study found teachers who demonstrated instructional commitment to students and consistently gave
students positive reinforcement, nurtured higher-achieving students (Brookover et al., 1978).

Armor et al. (1976) conducted a study that involved twenty Los Angeles elementary schools participating in a specific reading program focused on the classroom practices of the teachers who successfully improved reading scores. It was shown that teacher efficacy positively affected black children’s reading scores (Armor et al., 1976). Alderman (1999) maintained that high-efficacy teachers were more likely to innovate and change their teaching practice. Ashton and Webb (1986) found that teachers with high efficacy tend to differ in their interactions with students with respect to teaching practice. High-efficacy teachers had a tendency to hold students accountable for their performance and develop supportive trusting relationships with students. Lee (2002) stated that the study of teacher efficacy has become an important area of research in the field of education, and research studies have linked teacher efficacy to the improvement of various dimensions of schooling. Lee further stated that teacher efficacy was a powerful construct related to student outcomes such as student achievement and motivation.

Bandura (1986) maintained that efficacious teachers strongly believed in their ability to promote learning and consequently create mastery experiences for their students. Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk, and Hoy (1998) stated that teacher efficacy refers to a teacher’s belief in his or her capability to organize and execute courses of action required to accomplish successfully a specific teaching task in particular context. Furthermore, Bandura (1986) suggested that a strong, positive sense of teacher efficacy has been associated with teachers’ classroom behaviors, including willingness to try a variety of materials and approaches, increased lesson planning and organization. He
noted that teacher efficacy has been also linked to student motivation, students’ positive attitudes toward school, optimistic perspectives about subject matter taught, and improved self-direction.

Likewise, Sparks (1987) reported that high efficacy in teachers led to a greater willingness to try new methods, see the importance of training in new practices, and use these new practices in the classroom. The relationship of teacher efficacy and student confidence in academic performance underscores the importance of teacher efficacy, because teacher efficacy affects the instructional methods used by teachers and students (Alvermann, 1999). Therefore, as a middle school literacy coach, understanding the concept of teacher efficacy will maximize the coach’s influence.

**The many definitions of teacher efficacy.** Based on Bandura’s (1977) cognitive social learning theory of self-efficacy, teacher efficacy is generally identified as a teacher’s belief in his or her capabilities and influence as a teacher. The theoretical foundation of self-efficacy is found in social cognitive theory, developed by former APA president (1974) and current Stanford professor Albert Bandura (1977, 1997). Bandura’s work began with self-efficacy in 1977 and then grew into specific forms that have been influential in many of the basic and applied social sciences. In the field of education, research related self-efficacy beliefs influence academic performance and self-regulated learning (Pajares, 1996).

Bandura (1997) proposed that because self-efficacy beliefs were powerful predictors of behavior because they were explicitly self-referent in nature and directed toward perceived abilities to accomplish specific tasks. The research on factors associated with, for example, teacher self-efficacy, is relatively strong, indicating that many of the
desirable outcomes of schooling are better accomplished by teachers with high self-efficacy. The same, however, is not true of efforts to define and measure self-efficacy. Throughout the course of research on this topic there have been many definitions of teacher efficacy and not all of them have been consistent with each other. Chacon (2005) defined teacher efficacy as teachers’ judgments on their capabilities to bring about student change even among difficult or unmotivated students. This definition thus focuses on the beliefs of teachers about their ability to successfully teach. In contrast, Friedman and Kass (2002) defined teacher efficacy as the teacher’s perception of his or her ability to perform required professional tasks, regulate relations involved in the process of teaching students, and perform organizational tasks. In this definition the focus is on the ability to perform professional actions and behaviors. Finally, Ghaith and Shaaban (1999) stated that personal teaching efficacy is the teachers’ own expectations that they will be able to perform the actions that lead to students learning, and general efficacy is the belief that the teacher population’s ability to perform actions is not limited by factors beyond school control. Here, there is more emphasis on what teachers hope or expect they can do rather than the level of confidence they have in either the ability to teach successfully or properly perform the actions of professional teaching.

Ross (2003) warns that individual studies may be using different conceptions and definitions of teacher efficacy, which results in inappropriate comparisons across empirical studies. Given that there is no single universal definition of teacher efficacy the definition used in this dissertation is developed in the next sections.

The components of teacher efficacy. While there are competing definitions of the construct of self-efficacy, a large portion of the research and professional practice
literature has been based on definitions similar to one developed by Bandura: “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 2003). The definition of teacher efficacy used in this study was based on Bandura general definition of self-efficacy. Bandura’s theory of teacher efficacy has two parts. The first stated that teacher efficacy included the belief that educators, and education, can make a difference in the life of a student. The second states the particular teacher with high teacher efficacy believes she or he can make a difference in the lives of students. These two components were named the dimension of outcome expectation and the dimension of efficacy expectations. Bandura’s dimension of outcome expectations suggests that people can believe that certain actions will produce certain results. The teacher must believe he or she can be a successful teacher. Bandura believed high or low teacher efficacy has very important consequences. He argued that if people do not feel capable of performing the actions of a profession like teaching they may neither initiate nor persist in them. Many of the definitions of teacher efficacy in currently in the literature are consistent and parallel with Bandura’s two dimensional construct of teacher efficacy.

Bandura (1997) proposed the notion that “because self-efficacy beliefs were explicitly self-referent in nature, and directed toward perceived abilities given specific tasks, they were powerful predictors of behavior (p. 4).” Bandura has further divided efficacy into four integral components: verbal persuasion, vicarious experiences, physiological arousal, and mastery experiences. Efficacy is also a commonly used term for the psychological components of self-actualization, which determines self-confidence.
**Measuring this type of teacher efficacy.** Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk (1998) defined teacher efficacy as a teacher’s “judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated.” As noted by Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk, teacher efficacy was measured and determined by various efficacy scales and measurements. These include, but were not limited to, the Gibson and Dembo Teacher Efficacy Scale, the Ohio-State Teacher Efficacy Scale, the Teacher Efficacy Scale, and the Science Teaching Efficacy Belief Instrument. Subscales on these instruments measured the broad concept of teacher self-efficacy and narrower constructs such as, student perception of teacher efficacy, instructional components of a teacher’s role, and teacher expertise.

Many of the instruments used to measure teacher efficacy have used Bandura’s self-efficacy theory, but other theories have also been used. For example, assessments and evaluations in this field have been build locus of control theory. This theory was developed by Rotter in 1954 when he developed the concept of “locus of control.” Some people have an “internal” locus of control which means they believe that when something good or bad happens in, for example, the work they are doing, their behaviors are responsible for what happened. On the other hand, people with an external locus of control tend to believe they have little or no control over what happens in their life. Thus they tend to explain the reasons behind a positive, or negative, event was being due to external factors. For example, when they receive a promotion (or are fired), people with an external locus of control may explain it by saying “my boss really likes me for some reason” (or, “my boss has it in for me because I’m a ____”). Both self-efficacy theory
and locus of control theory put a great deal of emphasis on the importance and impact a person’s beliefs have.

**Studies of teacher efficacy.** Armor et al. (1976) conducted a study that involved 20 Los Angeles elementary schools participating in a specific reading program focused on the classroom practices of those who successfully improved reading scores. The study showed that teacher efficacy positively affected Black children’s reading scores (Armor, et al., 1976). This idea that high teacher efficacy is associated with better academic outcomes has been reported in many studies. For example, Alvermann (1999) maintained that high-efficacy teachers were more likely to innovate and change their teaching practices. Ashton and Webb (1986) found that teachers with high efficacy tended to differ in their interactions with students with respect to teaching practice. High-efficacy teachers had a tendency to hold students accountable for their performance and to develop supportive trusting relationships with students. Lee (2002) stated that the study of teacher efficacy has become an important area of research in the field of education, and research studies have linked teacher efficacy to the improvement of various dimensions of schooling. Likewise, Sparks (1987) reported that high efficacy in teachers led to a greater willingness to try new methods, to value training in new practices, and to value help to implement these new practices in the classroom. The relationship between teacher efficacy and confidence in academic performance underscores the importance of teacher efficacy, because teacher efficacy affects the instructional methods used by teachers and students (Alvermann, 1999).

**The effects of teacher efficacy.** Regarding teacher behaviors, efficacious teachers persisted with struggling students and criticized less after incorrect student
answers (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). These teachers were both more likely to agree that
students with low socioeconomic status (SES) should be placed in regular education
settings, and less likely to refer students for special education (Podell & Soodak, 1993).
Teachers with high efficacy tend to experiment with methods of instruction, seek
improved teaching methods, and experiment with instructional materials (Allinder &
Guskey, 1994). Coladarci (1992) observed higher professional commitment among
efficacious teachers.

The idea that teachers’ self-beliefs were determinants of teaching behavior is a
simple yet powerful idea. In the research literature there are many correlates of teacher
efficacy even though the research uses a diverse range of efficacy scales and
measurements. Students of efficacious teachers generally have outperformed students in
other classes. Teacher efficacy was predictive of achievement on the Iowa Test of Basic
Skills (Moore & Esselman, 1992), the Canadian Achievement Tests (Anderson, Greene,
& Loewen, 1988), and the Ontario Assessment Instrument Pool (Ross, 1992). Watson
(1991) also observed greater achievement in rural, urban, majority Black, and majority
White schools for students of efficacious teachers.

Teacher efficacy is also related to students’ own sense of efficacy (Goddard, Hoy,
& Hoy, 2000). Researchers in psychology, the social sciences, and education continue to
use both qualitative and quantitative research methods to study teacher efficacy. The
social cognitive theory has not been disputed due to the abundance of research provided
in the past twenty years. However, research is still needed to identify the relationships
between staff development efforts and teacher efficacy as well as professional practice
and teacher efficacy.
Professional Development

The focus of this research, literacy coaching, is a form of adult education that is generally referred to as professional development. Many educators consider professional development to be one of the keys to improving instruction and the quality of American schools. Implementing new initiatives requires teacher learning that will lead to more effective instruction. Professional development has often taken the form of graduate course work, outside conferences, or several days set aside in the school calendar for teachers’ “special” events. In essence, these were one-shot workshops, piecemeal information, or learning that bore no relevance to the teachers’ classroom life (Darling-Hammond, 1996; Guskey, 2000)

Professional development can come in many forms: workshops, conferences, coaching, webinars, and courses. Professional development may also take place during the execution of a lesson, while creating a curriculum, or reading a professional journal (Desimone, 2011). Professional development that institutes a change in teacher performance is an ongoing process. Desimone listed the following core values of good professional development:

1. Professional development should focus on the subject matter of the content and the manner in which students learn that content.

2. The activities included in professional development should involve teachers actively participating in discussing, presenting, and analyzing student work.

3. Professional development should not be isolated. It should be consistent with professional development offered on the school, district, and state level.
4. Quality professional development should be spread over a semester and not concentrated into a single seminar.

Finally, Desimone (2011) stated that professional development should be administered to groups of teachers from the same grade, subject, or school. This would build collegiality and school-wide reform. Garet et al. (2001) supported this claim in a nationwide research study of professional development. The research indicated that professional development should be a part of a coherent program of teacher learning (Garet et al., 2001).

One of the trends in American education today is a reduced emphasis on “in-service” and “pre-service” professional development along with an increased emphasis on job-embedded professional development that requires teachers to critically reflect on their practices (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011). Job-embedded professional development like literacy coaching requires teachers to integrate learning to use new approaches and methods with their day to day practice in the classroom. Guskey (2002) emphasized that the purpose of professional development is to institute a change. For teachers, the change will expand their knowledge base, support growth, and enhance effectiveness with students. (Guskey, 2002) emphasized the importance of professional development. Contrary to many assumptions, teachers view professional development as among the most promising and most readily available routes to growth on the job (Fullan, 1993).

Professional development programs such as literacy coaching may thus be a valid alternative to traditional professional development that is both appealing to teachers and also a way to help them bridge any gaps between their current professional practice and
best practices in their area of teaching. Literacy coaching is one way to accomplish two important aspects of professional development that were noted by Joyce and Showers (1981). They believed we must consider not only how to help teachers acquire and improve their skills, but also how to help them integrate those skills into their active repertoire. By their nature traditional in-service workshops are theoretical in nature. In order for implementation of innovations in adolescent literacy to occur there must be an active form of professional development. Curriculum literature and research suggests that both coaching and psychological support from a cohort are important contributors to implementation of innovations.

Sparks and Horsley (1989) spear-headed the movement in professional development, creating the five models of staff development for teachers. As school districts implemented some of the first professional development models, Sparks and Horsley (1989) found the main forms of professional development were; (a) individually guided staff development, (b) observation/assessment, (c) involvement in development and improvement processes, (d) training, and (e) inquiry. Individually guided staff development occurred with or without formal staff development. This type of staff development was done individually with activities such as reading a journal (Sparks & Horsley, 1989). Teachers participating in individually guided professional development understood their learning needs and possessed the ability to support those needs. Observation and assessment took the form of peer coaching and clinical observation (Sparks & Horsley, 1989). Many teachers were reluctant to participate in this form of staff development because they felt it was evaluative. As teachers engaged in the development of curriculum, or worked in a group to solve instructional problems, they
supported their own learning. Training took the form of workshops, retreats, and/or conferences on the local and national level that increased the knowledge of the teacher (Sparks & Horsley, 1989).

Joyce and Showers (1987) determined that training is an effective means of professional development if facilitators employ group discussion, cooperative learning, and lecture. These forms of professional development make schools a place for learning. Hawley and Valli (1996) found in their research that once a school becomes a place dedicated to the learning of all students and teachers, it will begin to improve.

Guskey (2000) proposed that professional development was a model of teacher change. According to Guskey, “professional development programs based on the assumption when changes in attitudes and beliefs comes first are typically designed to gain acceptance, commitment, and enthusiasm from teachers and school administrators before the implementation of new practices or strategies” (Guskey, 2002, p. 383).

This described the methodology of literacy coaching. Literacy coaching provides the gateway for change. As coaches interact with teachers they model the positive results of the educational reform. Teachers then continue to work with the coach to implement new strategies or programs within their classroom. This is the critical point where the experience of successful implementation changes teachers’ attitudes and beliefs. They believe it works because they have seen it work, and that experience shapes their attitudes and beliefs (Guskey, 2002). As a result, professional development increases teacher efficacy as teachers work with a literacy coach.
What Do We Know About Coaching?

Joyce and Showers (1981, 1982) concluded that coaching facilitates the transfer of training in two forms; learning new skills or fine tuning existing skills. Technical coaching helps teachers transfer training in new skills or knowledge into their classroom practice. This form of coaching was based upon the premise that certain teachers or individuals have expertise or experience from which others can learn. The most popular forms of expert coaching include literacy coaches, mentor teachers, or demonstration teachers (Ackland, 1991).

Challenge coaching is a variation used by teams of teachers to solve recurring problems in instructional design or delivery (e.g., implementing a new ELA curriculum, implementing new strategies, or supporting struggling readers). Collegial, or reciprocal, coaching is used primarily to refine teaching practice by deepening collegiality, increasing the professional dialog, and helping teachers to be more reflective with regards to their teaching practice (Garmston, 1987). Reciprocal coaching fosters a reciprocal relationship between two teachers and is most often associated with collegial or challenge coaching. Most forms of reciprocal coaching involve teachers volunteering to learn or refine the application of skills and knowledge simultaneously, to watch each other try the strategies out in the classroom, and then to give each other constructive feedback (Ackland, 1991). Johnston and Wilder (1992) conducted a study which found teachers who implemented a peer coaching model were more successful in implementing new reading and writing programs. Their success was measured by their levels of engagement, teacher efficacy, and student outcomes. It was found that teachers needed an identical learning environment to that of their students. Books, small group discussions, mentors,
opportunities to display knowledge, and colleagues to challenge were incorporated into
the peer coaching model researched by Johnston and Wilder (1992). Overall the available
research suggests that the peer coaching model was very effective in changing ELA
instruction because it first changed the teachers’ attitudes, then increased efficacy, and
finally attempted to improve practice.

Correspondingly, Heydon et al. (2004) provided insight into strategies to support
balanced literacy instruction during a study of two teachers. One teacher was an in-
service teacher and the other a pre-service teacher. Both teachers required additional
support to implement Balanced Literacy. In both instances a team of peers were required
to “coach” these teachers and provide them with feedback and ideas to improve
instruction. The “coaches” first established positive reinforcement to empower the
teacher and then provided useful feedback on instructional practices. Therefore, it is my
goal to investigate and examine the relationship between teacher efficacy and
professional development as well as whether or not there will be an increase in teacher
proficiency with delivery and implementation of the innovations of ELA.

Peer coaching can serve as an alternative to assist in making changes and transfer
of professional development to practice. The two ideas are linked by the premise that the
beliefs and attitudes of the teacher must change before the implementation of new skills,
strategies, and programs. As Kohler puts it, “Unlike some other methods of collaboration,
peer coaching was specifically designed to foster teachers’ development and acclimation
of new instructional practices in the classroom (Kohler, 1997). Implementing the peer
coaching model can serve as a reference and a form of professional development that will
lead to meaningful change. Teachers learn from one another by professional discussion,
observation, and modeling. Utilizing peer coach has a form of professional development supports the implementation of new teaching initiatives. The instances where teachers transfer training to practice will dramatically increase because it will gain acceptance, commitment, and enthusiasm from teachers and school administrators (Slater & Simmons 2001).

**Literacy Coaching**

Literacy coaching is a component of educational reform targeted at bridging the gap in secondary schools. It has continued to gain momentum over the last five years as school districts across the nation implement coaching (Campbell & Sweiss, 2010). America spends millions of dollars placing coaches in secondary schools with the hope that this will revolutionize instruction and increase student achievement.

Instructional coaching has been identified as a relatively new and increasingly popular form of professional development (Dole & Donaldson, 2006; Toll, 2005). Literacy coaches are placed in schools to broaden the instructional repertoires of teachers and increasing student engagement (Gross, 2010). However, this mission has dated as far back as the 1930s (Bean, 2004) with the titles “instructional coach,” “instructional specialist,” and “language arts” facilitator. (Mraz et al., 2009)

Coaching, reading instruction, and professional development are the increased roles and responsibilities of reading teachers. Garmston (1987) referred to this as technical coaching. This type of coaching insists that a practicing teacher provide literacy support to a variety of teachers, in a variety of instructional areas. This gave birth to literacy coaching as we know it (Cassidy et al., 2010). During the early years of coaching, reading teachers who provided professional development opportunities to peers
were called literacy coaches. These reading specialists began spending less time
instructing struggling readers and more time providing on-going professional and support
to teachers. Instructional coaching incorporated the ability to have a knowledgeable
professional working relationship with teachers at the school or classroom level. In turn,
this relationship would lead to a professional discourse and relationship that supported
the needs of the individual teacher.

As literacy demands continue to change, coaches provide professional
development in reading, writing, listening, and speaking across the content areas.
Currently, coaches have been assigned two major responsibilities: teacher mentoring and
literacy program advocacy. These two responsibilities were reflected in the International
Reading Association (IRA) standards for middle and secondary literacy coaches, with the
four standards evenly split between them. Standard 1, “Skillful Collaborators,” and
Standard 3, “Skillful Evaluators of Literacy Needs,” emphasize literacy-program
advocacy and collaboration. Standard 2, “Skillful Job-Embedded Coaches,” and
Standard 4, “Skillful Instructional Strategists,” stress the importance of working with
teachers to provide mentoring and assistance in learning and implementing literacy-
related instructional strategies (IRA, 2006).

Literacy coaches work one-on-one with teachers to discuss ways to incorporate
current trends into their daily classroom routines. This poses a unique challenge to
coaches in secondary schools. Middle school teachers believe reading instruction is the
responsibility of the English teacher. Literacy coaches in middle schools are charged with
changing the culture as they make reading pervasive throughout the building. Coaches
understand both student and teacher learning, as they must understand both how students learn in various content areas and why teachers make instructional choices.

Coaches engage teachers in a variety of activities to increase teacher competency. Figure 2.1 illustrates the coaching activities that are performed by coaches. These activities are gauged at building collegiality, increasing teacher participation in coaching, and providing support. Although adult learners are different from child learners, the literacy coach uses good pedagogy to support teachers. Literacy coaches build teacher capacity from “the know, to the new,” signifying that they use teacher’s knowledge to move into new innovations of teaching (Sandvold & Baxter, 2008). Figure 2.1 illustrates the process of coaching. Throughout the coaching process the teacher is actively involved in his or her learning. As coaching progresses, there is a gradual release of responsibility from collaboration to independent execution. This continuum incorporates coaching and adult learning to create a natural progression of learning (Moran, 2007).

*Figure 2.1. The Literacy Coaching Continuum (Adapted from *Differentiated Literacy Coaching: Scaffolding for Students and Teacher Success* by M. Moran, Alexandria, VA: ASCD. Copyright 2007 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.)*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Format</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Potential Roles of the Literacy Coach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Resource Management</td>
<td>The literacy coach works with teachers to become familiar with and tap into available resources. This is an opportunity for rich conversation about instruction, grouping, and differentiated instruction.</td>
<td>Resource person, collaborator, encourager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Content Presentations</td>
<td>The literacy coach provides content knowledge and fosters collaboration. This format ensures that all teachers are on the same page in terms of information, procedures, best practice, and other matters.</td>
<td>Facilitator, expert, resource person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused Classroom Visits</td>
<td>The literacy coach provides teachers the opportunity to observe a particular teaching method, learn how other teachers organize for instruction, and develop an understanding of what is expected at other grade levels.</td>
<td>Facilitator, resource person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Planning</td>
<td>Teachers work together to review current data and plan instruction. This might include discussion on grouping options, assessment results, and specific lesson planning.</td>
<td>Resource person, collaborator, encourager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Groups</td>
<td>A group of educators meets on a regular basis to discuss issues relevant to their teaching. The range of study group options includes job-alike, book study, and action research.</td>
<td>Facilitator, mediator, resource person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration Lessons</td>
<td>The literacy coach demonstrates particular teaching methods to teachers who are less familiar with these methods or less confident about using them.</td>
<td>Expert, consultant, presenter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Coaching</td>
<td>This is the traditional coaching model whereby the literacy coach observes the classroom teacher and provides feedback during a debriefing session.</td>
<td>Expert, encourager, voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-teaching</td>
<td>The classroom teacher and the literacy coach plan a lesson together and share responsibility for the lesson's implementation and follow-up.</td>
<td>Collaborator, encourager, voice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 2.2. A Closer Look at the Literacy Coaching Continuum (Adapted from Differentiated Literacy Coaching: Scaffolding for Students and Teacher Success. by M. Moran, Alexandria, VA: ASCD. Copyright 2007 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.*
The responsibilities of a literacy coach illustrated in Figure 2.1 correspond with those highlighted in the literature. Toll (2005) connected the process of coaching with mentoring: “a literacy coach is 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” (2005, p. 4). Dole (2004) agrees with this focus on mentoring teachers, stating, “Among the most important kinds of reading coaches’ activities were teaching demonstrations and modeling of lessons. . . . The reading coach may also have observed in classrooms and provided them with feedback about their lessons” (pp. 4–5). From this point of view, the primary responsibility of the literacy coach is to work with teachers as a mentor.

Figure 2.2 further illustrates the activities that take place in the literacy coaching continuum. The activities proposed by the literacy coaching continuum support the theory that literacy coaches must be woven into the fabric of teaching. Coaching is a hands-on activity, grounded in theory and executed in authentic teaching settings. Researchers have created definitions of coaching that emphasize literacy advocacy over mentoring. Sturtevant (2003), for example, defines literacy coaches as “master teachers who provide essential leadership for the school’s entire literacy program.” Walpole and McKenna (2004) also placed importance on this coaching responsibility, identifying a crucial part of the coach’s job as being a school-level planner, someone who will “plan and implement programs designed to help students improve their reading and writing including those supported by federal, state, and local funding” (p. 11). Much of the research identifies five coaching responsibilities: planner, learner, grant writer, researcher, and teacher of teachers.
Upon analyzing the literature, an assumption can be made that the coaching process supports the professional development of teachers as a whole-school literacy advocate and a teacher mentor in order to improve literacy instruction. There are various forms of coaching models, ranging from facilitating team planning with minimal observation and evaluation (Joyce & Showers, 2002) to the model of the coach as a supervisor and evaluator of teachers (Anderson & Pellicar, 2001).

Gross (2010) conducted a mixed-method study on secondary literacy coaching. The findings indicated that teachers were eager to work with a coach instead of attending off-site workshops. The gradual development of relationships increased participation in the coaching process. Conversations about literacy and workshops piqued the interest of teachers not involved in the coaching process, and as coaches shared their knowledge in a non-threatening manner, teachers willingly invited the coach into their classroom. Content-area teachers took advantage of the literacy coach for implementing strategies to support their instruction. Teachers were highly satisfied with the instructional changes in throughout the building. Secondary coaching is continually challenged by time constraints and administrative mandates, but teachers that participated in this study found new instructional ideas that engaged students.

A number of studies have examined coaches working as consultants, where the coach is available to provide teachers with advice or expertise to improve instructional practice (Hasbrouck, 1997). Coaches in these cases act as mentors, monitoring teachers’ progress, providing expert assistance, and guiding an ongoing reflective process (Anderson & Shannon, 1995). The coach might help teachers interpret new information and apply it in the classroom, potentially bridging the gap between information learned
outside the classroom and implementing new strategies with students. It is unclear, however, how a coach might compensate for vastly different levels of literacy experience among teachers he or she would be consulting, or how a coach might deal with an array of school contexts and programs in which the teachers were attempting to implement new instructional strategies.

Instructional coaching, a relatively new and increasingly popular form of professional development (Dole & Donaldson, 2006; Toll, 2005), seems to promote a number of the traits identified by both the situated-learning perspective and the normative-reeducative change process. Conceptually, instructional coaching would involve having a knowledgeable individual work over a period of time with teachers at the school or classroom level on issues of teacher learning and classroom practice.

This dual set of responsibilities is consistent in the literature. For example, Toll (2005) defines a literacy coach in relation to the responsibility of mentoring teachers 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” (2005, p. 4). In her examination of the evolving role of reading specialists, Dole (2004) agreed with this focus on mentoring teachers, stating, “Among the most important kinds of reading coaches’ activities were teaching demonstrations and modeling of lessons. . . . The reading coach may also have observed in classrooms and provided them with feedback about their lessons” (pp. 4–5). From this point of view, the primary responsibility of the literacy coach is to work with teachers as a mentor.
Other definitions of coaching emphasize literacy advocacy over mentoring. Sturtevant (2003), for example, defines literacy coaches as “master teachers who provide essential leadership for the school’s entire literacy program. This leadership includes helping to create and supervising a long-term staff development process that supports both the development and implementation of the literacy program over months and years” (p. 11). Walpole and McKenna (2004) also place importance on this coaching responsibility, identifying a crucial part of the coach’s job as a school-level planner—someone who will “plan and implement programs designed to help students improve their reading and writing including those supported by federal, state, and local funding” (p. 11). They do not stop with just this one responsibility, however, but go on to identify a total of five coaching responsibilities: planner, learner, grant writer, researcher, and teacher of teachers. This last one, incidentally, moves the coach back toward the responsibility of literacy coach as mentor.

Literacy coaching, then, seems to be a combination of literacy-program and mentoring responsibilities. In fact, several researchers provide definitions of coaching that include both of these responsibilities to some degree (Blachowicz et al., 2005; Coskie, 2005; Knight, 2004). Defined using this dual-purpose definition, the coaching process would entail the literacy coach addressing the professional development of teachers as a whole-school literacy advocate and teacher mentor in order to improve literacy instruction. What is unclear is whether there is an optimal balance between these two sets of responsibilities, which, considering the coach’s available time, may be in conflict. How a literacy coach might manage to strike a balance between advocating a
literacy program at the whole-school level and mentoring individual teachers in classrooms remains an open question.

Existing research on coaching incorporates a range of possible coaching models, many of which overlap and are sometimes used interchangeably in the literature. Where coaches are engaged as consultants (Hasbrouck, 1997; Hasbrouck & Christen, 1997; Tschantz & Vail, 2000) they act as mentors, monitoring teachers’ progress, providing expert assistance, and guiding an ongoing reflective process (Anderson & Shannon, 1995). A one-way flow of knowledge is common to this type of coaching; knowledgeable mentors provide expertise and assistance in the learning process of less-knowledgeable teachers. While this approach has been examined in some narrowly-defined cases (Ballard, 2001; Kovic, 1996), questions about its effectiveness in the social contexts of schools remain.

A second model in research is that of peer coach, where the coach is also a practitioner. This creates a self-help community which fosters transfer of new skills, companionship, peer feedback, and self-reflection (Gottesman & Jennings, 1994; Joyce, Calhoun, & Hopkins, 1999; Joyce & Showers, 2002). In this capacity, the coach works as a peer in cooperation with classroom teachers; one person is usually assigned to serve as coach for a school year, but in some cases teachers switch places, taking turns being the coach. This method of coaching is beneficial, as suggested by the positive response to, and claimed benefit of, coaching work and planning among teachers across a number of studies where the sense of teacher isolation was reduced, and where teamwork resulting from the peer coaching approach was found to have a positive effect on knowledge acquisition and teaching practice (Kohler et al., 1997; Ponticell, 1995).
Coaches and teachers in these cases possessed similar levels of knowledge, and teacher learning appeared to have been positively affected. Research on this peer coaching model does not address how learning beyond the immediate classroom would be affected, how middle-school contexts might affect the process, or how peer collaboration work might address the whole-school literacy plan. Also not addressed is the issue of the coach being able to maintain a peer relationship with teachers while at the same time providing literacy expertise.

A third coaching model emphasizes collaboration, where groups of teachers are assisted in team planning and problem solving. The coach acts as a collaborator and change agent, providing opportunities for continuous learning with the support of colleagues (Lieberman, 1996), formation of discourse communities (Putnam & Bork, 2000), and nurturing a school-wide culture of inquiry (Szabo, 1996). In complex school settings, coach participation in subject matter departments, informal study groups, or administration-directed action teams would likely take place for a variety of purposes and with a range of outcomes.

Literacy coaching is mentoring, advocacy, modeling, collaborating and communicating. Literacy coaching is not evaluation. A study conducted by Campbell and Sweiss (2010) indicated that there was almost no engagement in evaluations by coaches. Assuming the role of an evaluator compromises the position of the coach, and also compromises the relationship between the coach and the teacher. However, Campbell and Sweiss (2010) report that avoiding the evaluation of teachers hinders the coaching process. The fear of evaluating teachers may cause coaches to perform their duties outside of the classroom. They may avoid conducting observations and providing
feedback. Literacy coaches are challenged as they try to ensure they are not viewed as administrators. However, this cannot hinder immersion in classroom activity. Rainville’s (2008) study on roles and situations of literacy coaches indicates that coaches face an identity crisis. They serve teachers, school administrators, school district administrators, and students’ their identity can be blurred at any given time. It is vital that the roles and situations in which a coach operates are aligned with stakeholders.

Fulfilling the many roles and responsibilities of coaches demands coaches possess expertise in literacy, adult learning theory, student learning, and cooperative learning. A coach must be a successful teacher. Their knowledge of teaching translates to the coaching process as they model and co-teach. Coaches must also have a strong working knowledge of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. This background in literacy also includes content area literacy. Frost and Bean (2006) explored the qualifications of coaching. This study supported the Standards for Coaching presented by the International Reading Association. It is important to understand the experience and knowledge needed to be an effective coach. Effective coaches must be more than reading teachers. An effective coach should have knowledge of reading, reading instruction, adult learning, student data, and building-wide planning. In addition to coaches must also be able to communicate with and support teachers. Coaching conversations should set in motion reflection on practice (Frost & Bean, 2006).

As mentioned previously, there is little research about the actual effectiveness of literacy coaching at the middle school level (Neufeld & Roper, 2003). Despite this lack of gap in the literature, there is research that emphasizes the overall benefits of literacy coaching. Vanderburg and Stevens (2009) interviewed 35 literacy coaches in order to
research how coaching helped them. In this study, teachers reported they took more risks because of their coach. The changes were aligned with the new demands of literacy.

Examples of changes in teacher behavior included;

(1) were willing to try more things in their classroom, (2) used more authentic means of assessing student needs, (3) modified instruction based on students’ needs, and (4) changed their beliefs and philosophies based on the educational theory and research they read. (Vanderburg & Stevens, 2009, p. 9)

Teachers attributed these risks to their participation in the coaching process. Coaches assisted teachers with implementing research based practices into their daily professional duties. The coach facilitated learning both outside and inside of the classroom. The coach created an environment where the professional voice was developed.

In her study focused on the effectiveness of teachers in urban areas, Steckel (2009) reported similar findings. According to Steckel, “teachers reported a sense of increased proficiency with a range of instructional, assessment, and management strategies, many of which they were using for the first time” (p. 17). Teachers’ testimonies reported an increase of student achievement as a result of instructional changes. The coaching experiences shared knowledge that provided teachers with the knowledge to differentiate learning tasks for the variety of students in their classrooms. Providing tasks on students’ instructional and independent level support student learning.

There is a smaller amount of research about literacy coaching at the secondary level than there is research on coaching at the elementary level. This may be caused by school districts’ use of Reading First or Title I funds to pay for literacy coaching in elementary schools. However, increased funding for adolescent readers through federal
grants such as *Striving Readers* discretionary grant programs along with other funding sources aimed at adolescents and literacy have helped middle and high schools begin to fund literacy coach positions.

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) revealed literacy coaches at the secondary level focus their attention on working with teachers, not students. Their report *NCTE Principles of Adolescent Literacy Reform* (2006) stated literacy coaches at the secondary level can help teachers across content areas. Kamil (2003) also emphasized the positive role that literacy coaches can play at the secondary level, particularly when attending to the current structures of secondary schools today. He stated,

One vehicle for remedying the infrastructure problem in middle and secondary schools would be to provide high-quality, ongoing professional development in literacy. The most popular and promising solution to this problem seems to be coaching—literacy specialists who work with content teachers to assist them in infusing literacy instruction in their teaching. (p. 27)

Coaching’s success is dependent on the coach’s relationships with the teacher. Coaching is a social process, building trust through interaction. “coaches have to build relationships with teachers over time, taking the initiative to work with them and to communicate their role in implementing the initiative” (Sandvold & Baxter, 2008, p. 24)

Teachers need to trust their coaches know what they are doing and are sincere about supporting them. Coaches must be viewed as a part of the teaching team. This builds collegiality and comradesy.
Communication plays a major role in building coaching relationships. Regardless of the coaching activity—peer coaching, study groups, demonstrations, or lessons—the communication between the coach and the teacher validate the interaction.

**Coaching and Teacher Self-Efficacy**

Coaching opportunities foster positive peer influences through collaboration. Peers can also influence teacher efficacy through the three other sources of efficacy information proposed by Bandura (1997), including social persuasion (persuading peers that they are capable of performing a task), vicarious experience (observing a similarly capable teacher peer implementing successful strategies), and physiological and emotional cues (peer influence on increasing positive feelings arising from teaching and teaching ability or on reducing negative feelings arising from teaching experiences).

A teacher’s sense of efficacy is shaped by his or her impact on student learning. There is an interdependence that exists between teacher efficacy and student achievement which determines a teacher’s sense of efficacy (Guskey, 2002). While participating in the coaching process, teachers give compelling testimony that they have a sense of increased competency in literacy (Balchowitz et al., 2005; Steckel, 2009; Vanderberg & Stevens, 2009). According to Steckel (2009), “the teacher testified to the most significant impact a coach can have on school culture: not only initiating positive change but also creating the conditions in which that change can be self-sustaining” (p. 19).

When researching the tenets of coaching and efficacy the literature indicates that coaching activity provides the experiences essential to increasing efficacy according to Bandura (1995). Bandura states efficacy is increased by observing models in real-world situations, by experiencing success, and by verbal persuasion and support. The coach
facilitates the transfer of knowledge with demonstration and co-teaching lessons inside of classrooms. In addition, research indicates teachers participating in coaching activities have experienced success when implementing new literacy strategies. During peer coaching, collaborative meetings, and conversation, coaches verbally support teachers with concerns. The factors of efficacy and the structure of the coaching process support one another.
Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a detailed description of the research methodology that was used for this mixed methods study. This chapter presents demographic data on participants, and describes the types of data collected, the method of data collection, and the manner in which the data was analyzed. This study examined the literacy coaching process (and the participating teachers) as it related to teacher efficacy. The research was conducted with the use of in-depth interview questions to obtain candid views of literacy coaches through the eyes of the teachers they served. The Ohio State

Table 3.1

Types of Data Collected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Sources of Data</th>
<th>Type of Data Collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OSTES</td>
<td>23 Teachers</td>
<td>Demographic data; Survey responses on a Likert scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>6 Teachers</td>
<td>Audio data transcribed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>3 Literacy Coaches</td>
<td>Audio data transcribed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group</td>
<td>5 Teachers</td>
<td>Audio data transcribed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Literacy Coaches,</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Notes</td>
<td>Teachers, Literacy</td>
<td>Written notes, transcribed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coaches, Students,</td>
<td>Journals, transcribed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES) was administered to measure the perceived efficacy of teacher participants (See Appendixes A, B, C.). Through a mixed-methods research design, this study also examined the general question of whether the presence of literacy coaches in middle schools increased the sense of efficacy of teachers as defined by Bandura, (1977).

The study was done in three middle schools located in the New York area. The manner in which middle school literacy coaches approached their job and viewed their role in their respective school was studied. Further, this study explored teachers’ perceptions of literacy coaches and the impact literacy coaches had on teacher efficacy. This chapter presents the methodology for answering the following research questions:

1. Does Teacher Self-Efficacy increase as a result of literacy coaching?
2. What aspects of the literacy coaching experience do teachers and coaches perceive as being the most influential and useful as well as being the least effective or useful?
3. Is there a change in delivery and execution of ELA instruction as a result of participating in the literacy coaching professional development activity?

This study relied primarily on qualitative data with a theoretical foundation in phenomenology. Phenomenology is an approach to studying human behavior and interaction that focuses on people’s subjective experiences and interpretations of the world (Creswell, 1998). For the purpose of this study I took on the role of a phenomenologist trying to understand the phenomenon of literacy coaching through the eyes of teachers working with literacy coaches and through the eyes of the literacy coaches themselves.
Table 3.2

*Data Sources Correlated to Research Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Data Collection Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open-Ended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OSTES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does Teacher Self-Efficacy increase as a result of literacy coaching?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What aspects of the literacy coaching experience do teachers and coaches perceive as being the most influential and useful as well as being the least effective or useful?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a change in delivery and execution of ELA instruction as a result of participating in the literacy coaching professional development activity?</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phenomenological research requires an authentic approach to research. That is, it was must be conducted in the real world and must rely on data collected from humans interacting in a real world context. The context for this study was the American middle school, specifically three middle schools in the New York metropolitan area. This chapter describes the methodology and rationale of the research.
To understand the impact that professional development in the form of literacy coaching has on personal teaching efficacy, it was advantageous to employ the use of a survey to provide statistical data on the teachers’ perceived self-efficacy. Qualitative methodology in the form of interviews, observation notes, field notes, and focus groups provided teachers with an opportunity to narrate and describe how and why literacy coaches impacted them either positively or negatively. The use of several data collection techniques enhanced and encouraged the trustworthiness of the study (Glesne, 2006).

Qualitative research, as described by Creswell (1998), is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It turns the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, observation summaries, researcher reflections, and the researcher’s memos to the him or herself (Creswell, 2007). This meant the qualitative researcher studied objects in their natural settings attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2006). This study met the expectations for several types of qualitative research, but I have elected to categorize it as “field research” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2006).

In this study, field research was employed as a method of gathering qualitative data. As a researcher I ventured into the field to gather data. This was also a qualitative ethnographic study because, as a literacy coach, I observed the phenomenon that interested me in its natural state. More specifically, it was a participant-observer ethnographic field study because I was involved in the professional life of teachers and coaches in the school settings where I observed them at work. As a participant observer I took extensive field notes, which were analyzed.
Another way to describe this study is descriptive. Descriptive research permits the researcher to identify current conditions of teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs and literacy coaches’ perspectives about their position within the school context. Some of the descriptive background data collected in this study was treated as “real” information that accurately provided answers to questions, such as the number of years a teacher has taught, types of certification, as well as other demographic data. However, most of the data collected in this study was phenomenological. That is, it reflected the perceptions and views of the individual providing the data. It was not treated as data reflecting or corresponding to an external truth. Instead, the data analysis treated such data as a reflection of how the participant viewed their intrinsic ability to effectively teach students and carry out professional duties, as well as and how literacy coaches influenced that work. The quantitative portion of my study included an administration of the OSTES developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy (2004). This survey was developed in an effort to provide a multidimensional construct to measure efficacy as described by Bandura (1977).

The OSTES is a questionnaire designed to help gain a better understanding of teacher feelings of self-efficacy relative to three areas of professional practice: student engagement, instructional practice, and classroom management. I chose this measure because through its phases of development it became a mainstream measure of teacher efficacy in the field of education and sociology. Research (Kenson, 2001) has tested the construct validity of this instrument and has found high reliability of this instrument. In addition, there was evidence of concurrent validity with the RAND items and Gibson and Dembo (1984) scales (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2002).
Over the years, several instruments have been used to measure teacher efficacy. These included the Teacher Efficacy Scale (Gibson & Dembo, 1984) and the Science Teaching Efficacy Belief Instrument (Riggs & Enochs, 1990). Some researchers, including Roberts (2001), have argued that these measures of self-efficacy have been theoretically confused and generally not reflective of Bandura’s (1996) social cognitive theory conceptualization of self-efficacy. These criticisms supported the idea that a survey is a flat measurement. Roberts (2001) believed that the concept of teacher efficacy was more complex and is influenced by internal and external factors. These included experiences as a teacher, self-esteem, collective efficacy within the respective school, and school administration. Thus, there were questions of whether or not studies of teacher efficacy could treat the construct of self-efficacy as a flat one-dimensional characteristic or whether they must acknowledge that it is multi-dimensional (Pajares, 2006; Roberts, 2001). There were numerous debates in the literature that have argued the idea of whether or not efficacy is best measured being by addressing specific behaviors (Coldarci & Fink 1995; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Roberts and Henson (2001) conducted a study of the OSTES, and based on an exploratory factor analysis the OSTES showed promise in the measure of teacher efficacy. My reading of the literature, and my experience as a teacher and literacy coach, led me to side with the researchers who viewed teacher self-efficacy as a multi-dimensional construct. Therefore, I have chosen to use the OSTES, as the OSTES scale is a multi-dimensional approach to measuring efficacy across three facets of a teacher’s professional practice (See Appendixes A, B, C.). The survey consisted of 24 questions that are answered on a Likert scale. There are eight items that address efficacy in student engagement, nine questions that address efficacy in
instructional strategies, and eight questions that address efficacy in classroom management.

Teachers were asked to rate each of the 24 items on a 9-point Likert scale ranging from *nothing* on the lowest end to *a great deal* on the highest end. While administering the scale teachers were asked about their perceptions of teacher efficacy and their personal beliefs about their own efficacy. The following were examples of each of three scales:

- **Efficacy in Student Engagement:**
  - How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?
  - How much can you do to foster student creativity?
  - How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?

- **Efficacy in Instructional Strategies:**
  - How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?
  - To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused? How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?

- **Efficacy in Classroom Management:**
  - How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?
  - To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior?
○ How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?

The presence of three subscales provided a clear measure of the duties and responsibilities that teachers faced in school. This instrument provided the multidimensional view needed to assess teacher efficacy.

The validity of the OSTES was examined in three studies (Coldarci, 2002). This scale began as a 52-item analysis of teacher efficacy. In the first study the instrument was tested on a sample of 224 participants. The result of this study was a reduction of items from 52 to 32. Study two used a sample of 217 participants. The scale was further minimized to 18 items by removing items that had the lowest correlations to the three subscales. Study three was a confirmatory factor analysis. The analysis found that the classroom management portion of the survey was relatively weak in relation to the subscales for student engagement and instructional strategies.

To improve this sub-area, Hoy, Moran, and Coldarci (2001) took items from Emmer’s (1990) Teacher Efficacy for Classroom Management Scale and added them to the OSTES. A field test was then conducted resulting in a 36-item instrument. A sample of 410 participants from primary and secondary schools both in-service and pre-service was used to evaluate the final version of the survey. Those items with the lowest loading ranges were dropped. The result was the 24-item long form and the 12-item short form. Reliabilities for the teacher efficacy subscales were .91 for instruction, .90 for managements, and .87 for engagement (Coldarci, 2001). The results of the field tests and analyses indicate that the OSTES may be considered a valid and reliable instrument. This study used the long (24 item) form for research.
Setting

This study took place in three middle schools located in two school districts in the New York City region. The first district was located in a metropolitan suburb of New York City. This school district had a total student population of more than 8,000 students during the 2009-2010 school years. Within this district 60% of the students were classified as economically disadvantaged, receiving free lunch. Approximately 40% of the total student population was categorized as economically advantaged. The ethnicity demographics of all the students were 77% Black or African American, 15% Hispanic or Latino, 6% White, 1% Asian, and 1% Multiracial. The district achieved Annual Yearly Progress according to the guidelines set by New York State Department of Education (2007). Adequate Yearly Progress is required by the NCLB (2001) legislation. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) refers to the percentage of students who achieve the state’s definition of academic proficiency. This district was also in Good Standing in the areas of Math, ELA, Science, and graduation rate. Good Standing suggests that the school district does not fall into the categories of Needs Improvement or Requiring Academic Progress.

At Patterson Middle School during the 2009-2010 school year, there were over 800 students enrolled. Based on the school’s Accountability and Overview Report for 2009-2010, which was available on the New York State Department of Education website, 69% of the students were categorized as economically disadvantaged and receiving free and reduced lunch. The school population demographics showed that 74% of the students were identified as Black or African American, 17% were Hispanic or Latino, 1% were Asian or Hawaiian, and 7% were White. The building achieved annual
yearly progress according to the criteria set by the New York State Department of Education (2010).

Although the Yellowstone Middle School was almost 50% smaller than the Patterson Middle School, the demographics were quite similar to Patterson Middle School. The Yellowstone Middle School was located in the same suburban city as the Patterson Middle School. During the 2009-2010 there were almost 500 students that attended school. According to the New York State Report Card, 81% of these students received free and reduced lunch and thus were classified as economically disadvantaged students. Similar to Patterson Middle School, the percentage of Blacks or African Americans far exceeded that of other ethnicities. According to the 2009-2010 New York State Report Card, 90% of the students were Black/African American, 7% of the students were Hispanic or Latino, and 3% of the student population were White. The school was in Good Standing in all categories of Math, ELA, and Science.

The third and final school, Henry Abbott Middle School, was located in an urban New York School District. Although this school was classified as a part of a large urban school district it was located four miles from the Patterson Middle School and one mile away from the Yellowstone Middle School. Although the Henry Abbott Middle School was located in New York City, demographics of the student population in this school were very similar to the two middle schools located in the suburbs. According to the New York State Report Card, the Henry Abbott Middle School has a total population of almost 1,000 students. Approximately 89% of these students were categorized as disadvantaged, based on receiving free and reduced lunches. The demographics of the 955 student population were 1% Native American or Alaskan Native, 71% Black or African
American, 26% Hispanic or Latino, 2% Asian, and 1% White. The Henry Abbott Middle School is in good standing in Math and Science. However, they were in the restructuring phase for ELA. This school did not meet the Adequate Yearly Progress criteria in 2008-2009 in ELA.

The demographics of the three participating schools illustrated numerous similarities. All schools used in this study were heavily populated by minorities, especially African American. The class sizes in all three schools ranged from 20 to 28 students per class. In all three schools at least 40% of all teachers had a Master’s Plus 30 designation, with over 83% of teachers teaching within their certification area.

The teacher turnover rate in these schools was a specific interest in this study. Excessive teacher turnover in low-income urban and suburban communities had an impact on student achievement (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). In Patterson Middle School the teacher turnover rate was 15%. The Yellowstone Middle School had a teacher turnover rate of 20%. Henry Abbott Middle School is had an 18% turnover rate, lying directly in between Patterson Middle and Yellowstone Middle School.

Research Participants and Context

The initial population proposed for this study was 5 middle school literacy coaches and 50 middle school ELA teachers in four different middle schools across two school districts. The literacy coaches were female participants with at least 10 years teaching experience and at least four years of coaching experience. Their years of experience as classroom teachers ranged from 10 to 30 years. For literacy coaches, the, and their years of experience as a literacy coaches ranged from 1 to 10 years.
However, one of the targeted literacy coaches was forced to return to the classroom due to budget cuts in her school. As a result, this middle school did not receive coaching for 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 academic years. Due to large budget cuts imposed on New York schools and the strict timeline for the research, I was unable to find another literacy coach, as well as another and school to include in this study.

Literacy Coach A had worked at Henry Abbott Middle School for over 15 years. She began her career as an elementary school teacher over 19 years ago. She moved to Henry Abbott Middle School to become a sixth-grade teacher in 1996. She taught sixth grade for six years, beginning her career as a literacy coach in 2002. During the study she coached ELA teachers in Henry Abbott Middle School.

Literacy Coach B had worked at Patterson Middle School for the past two years as a literacy coach. She began her career as an elementary school teacher in New York City for five years. She then moved to become an elementary school literacy coach in a suburban district of an urban area in New York. Two years ago she accepted a position as a middle school literacy coach based on her experience.

Literacy Coach C worked as a teacher in Georgia schools for over 12 years. She then began her six-year tenure as an elementary middle school literacy coach. As a result of her success she became a literacy coaching consultant. She traveled to major cities in the United States which brought her to Yellowstone Middle School. She has mentored and coached the current literacy coach at the Yellowstone Middle School for one year.

The fourth literacy coach was the researcher. In this study the researcher was also a participant in the study. Literacy Coach D worked as a middle school ELA teacher for two years in New York City. She then taught sixth grade for eight years before accepting
a position as the literacy coach at Yellowstone Middle School. I included myself because of the information I added to the research from field notes taken as a coach. My position as a literacy coach also influenced my interpretation of data.

The teacher population includes all of the teachers that each coach serviced. There were a total of 39 teachers serviced between the four literacy coaches, 33 female and 6 male in-service teachers. Of the 39 teachers, 23 responded to the survey; therefore the study includes 23 teacher participants and 3 literacy coach participants. Of the 23 participants, 7 were purposefully selected to participate in the open-ended interviews. The participants were chosen based on both their various years of experience as teachers and as well as their age. The goal was to interview teachers who represented a range of ages and years of experience.

The 23 participants were quite diverse in nature. Nineteen of the teachers were female and four of the participants were male. Based on this demographic information, no data will be collected based on gender because of the small number of males involved in the study. The teacher population included one participant who was between the ages of 21 and 29, eight teachers were between the ages of 30 and 39, six teachers fell between the ages of 40 and 49, and eight teachers were between 50 and 59.

The 23 participants also had a wide-range of teaching experience. Six teachers had taught for 20 or more years, three teachers had taught between 11 and 15 years, six teachers had taught between 6 and 10 years, and the remaining eight teachers had taught between 0 and 5 years.
All 23 teachers were New York State Certified. Twenty-two participants had master’s degrees and one teacher possessed a doctoral degree. Demographic results are summarized in Table 3.3.

No respondents reported that they currently teach sixth grade and a few reported working both with seventh- and eighth-grade students. Similarly, several participants reported they taught multiple subjects, with overall results leaning toward ELA. Certification, however, showed a good deal of variety, with quite a few respondents to this item claiming more than one certification. Multiple response item results are presented in the following Table 3.4.
Table 3.3

*Survey Multiple Choice Items: Respondent Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-29</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Experience (in years)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16–20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21+</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent Highest Degree Earned</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent’s Class Size</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 20</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21–25</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26–30</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Socioeconomic Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low–Middle</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.4

*Survey Multiple Response Item Frequencies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>( f ) (Responses)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grade Level(s) Taught (( n = 23 ))</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject(s) Taught (( n = 22 ))</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIS</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Certification Area(s) (( n = 20 ))</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Education</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English 7–9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English 7–12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K–12 Special Education</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K–12 ESL</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K–12 Literacy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Collection Process**

This study was immersed in data collected from three middle schools in New York. These schools range from Grade 6 to Grade 8. All data collection occurred within the school building, both during and after school hours. Teacher and literacy coach data were collected from voluntary participants only. Demographic data were retrieved during the literacy coach interview and the demographic section of the survey (see Appendix B.). School achievement and demographic data were collected from the New York State
Department of Education website, specifically from the individual school report card constructed by the Department of Assessment and Accountability.

The researcher gathered the surveys with the assistance of the literacy coach in each school. The researcher attended one department meeting in each school explaining to explain the study. Approximately three weeks after the official meeting, a survey, blank envelope, and consent form (See Appendix C.) were placed in the mailbox of each ELA teacher. The literacy coach in each school provided friendly reminders to staff and collected surveys in a designated envelope. The researcher maintained consistent contact with the each literacy coach for five weeks. After five weeks, 60% of the surveys were returned.

The data collected from OSTES were used as descriptive statistics. The statistics described the teacher’s perceived efficacy in the area of ELA instruction. The descriptive statistical data were based on the three sub-areas of student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. The mean scores from each subscale were calculated and used to describe Personal Teacher Efficacy (PTE).

The researcher then began the qualitative portion of this study. The researcher collected a purposeful sample based on the demographic information collected in the survey (See Appendix D.). The researcher carefully chose participants from various age ranges and years of experience teaching ELA. Participants were notified by e-mail that they were chosen to participate in the open-ended interview. Interviews were scheduled by e-mail and confirmed the day before the scheduled time by telephone. Interviews were conducted in the teachers’ classrooms using a digital voice recorder. Teachers were able to preview questions before the formal interview (See Appendix E.). The interviews were
open-ended and were facilitated as a conversation between the participants and the researcher. Although structured interview questions were asked, additional questions based on the responses of the participant were also posed. These questions were based on the responses of the participant. Interviews were recorded and transcribed by a professional transcriber.

At the conclusion of the teacher interviews, literacy coach interviews were scheduled using e-mail and telephone correspondence. Each literacy coach agreed to participate in the interview. Interviews were conducted in the literacy coaches’ offices at their respective schools. Interviews were taped using a digital audio recorder. At the conclusion of the literacy coach interviews the audio files were transcribed by a professional transcriber.

The final phase was a focus group of teachers. Morgan’s (1997) perspective on focus groups was used in this study to “research a technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher” (p. 6). The session was structured similarly to the interview questions (See Appendix E.). The focus group began with broad questions about professional development and progressed to more structured and specific questions addressing the how the coaching process impacted teacher efficacy. All participants were e-mailed and notified of the time and location of the focus group. The researcher sent three rounds of e-mails to remind teachers about the focus group. Six teachers responded positively to the focus group invitation. However, the entire focus group consisted of teachers from Yellowstone Middle School.

Throughout this study the researcher took field notes as she performed her daily duties as a literacy coach and participated in a literacy consortium. In addition, the
researcher observed coaching sessions of the participating literacy coaches. Through the observations the researcher was afforded the opportunity to describe how participants’ actions corresponded with their words (Hoffman, 2009). The observations allowed the researcher to understand the subtle nuances of literacy coaching. Observations provided additional data about teacher and coach interactions.

**Data Management**

SPSS software was used to analyze the OSTES data. A professional transcriber converted audio interview data to text data that was used in the analysis phase of the research. The interview data was primarily narrative in nature, although some interview questions asked for demographic information. According to Creswell (2009), a narrative approach asks one or more individuals to tell a story about their lives and experiences. This was then retold in a narrative form with the combined views of the participant and the researcher. In this study, a collection of experiences from several people were merged together based on the research questions. A composite narrative was written for the literacy coaches. The composite narrative covered the experiences of the literacy coach, along with detailed perspectives of the coaching process as expressed by the coach and participating teachers.

The data from interviews were transcribed into Microsoft Word. Each response from interviews was manually coded by the researcher. In addition, digital recordings of interviews were converted to media files and listened to on an MP3 device. The questions posed at the beginning of this chapter served as the initial organizing structure for coding the data. The researcher assigned codes based on the research questions. Each participant response was coded and then entered into a Microsoft Excel file. The coded responses
were organized so all responses relevant to each research question were together in specific file. In addition, the quantitative data from the OSTES were used in the coding process; this allowed that for the perspectives and views of teachers to be organized according to their levels of self-efficacy. Data was analyzed first through text coding followed by the identification of patterns. To establish the phenomenological validity of my conclusions and analyses I used triangulation of all data sources and data types.

As a participant observer I also took notes during my coaching process in the Patterson Middle School. The field notes were taken during teacher observations, coaching sessions, a national literacy coaching conference, and a local literacy coach consortium. These field notes served as qualitative data to gain further knowledge on the coaching process.

**Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis**

The study began with a proposal submitted to the two participating school districts. In November 2010, a proposal and a letter of introduction were submitted to the urban and suburban school districts (See Appendix F.). Once approval for the study was obtained from the two districts, an IRB proposal was submitted to St. John Fischer College for approval in December 2010 (See Appendix G.).

Data collection occurred over a four-month period ranging from January 2010 through May 2011. Phase 1 of the study involved administering the OSTES and analysis of the data to determine the personal teacher efficacy (PTE) for each participant. Each teacher received a letter of introduction, informed consent form (Appendix H), and the proposed surveys. A blank envelope was provided to mail back surveys and the informed consent form. This data was used to amend questions for individual interview and focus
group sessions that will occurred in Phase 2 of the study. Teachers were given three weeks to complete and return surveys. During the first three weeks the researcher received 5% of surveys from participants. In response, the researcher sent follow-up emails, conducted school visits, and placed phone calls. After six additional weeks of follow-up contact, 77% of surveys and informed consent forms were returned. Data received from the OSTES were analyzed using SPSS software. This aggregated data were used to construct in-depth interview questions and measure teacher efficacy.

The primary goal of Phase 2 was to develop a better understanding of what professional and personal characteristics of the literacy coach viewed as having a positive impact on teacher self-efficacy. Phase 2 consisted of 9 one-on-one interviews. This phase of the study began in April after the receipt of 77% of the distributed surveys. The researcher scheduled individual interviews with six conveniently chosen ELA teachers and three literacy coaches. These interviews consisted of pre-constructed questions that included reflection on teacher practice, teacher efficacy, student achievement, and the role of the literacy coach in their school. All data were coded for analysis.

These interviews discussed teachers’ feelings and perceptions towards their literacy coach. In addition, further investigation of teacher efficacy continued. Phase 2 data collection and analysis provided insight into the literacy coaches’ self-perceptions. This phase consisted of 3 one-on-one interviews with each literacy coach. These interviews examined the literacy coach’s approach to assisting teachers and their perceived impact on teacher efficacy.
Phase 3 of this study added another qualitative dimension to the study using observation. Phase 3 of the study consisted of a focus group of six teachers. The focus group was used to validate the responses from Phase 2 interviews.

**Concluding Statement**

The data presented in this study was authentic in nature. Survey, interview, and research notes provided data that addressed the perceptions, beliefs, and practices of literacy coaching. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the data collected and Chapter 5 discusses those results and suggests some implications of the findings for both literacy coaching practice and future research on the topic.
Chapter 4: Results

This chapter explores the results of a five-month-long mixed-method study about literacy coaching and teacher efficacy. In order to address three research questions and gain knowledge on the teachers’ personal efficacy, a survey was administered to 23 teachers. In addition, open-ended interviews were conducted from a sample extracted from the total number of participants, as well as three literacy coaches. A focus group was used to validate interview responses and collect group interview data. Observation and field notes were taken as the researcher engaged, observed, and participated in the coaching process. The data analysis was focused on describing the impact of literacy coaching on the teacher efficacy of middle school English Language Arts (ELA) teachers.

In Phase 1 of the study the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES) was administered manually to teacher participants. This survey was administered in January 2011 to all ELA teachers in the three middle schools. The survey was administered in order to measure the Perceived Teacher Efficacy (PTE) of these participants. All teachers who completed this survey have participated in at least two years of literacy coaching. The OSTES collected information on the (a) teacher’s efficacy on classroom management, (b) teacher’s efficacy in student engagement, (c) teacher’s efficacy on instructional strategies, (d) personal teacher efficacy (PTE), which is based on the first three subscales, (e) demographic information about each teacher, and (f) general measure of participants’ collective efficacy, which is also based on the first three subscales.
This study has been guided by three research questions:

1. Does Teacher Self-Efficacy increase as a result of literacy coaching?

2. What aspects of the literacy coaching experience do teachers and coaches perceive as being the most influential and useful as well as being the least effective or useful?

3. Is there a change in delivery and execution of ELA instruction as a result of participating in the literacy coaching professional development activity?

The Survey Data: Preliminary Analysis

Before addressing the three research questions, the survey data was presented to provide a conceptual background. The foremost variables that were explored in relation to the OSTES were the three factors of classroom management, student engagement, and instructional strategies. Questions 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 14, and 22 loaded on the factor of Efficacy in Student Engagement. Questions 7, 10, 11, 17, 18, 20, 23, and 24 loaded on Efficacy in Instructional Strategies. Efficacy in Classroom Management was addressed by questions 3, 5, 8, 13, 15, 16, 19, and 21. The questions were measured on a scale of 1–9. Scores ranging from 1–2 (little to none) reflect no efficacy at all. Scores ranging from 3–4 illustrate very little efficacy. Scores ranging from 5–6 demonstrate some degree of efficacy. Scores that fall into the 7–8 range are evidence for quite a bit efficacy. At the top of the scale were responses with the score of 9, signifying a great deal of efficacy. As noted in Chapter 3, 23 teachers completed the OSTES in January of 2010.

Teacher Efficacy Data

Mean efficacy scores for the three subscales were calculated for each respondent. Two respondents were missing a response to a total of three items. No two missed items
fell within the same subscale for the same respondent. Therefore, when items were missing, the remaining seven items were used to calculate a subscore, enabling us to include all respondents in the subsequent analyses.

The distributions of these scores for the three subscales are presented in Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3. Distributions were found to be statistically normal according to a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality ($p > .05$).

*Figure 4.1. Efficacy in Student Engagement Score Distribution.*
The means and standard deviations for the three subscales are summarized in Table 4.1.
Table 4.1

*Subscale Summary*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy in Student Engagement</td>
<td>7.01</td>
<td>.970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy in Instructional Strategies</td>
<td>7.89</td>
<td>.817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy in Classroom Management</td>
<td>7.44</td>
<td>.914</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4.4. Subscale Mean Scores. SE = Student Engagement mean; IS = Instructional Strategies mean; CM = Classroom Management mean.*

To summarize, most of the responses recorded on the OSTES fell between a score of 5 and 9 (*quite a bit* and *a great deal*). This revealed that this group of participants was generally very efficacious. The responses illustrated that this group of teachers possessed a high-level of confidence in their capacity in the areas of classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement.
The first of the three subscales teachers responded to on the OSTES was instructional strategies. Participant responses on this subscale indicated that teachers believed they possessed instructional strategies to reach a variety of learners. Teachers responded the highest to this factor. For example, Question 23 asks, “How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?” Twenty-five percent of the participants responded as having a great deal (9) of efficacy in alternative strategies, fifty-four percent of the participants responded has having quite a bit (7–8) of efficacy implementing these alternative strategies, and 21% of the participants responded that they possessed some influence (5–6) in this area.

Question 10 required participants to gauge their efficacy to gauge comprehension on what they have taught students. Thirty-eight percent of the teachers responded has having a great deal (9) of efficacy in gauging comprehension on subject matter taught. Fifty percent of the respondents felt that they have a quite a bit (7–8) of knowledge to monitor student comprehension, and twelve percent of the teachers recorded having some influence (5–6) in their ability to monitor student progress as it pertains to students understanding of a particular lesson.

Question 17 assessed how the teachers felt about their ability adjust the levels of lessons for individual students. Twenty-five percent of the participants believed that had a great deal (9) of proficiency at differentiating instruction for students, forty-nine percent of the participants responded in the quite a bit (7–8) range, and two questions about adjusting lessons for individual students. The remaining seventeen participants felt they had quite a bit (7–8) of ability and adjusting lessons in ELA for students of mixed abilities.
Table 4.2

Efficacy in Instructional Strategies N = 23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 Address difficult questions</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Gauge student comprehension</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Craft good questions</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Adjust lessons for student needs</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Use a variety of assessments</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Provide alternative explanations</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Provide challenges for students</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses for the items in the Instructional Strategies subscale generally follow this trend. More than 50% of the responses indicated teachers felt they had *quite a bit* efficacy in this area. The mean score fell in the *quite a bit* range for the instructional strategies factor. The participants in this study strongly believed that they were able to tailor their lessons to meet the needs of the students they service. The open-ended interview questions that will be discussed later will reveal how the presence of literacy coaching relates to this high level of efficacy.
Table 4.3

Efficacy in Student Engagement N = 23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Get through to difficult students</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Develop students to think critically</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Motivate difficult students</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Get students to believe they can do well</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Help students value learning</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Assist families help their children</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student engagement was the factor teachers rated themselves as least proficient in comparison to the other factors. Mean scores from the OSTES revealed that teachers felt they had only some influence in this area. However, the rating of some influence specifically related to difficult students and families. Student engagement related to instructional strategies and teaching was rated as quite a bit by the average teacher.

The OSTES also asked teachers to measure their efficacy in student engagement. The OSTES asked eight questions in regard to how well teachers obtain the ability to engage all learners during ELA instruction. Question 4 on the OSTES asks, “How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?” Thirteen percent had a sense of efficacy that illustrated a great deal of ability in motivating students, Thirty-three percent rated their ability to motivate disinterested student as quite a bit. In addition to measuring motivation, the OSTES asked teachers to measure their
efficacy on strengthening students’ self-esteem as it related to school work (Item 6). A large percentage (42%) of participants revealed they hold some influence over increasing student self-esteem, while 12% of participants measured their efficacy with low self-esteem students as very little.

Forty-two percent rated themselves as having the highest level of efficacy in this area. Thirty-three percent of participants believed they had quite a bit of proficiency in strengthening students’ belief in themselves. Twenty-five percent of the participants answered that they felt some influence on this indicator. Individually, participants rated themselves highly in the area of student engagement. However, the lowest scores by this group on the OSTES—those ranging between little (3–4) and very little (1–2)—were all found in this subscale. Participants expressed moderate efficacy in this area in comparison to the other two subscales.

Student engagement scores on the survey instrument indicated that overall teachers believed they possessed quite a bit of efficacy in the area of classroom management.

Classroom management was the last subscale analyzed from the OSTES. Classroom management was measured by eight questions on the OSTES. For example, the survey posed the question, “How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?” The results from this questions supported conclusions that participants were efficacious with regard to classroom management. Twenty-five percent responded with a great deal (9) of efficacy. Quite a bit (7–8) of efficacy was held by 54% of the respondents. Twenty-one percent believed that they were
aware that they had *some influence* in implementing and maintaining a classroom management system.

Table 4.4

*Efficacy in Classroom Management* N = 23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Control disruptive behavior</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Make expectations clear to students</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Establish routines</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Get students to follow rules</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Calm a disruptive student</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Establish classroom management system</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Respond to defiant student</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The OSTES also presented the question, “How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?” Twenty-five percent of participants assessed their ability to get students to follow rules on the top of the scale. Fifty-four percent answered the item with a response of *quite a bit* (7–8) of efficacy and 31% felt they had *some influence* (5–6).

Although teachers displayed confidence in monitoring and managing student behavior, the scale addresses those instances when a fraction of the students were incorrigible. Question 19 addresses this situation: the question reads, “How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson?” A staggeringly small amount of participants responded with 10% having *a great deal* (9) of efficacy in controlling these
students. However, 54% of the responses fell in the quite a bit (7–8) range. Thirty-six percent of the teachers said they had some influence (5–6) on this student group. The results from this subscale revealed that the participants in this study believe that they have the ability to maintain the learning environment in the classroom.

A paired-sample t-test was conducted using SPSS software to compare instructional strategies ($M = 7.89$) against classroom management ($M = 7.43$) and student engagement ($M = 7.01$). It also measured classroom management ($M = 7.43$) against student engagement ($M = 7.01$) and instruction strategies ($M = 7.89$) against student engagement ($M = 7.01$). Table 4.5 illustrates subfactor data in pairs. This data compares each factor to one another. The data compare the mean scores responses of participants on each subscale of the OSTES. The data in Tables 4.6 and 4.7 provide descriptive statistics for all three subscales. The correlations in Table 4.8 indicate a strong positive correlation between instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement in efficacy. The significance calculated was less than .01 across all pairs. Therefore, there is a significant value. Specifically our results suggest the three factors are interdependent.

Table 4.5

*Paired Sample Correlations (N) = 23*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>$r$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  Student Engagement &amp; Instructional Strategies Mean</td>
<td>.662</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Student Engagement &amp; Classroom Management Mean</td>
<td>.739</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Instructional Strategies &amp; Classroom Management Mean</td>
<td>.664</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.6

*Paired Sample Test*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$p$ (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>−5.655</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>−3.012</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.041</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7

*Test Between Subjects*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>3827.331</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3827.331</td>
<td>1981.088</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>42.503</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1.932</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8

*Test Within Subjects*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Teacher Efficacy</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>$df$</th>
<th>Mean Sq.</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Efficacy Linear</td>
<td>2.112</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.112</td>
<td>9.070</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error (Teacher Efficacy) Linear</td>
<td>5.123</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.233</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To summarize, the OSTES was administered in January to provide a snapshot of the participants’ sense of efficacy. At this time, there were no norms for the OSTES. Therefore, there was no data available to complete a comparison of these participants against other sample populations or a norm group. However, this scale provided a thorough foundation for creating interview questions for participants. Based on the survey data, interview questions were tailored to specifically address whether or not the participation in the literacy coaching project contributed the high level of efficacy of teachers.

**Interview Data**

This section explores the qualitative data obtained. After the OSTES was administered, five teachers and three literacy coaches were purposefully chosen to participate in open-ended interviews. Teachers were chosen to represent various ages, years of experience, and education levels. In addition, six teachers were randomly chosen to participate in a focus group. Twelve interview questions explored the beliefs and perceptions of literacy coaching and teacher efficacy (See Appendix E.). In this section interview and focus group data analysis is organized by correspondence to each of the three research questions in this study.

I employed pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of participants and the participating schools. Twelve interview questions were created to address the research questions presented by the researcher. For research purposes the responses relevant to research questions will be explored as they related to a specific research question.

**Question 1. Does teacher efficacy increase as a result of literacy coaching?**

Literacy coaches were asked a series of questions that referred to their perceptions of
teachers’ coaching experiences. Literacy coaches responded to the question, “Has working with teachers had an impact on how confident they were as literacy teachers? How do you know?” Teachers responded to question, “Has working with your coach had an impact on how confident you were as a literacy teacher? Can you give me some examples of how more confidence, or lack of confidence, has an impact on your work with students?” Another question posed to teachers explored teacher-student interactions. The question asked, “Can you think of some examples of changes in the way you work with students that led to improvements in their literacy performance?”

While exploring the responses of interview questions a number of themes emerged. These themes included: (a) increased confidence (b) increased knowledge (c) feeling prepared, and (d) feeling empowered. According to Gibson and Dembo (1984), efficacious teachers are those who have confidence in their own teaching abilities. For the purpose of this study, the term confidence will be interchangeable with the term teacher-efficacy. Bandura (1977) sets the foundation of personal efficacy in the amount of confidence that one possesses.

**Teachers and literacy coaches describe experiences that increase confidence/efficacy.** One result of the analysis of interview data from both teachers and coaches was a theme around the idea that participating in the literacy coaching process increased efficacy in all three sub-areas, classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement. Moreover, the subscale changes were interdependent. Based on the data collected, most responses illustrated that efficacy in the area of instructional strategies increased the most. Teachers expressed the coaching process provided the support. It also provided increased understanding, help with implementation, and
reflection with instructional strategies. Teacher efficacy in classroom management increased as a result of the improvement of instruction. Student engagement increased as a result of teacher support acquired from participation in coaching. It was also found that increased teacher efficacy in the sub-area of instructional strategies lead to increased efficacy in classroom management and student engagement. Teachers that participated in the coaching process believed effective instructional strategies increased student engagement during a lesson. In addition, higher levels of student engagement decreased the number of behavior issues and distractions present during the lessons. Relative to instructional strategies one teacher found that “it’s really helped show me that if I can come up with creative activities along with whatever I’m teaching, they are more receptive to what I’m trying to do.” Similarly, another teacher expressed that “when I use great strategies, the kids are so engaged, the students that usually interrupted my class with side conversations participated in the lesson.”

Teachers responded favorably to interview questions supporting an increase in their efficacy. During the interview one teacher described the following feeling after working with her respective coach, a teacher with more than 20 years’ experience, “I feel, . . . I feel energized, I feel positive.” Teachers expressed feeling more comfortable and more confident while conducting a lesson as a result of participating in the coaching process. Throughout each interview both teachers and literacy coaches expressed the belief that coaching increased overall teacher efficacy. A teacher with three years of teaching experiences stated, “I feel like I have enough education, I guess, to when I’m in front of my kids speak with enough confidence. I have enough resources, to reach any student that comes into my room now.” A teacher of seven years expressed a similar
view, “With my coach we improve my classroom. We’ve been improving my organizational skills, and things take steps, I believe, so I feel like I’m doing better.” Teachers felt that coaching sessions increased their level of preparation. This lent itself to an increased level of confidence during a lesson.

The teachers explained their experience with their coach yielded increased confidence and efficacy. The interview responses illustrated the importance of coaching as a personalized form of professional development. Teachers explained the usefulness of the coaching process. Literacy coaches interviewed had similar processes for coaching teachers. The coaches interviewed in this study utilized a method of coaching that employed a gradual release of responsibility to the teacher. The coach provided consistent one-on-one consultation and support to the teacher. One literacy coach described the process and its effect on a first-year teacher. The response clearly outlined how the coaching process increased the teacher’s overall capacity to teach ELA.

What I do is, for two days, I’m with the teachers, so we know what went on yesterday and what went on today and maybe the next day. If they see that you are there with them, they do the next day better. And then you go back, they’re excited to tell you that they did the work we did before, and there is work I need to read, like letters, like writings, and all that. I would I say, give me, and I’ll even help you rubric those tests.

One-on-one sessions with literacy coaches were found to have a profound effect on teachers’ efficacy. Teachers generally described these sessions as planning time. The literacy coach engaged in detailed lesson planning with teachers after in-depth diagnosis of student and teacher capacity through observation, discussion, and survey. The lesson-
planning periods were geared to the goals of the teacher and needs of the students. Each coach set aside time to meet with the teacher and plan a series of lessons that supported the district’s curriculum map and pacing guide. During this planning time the literacy coach presented teachers with various strategies to implement during the ELA period. As a result, teachers’ efficacy in the area of instructional strategies increased because of constant exposure and implementation of new strategies. A teacher reported,

Lessons, discussing lesson plans, getting ideas to reach certain students, we’ve had help modifying for special education students, how to deliver certain lessons so that they’re more interesting and interactive for the students... Let’s see. And that helps us if we’re stuck, too, trying to deliver a lesson to a certain student.

Following this meeting, the coach spent time in the classroom modeling the strategies and the overall lesson plan. Once the coach modeled the procedure of the lesson plan or implementation of a strategy they observed the teacher’s facilitation of the lesson. During the lesson, the literacy coach was engaged in the execution of the lesson. While the teacher presented a lesson the coach provided nonverbal direction through facial expressions or hand signals. Verbal cues were used during the lesson if a coach observed the teacher needed additional support. The coach may begin a co-teaching method to support teacher success. Additional support during a lesson may focus on classroom management. The coaches revealed how working with students in small groups, placing themselves in close proximity to perceived incorrigible students, or providing verbal cues help to maintain the learning environment. A teacher explained an experience with the literacy coach during a lesson,
When she comes into the room, it helps to have that extra set of hands, ears, and eyes in the room for certain classes, that we can, um, engage the student that may be a management problem. We can continue with our lesson and she’ll help with the management of that student or students so that we can move on and everyone can reap the benefits of what we’re, what we’re doing that day.

After the lesson, immediate feedback was provided to the teacher to provide additional support. Literacy coaches compelled teachers to reflect on the lesson presented. This was used to further assess the strengths and weakness of the teacher. These encounters were used as a platform for further interactions. If additional support was needed it was given.

A literacy coach interviewed in this study shared her design for coaching. Her process was identified as a “differentiated job-embedded approach.” She explained how the teachers she worked with were usually assigned to her by the building administration. The teachers were chosen based on a variety of reasons: number of years teaching, student achievement, or poor ratings. The coach explained how she first observes a teacher Then, she meets one-on-one with the teacher to have an honest conversation about what she noticed and enjoyed, along with what she wondered about and what she suggested. This work made the strengths and interests of the individual teacher very clear to all parties involved in the coaching process. In addition, teacher weaknesses were addressed in a nonthreatening manner. The coach proceeded to ask the teacher to set a literacy goal—sometimes she offered a suggested focus. This lent itself to a very specific and concentrated design for the coaching process. It required teachers to increase their capacity in one specific area of ELA instruction. The coach stated at this point that she
could return to the teacher with literacy “tools” that help the teacher reach those goals. Sometimes this meant modeling a lesson; other times, it meant team teaching. The majority of the time, it meant just being in the classroom as a supportive colleague who can jump in if needed or provide feedback after a class. This model for coaching candidly increases efficacy in classroom management by utilizing the presence of a coach as well as with regard to instructional strategies.

Teachers responded favorably when asked, “Can you think of some examples of changes in the way you work with students that led to improvements in their literacy performance? Teachers interviewed believed that, because they were better prepared, they approached their lessons with an increased confidence. They believed that the coaching process supported the execution of a seamless lesson. A teacher of 13 years stated that the effects of coaching yielded increased student engagement. She said,

Personally, I feel that it’s been very effective, the difference between just my confidence level in teaching English between now and last year has really grown. You know what? I have to say, emphatically yes! Oh my God, it’s really shown me things that I’ve even thought of that I can do in a classroom. Really some great techniques, some great tips on modeling, lesson plans, definitely. You know, I think it has definitely impacted my confidence level in terms of that creativity piece, coming up with ideas that the kids are receptive to. It’s really helped show me that if I can come up with creative activities along with whatever I’m teaching, then they are more receptive to what I’m trying to do. So it definitely made me feel more comfortable in what I’m trying to do. And it’s made me more confident in that area.
A literacy coach agreed with the response stating, “She’s very confident now, and actually her scores are better than anyone. Because she has helped the students build their reading stamina . . . every day; every day.” Another coach said, “I feel that it’s been an overall change in attitude, how to deliver instruction. I feel they have a better understanding now, not just of strategies, not just all chalk and talk but they have to engage the students.” Student achievement increased as a result of coaching, illustrating the effectiveness of coaching on the proficiency of the teacher. Coaches noted how much impact they had on teacher efficacy.

I have seen teachers take a more focused look at student work. They stop and check for understanding more. They don’t do “cute” stuff unless it's going to move learners. With a more critical eye, their teaching focus changes, and student learning improves because students are getting what they need.

During the research, coaches repeatedly stated that after coaching there were visible improvements of teacher performance. Coaches realized how much they help their teachers on a day-to-day basis. Moreover, teachers share the similar belief. Both teachers and coach expressed a clear understanding of the value of coaching. Based on responses to interview question it was clear that coaching positively impacted teaching.

The strength of coaching was marked throughout interviews conducted. Although teachers and coaches expressed an undeniable viewpoint that supported the idea that coaching increased efficacy, data received from the focus group identified very specific instances when coaching was ineffective. During the focus group teachers expressed a clear discontent for a coach that dictates during the coaching process. In this case teachers stated emphatically that coaching decreased teacher efficacy. Subjects explained
that coaches whose position and purpose were unclear yielded negative results. The focus group addressed ambiguity in relationship to the roles and responsibilities of coaches.

Is the coach a lead teacher? Is the coach a teacher at all? Does the coach who is leading the department also have the skill to go into the classroom on a daily basis, not just pop in and pop out. What is the difference between a coach and a lead teacher? Because other than that, I think there are some clear lines of demarcation that have not been laid out in certain districts. . . . I mean, I don’t think she knows what her job description is. That’s what I’m thinking. I don’t think we know. . . . I mean, if you’re here to help the kids, and ostensibly this district says it’s always here to help the kids, fine, then there has to be a team effort and there shouldn’t be any lines of demarcation like, “I’m this and you’re that.”

This data illustrated the importance of understanding the roles and responsibilities of a coach. During the focus group, teachers explained when coaches become controlled by administration they lose sight of their mission. Coaches become dictators and lose the important relationship necessary needed to be a successful coach. The focus group explained hang ups they have experienced with coaches that operate as administrators. “I don’t think they should be running a department, they should help the teachers to understand better ways of teaching the kids, and better practices for in the classroom”, stated a teacher in the focus group. This quote made it apparent that some teachers felt efficacy and coaching is compromised when coaching becomes impersonal. During the focus group, teachers explained that the quality coaching they received empowered them during consistent individualized instruction. It was observed that teachers were
demoralized by coaches that did not defer to the individual needs of teachers and their classes.

This is your class, these kids are not the same kids that are down the hall. What do you kids need and what can I do to help you get a better handle on how to help them with the skill they need, not what the whole school might need but not what your class might need but 60% of the school needed it so your kids are going to get it anyway.

In summary, responses to interview questions yielded an overarching belief that when teachers are continually supported in a coaching process that particularizes the strategies and planning an increase in teacher efficacy and student achievement will occur.

**Question 2.** What aspects of the literacy coaching experience do teachers and coaches perceive as being the most influential and useful or as being the least effective or useful? Literacy coaches were asked one interview question that directly related to Research Question 2. The research question asked, “Has the literacy coaching process been more effective in some areas, or with some teachers, than others? If yes, why do you think that is the case? During the interview teachers were asked, “Overall, how effective has the literacy coaching process been in helping you become an even better literacy teacher? Has the process been more effective in some areas than others? If yes, why do you think that is the case?” A number of themes emerged through interviews with teachers and coaches. Most influential aspects of coaching revealed three major themes, (a) modeling, (b) delivery of workshops and professional development, (c) providing
materials. Least influential aspects of coaching were centralized around attitudes based on years of teaching experience. This theme is explored below.

Participants were eager to respond to interview questions that evaluated the usefulness of the coaching process. Teachers shared positive experiences gained from interaction with their respective coaches. Throughout teacher interviews, literacy coach interviews, and the focus group *modeling* was repeatedly mentioned. When asked to describe the most useful components of literacy coaching, each coach explained the importance of modeling to the coaching experience. One coach stated, “what we must do is model different strategies that teachers can do and try.” Coaches expressed modeling as the most important work that they do as a coach. They believed that teachers cannot be taught new strategies without demonstration. Observing the coach allowed the teacher to understand the dimensions of execution, implementation, and evaluation of a new strategy. A participant recounted their experience,

Well, the coach, she actually comes around to classrooms, she’s willing to do demo-lessons in the classroom, if you find you’re struggling with a certain topic with the children, she’ll come over and say “Let me try this lesson with them,” or “Let me try this approach with them.” So she’s willing so come into the room and actually teach a lesson for you and gives you some pointers on what to do and how to keep the kids motivated.

When teachers watched their coach model, teachers’ efficacy was increased as they witnessed success within their respective classrooms. As the literacy coach modeled a lesson teachers were empowered and reassured that change and success were attainable under any circumstance. Modeling seemed to increase teacher confidence by providing
teachers with a positive force to try a new strategy. A literacy coach shared this idea with the researcher,

I work in several schools, but in each case, my most important role is to model. I don’t mean just modeling strategies or lessons in the classroom; I mean modeling professional behavior, integrity, hard work, and sincere relationships with faculty, students, and parents.

This statement conveyed another importance of modeling. Modeling provided a platform for making the teacher a more effective pedagogue and a better professional. As a result, modeling supports a teacher’s overall confidence when executing a lesson. As teachers continued to respond to the interview, their appreciation of modeling was evident. Teachers explained how modeling showed them the teacher that they could be, and for others it signified what some teachers always want to be. A teacher of more than 20 years affirmed this statement by saying,

I want to be a teacher like that. . . . She is a genius. She is able to help any class and any student right away. I struggle to make all of these new initiatives work.

She makes it looks effortless.

Modeling lessons and strategies was an experience for both the coach and the teacher. Although the teacher seemed to benefit the most from modeling, there was a clear exchange of knowledge. Coaches expressed that during the modeling process teachers dictated detailed notes about what they observed. These anecdotals provided the literacy coach with information about the teachers’ thoughts. A coach commented,
I require teachers to keep a binder with journal notes. These notes are taken during a modeling session or demo lesson. I also make them write a weekly reflection. This journal is a tool for reflecting.

It also allowed the coach to consistently gauge each teacher’s level of understanding. Literacy coaches monitored the breadth and depth of responses written by teachers, as teacher responses became more insightful, literacy coaches were able to chart professional growth. Comments during modeling were utilized during one-on-one sessions to tailor further instruction and enhance the coaching experience.

Teachers shared that engaging in the coaching experience was a form of quality professional development. As teachers responded to interview questions about their professional development experiences, each teacher felt that the professional development received from their coach proved to be the most useful professional development they received from their school district. One teacher expressed those feelings in the following statement,

A lot of times I leave PD days and say, “You know what, I can’t even say one thing that I learned.” But then there’s other days where you’re like, “Wow, I can use all of these things.” So when the literacy coach ran the PD, it was definitely very useful.

Teachers provided clear description of their perception of quality professional development. Participant responses described quality professional development as an experience that would immediately improve their day-to-day instruction. Based on interview responses, teachers expected professional development to be interactive and meaningful. Teachers expressed a yearning for knowledge that will make them better
equipped to deliver effective ELA instruction. It was a necessity that professional
development was hands-on useful. Professional development offered, must support the
daily demands of the teacher.

Teachers were asked to explore the variety of professional development that they
received from their school district. There was an overwhelming reaction of discontent. A
teacher stated, “I believe that the PD that was delivered to us was actually more harmful
than useful, the information that was presented to us was presented in such a way that we
were unable to use it.” Another key point that surfaced was illustrated in the following
point, “it’s [professional development] not relevant to what we’re doing in the classroom.
It’s not relevant to helping us perfect our craft.” In the course of the focus group a salient
point about professional development was made,

I think a big issue is that teachers are not consulted prior to PD days. I think, had
we been asked, and polled to see what our interests and needs are before PD days,
then maybe we could view these workshops to be more useful and helpful in the
classroom.

These quotes support the idea that the design and implementation of professional
development must involve input from staff to ensure that the professional development is
relevant to the context of the school. It was of the utmost importance to teachers that
professional development can be drawn upon during professional practice.

Teachers were animated as they continued to answer questions about professional
development. Interviews uncovered that, because the coach was immersed in the daily
operation of the school, the quality of professional development offered was superior.
When asked why professional development facilitated by the coach was superior, a
teacher responded, “The professional development workshops that come from the coach are always very helpful. . . . The way the coach, ah, broke it down to us I found it very practical, very useful, very hands-on.” Similarly, another teacher articulated that during professional development the literacy coach did a lot with us. The literacy coach has given us ideas that we’ve forgotten about, some ideas we didn’t even think of, um, because when you’re here for a long time, that can happen. We can kind of not, uh, maybe get new ideas. So I feel like I get doses of good ideas, practical ideas to use.

The common thread was usefulness. The coach presented professional development that was designed specifically for each group of teachers. Unlike an outside consultant, the professional development offered made direct connections to the issues presented by each respective school or classroom. A teacher shared her rationale for increasing professional development delivered by the coach by explain that they see the coach as one who helps us refine and hone what we know so we can do it better and be faster and use our time much more wisely. I think the literacy coach has been very helpful. The coach comes up with academic suggestions and I’m always open to suggestions. She gives me tips on certain individual students who might be struggling either behaviorally or academically, some strategies to, ah, handle them. And, . . . also, students who are struggling both academically and behaviorally. Um, a lot of good ideas.

These responses captured the significance of the coach’s usefulness in the professional community. As teachers and coaches continued to discuss professional development they articulated the belief that coaches delivered professional development
that served as change agent. One can gather that the professional knowledge and capacity of the coach enabled them to create professional development opportunities that were engaging and hands-on. Moreover, the coach’s familiarity with the culture of the school allowed them to tailor professional development in manner that was meaningful.

Professional development facilitated by the literacy coach was perceived as empowering by respondents. It served as a useful technique for increasing teacher capacity.

She also attends every single English meeting and actually runs most of the English meetings. Well, I feel that, honestly, at the English meetings, even though they’re brief, it’s almost like PD because she always comes with materials and suggestions.

Participants were forthcoming in their riposte on usefulness of literacy coaches. Teachers and coaches agreed that the coach supported teachers by providing materials. Literacy coaches were seen as human resource centers. Literacy coaches felt that it was their responsibility to provide teachers with the materials that they needed. All literacy coaches created a physical space for a lending library, technological resources, as well as access to professional publications. Teachers found this extremely helpful,

Again, the materials. She gave us a binder filled with different materials that we can use. She came with great materials; she came with all these games we could play with the kids, so it was just a bunch of supplemental materials that were very useful.

Teachers’ perspective on these materials supported the idea of the literacy coach as a resource. It seemed that the literacy coaches had a pulse on contemporary materials in education. Teachers that boasted 20-plus years found that obtaining materials from
their literacy coach forced them to abandon their usual routine of recycling plans and lessons from the past. One teacher stated, “It helps us to concentrate on the skill we’re supposed to be teaching for reading and writing. It gives us lesson plans, it gives us resources to use that are up to date.” Another teacher confirmed this assumption by saying, “I understand what the current best practices are . . . ”

At times materials provided by the coach increased communication throughout the department. It also built cohesiveness as teachers used the materials in unison across the departments, and sometimes the school.

She always gives an abundance of materials and new ideas for all teachers to benefit from, whether it’s English teachers, social studies teachers, math teachers, cross-curricular, um, just seeing what others are doing in our building kind of gives us a heads up and helps us feeling connected.

One operated a biweekly newsletter to communicate to the entire school building. Teachers found this helpful when planning and trying to meet the demands of curriculums and pacing guides.

So I feel like that’s a major perk, it’s a major plus . . . The newsletter gives us an idea of where we’re supposed to be and how we’re supposed to get there. These are things I know I’ll use to the end of my teaching career. It’s just, . . . I wouldn’t have ever had the time or the thought to do some of the things that this person has given me.

Possessing an abundance of materials to present to teachers seemed increase the literacy coaches’ skill set. The coaches continue to grow as they research new materials and best practices to share with their teachers. A literacy coach stated, “I continue to
learn and purchase materials so I can better serve my teachers. . . . I must never run out of ideas for them. . . . It is my job to have all the answers.” Coaches admit that the demands of the position are weighty. A coach admits,

        Usually they see me as a supplier of books, and as somebody who will give them everything they want. Everything they want when it comes to instruction, materials, to help them in many ways. They see me as anything relating to reading and writing.

Findings presented evidence that the coach is viewed as resource for materials.

        Although findings report literacy coaching was useful on many fronts, there is a recurring instance when coaching was not as useful. Coaches found that their work was least useful with teachers that were resistant to change, regardless of how many years they had taught. The research uncovered that this was a result of attitudes presented by these teachers.

        The kind of teacher that is receptive, the kind of teacher that thinks out of the box, the kind of teacher that is not afraid to try new things, the kind of teacher that is not resistant to change. And, you know, you have teachers like that here, and those are the teachers who benefitted from me the most.

Another interviewing agreed,

        Some of them, they don’t because they think that they have been and so they know better than you are. But you don’t give up on them. I never give up on them. I still go and we still talk. And if they ignore me, I say, can we do this some other time? You have to deal with them in a nice extra way.
Across this study coaches found that attitudes toward learning and change influenced the nature of the coaching.

Most often these attitudes were not directed toward the literacy coaches, but influenced by the culture of the building. The coaches interviewed in this study have all worked in more than one middle school. They expressed that schools with high staff turnover rates were the least successful in the coaching process. This was a result of the school climate and culture. The school’s culture and climate dictated the success of the coach.

Teachers in a school I worked in had five principals in eight years, and so of course, when something is new you’re going to be resistant to it. But going into the third year now I feel that the teachers are much more comfortable because they’ve actually used some of the strategies that I came in with and now they see that they work.

Findings revealed that coaching is most useful in a school community that was prepared to make change. Administration and staff are willing to accept candid help and support. The coaching process is built upon a change from within. The coach must be perceived as a colleague that is dedicated to work for the common good of the school. “If the coach is in the classrooms getting her/his hands dirty too, then the coach is a supportive colleague.” Although coaching was least successful in unsettled school environments, the coaching experience was valued as teachers became comfortable with idea of change. However, the changes supported by the coach must be deep rooted in the needs of the individual school. School contextual factors played major role shaping the coaching process and its effectiveness. Organizational factors and a negative school
climate had effects on coaching roles, in some cases dramatically impacting coach efforts to work with teachers.

**Question 3. Is there a change in delivery and execution of ELA instruction as a result of participating in the literacy coaching professional development activity?**

Findings thus far have shown a strong belief that the presence of coaching has changed the instruction of teachers that participated in the process. Literacy coaches, teachers, and focus group participants were asked one central interview question that directly related to Research Question 3. The research question asked, “Can you think of some examples of changes in the way the teachers worked with students that led to improvements in the students’ literacy performance?” The question discussed in this phase of data analysis encompasses the results from Interview Questions 1 and 2. The findings discussed earlier in regard to interview questions one and two are also relevant here. Teachers strongly believed that their participation in the coaching process increased the capacity of teacher in ELA instruction. Research Question 3 explored whether or not this increased capacity translated to the classroom and the students. It is not enough for teachers to possess new skills. The ability to reference this new knowledge and use it in a meaningful way may be the most important value of coaching. This section looks at the implementation of knowledge acquired from coaching.

Seven interviews and a focus group revealed that literacy coaching was a change agent in regards to ELA instruction. As teachers worked with their coach, there was a transfer of knowledge between the coach and the teacher. This knowledge was utilized during the teachers’ daily classroom routines. Responses from interview questions showed that participants felt the coaching process provided them with strategies and
skills were practical, therefore it seemed natural to transfer these skills into the classroom as a part of the coaching experience. One teacher put it this way:

This year I would probably say that it, um, it made me do more hands-on activities with the kids, let the kids be a lot more involved with the lesson than they have been previously. And bringing up more creative ways to engage with the kids. Bringing in PowerPoints, bringing in videos, allowing them to come up with different technology. They have a way better say in the lessons now and I think it’s really affected how our students look at our class period. They look forward to doing certain things or seeing certain videos, so overall it’s really helped. For me, it has really opened the door for creativity. It has really sparked creativity in me and caused me to think outside the box. Some of the activities and things were, you know, were suggested and made available to me. It’s really sort of helped me to try to make English more interesting. And that’s something I’ve been struggling with—trying to make English more interesting, like incorporating different mediums, doing PowerPoints, and incorporating technology, you know. Those are things that I never really thought to do or was maybe a little uncertain of trying. But I really feel more comfortable doing that this year and I’m excited, because those are things that I’m going to use forever.

This example demonstrated the connections between the coaching process and classroom practice. Responses showed that teachers increased their level of comfort with strategies through the coaching activities of model and professional development. The immersion in the coaching process increased the likelihood of implementation in the
classroom. Teachers were eager to implement ideas they learned from their coach. Below are additional quotes about how the coach influenced delivery of instruction;

> With the mini-lessons, I implemented demo lessons, which were invaluable, in that span of time doing a demo, what this sort of did was that it freed me up. ’Cause after I did that I can let them work independently and that frees me up to go to the kids who definitely need extra help. Or . . . I can just sort of float around and see who really needs the help, who is comprehending the skill, and even in turn use those kids to help me with kids who aren’t really getting it. That’s really, that’s really been a big change with me; it’s really changed my teaching style, which is a big thing.

The data also revealed that instruction has changed throughout content area departments and the entire school building. Coaches made an impact on instruction that was visible by both coaches and teachers. There were changes in the delivery of instruction that mirrored strategies learned during the coaching process.

Again, this is only my third year in this building, but the literacy coach came last year and I definitely see a difference in the building. Like the first year, the English teachers were very scattered, kind of did their own thing, whereas now with the literacy coach everybody’s more on the same page. She has a curriculum map where it’s mapped out that the English teachers should be doing this, the English teachers should be doing that. I feel it is nice that everybody’s on the same page and the children are learning the same thing at the same time. As we share experiences we notice that the majority of teachers have implemented the new strategies in their classroom. I think across the board it’s definitely beneficial
no matter which way you slice it. I do see a marked difference in the school, . . . the way things have been running and how people are teaching since she’s been here.

**Summary of Findings**

The combination of the survey and the interview findings provided insights into the relationship between teacher efficacy and literacy coaching. They also explored how literacy coaches did their job and how teachers perceived their influence. Data from the survey were analyzed first, and then the interviews were used to explain or further explore the findings as they relate to the research questions.

Data from the survey revealed the level of efficacy of the participants. This data showed that teachers felt very confident in all three factors, student engagement, instructional strategies, and student engagement. Mean scores on the survey showed that participants that have received at least one year of literacy coaching perceived they had quite a bit of efficacy in all factors.

The interviews indicated that middle school literacy coaches perform a wide range of duties that increased teacher capacity. This included planning, modeling, observing, professional development, and providing feedback.

Overall, teachers were extremely satisfied with the services provided by their literacy coach. The literacy coaches navigated the needs of the teachers, listened to the conversations of the teachers, and observed lessons. Interview responses showed that engaging in the coaching process improved their confidence, execution, and knowledge as it relates to ELA instruction. The data collected in the research, shows that teachers and literacy coaches, saw coaching as a powerful agent of change.
Chapter 5: Discussion

In this chapter I discuss key findings concerning teacher efficacy and the literacy coaching process. A brief overview of the research design and results are also provided. The limitations of this study and its design are discussed. This is followed by a summary of the implications and meanings of the study and how I think the results can be applied to the literacy coaching experience.

This mixed-method study explored the impact of the literacy coach on teachers’ sense of efficacy based on their Perceived Teacher Efficacy score on the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES) and response to individual interview questions and focus groups questions.

Three research questions guided this study:

1. Does Teacher Self-Efficacy increase as a result of literacy coaching?
2. What aspects of the literacy coaching experience do teachers and coaches perceive as being the most influential and useful as well as being the least effective or useful?
3. Is there a change in delivery and execution of ELA instruction as a result of participating in the literacy coaching professional development activity?

A mixed-method approach was used to investigate the multidimensional phenomenon of literacy coaching by addressing the three research questions. Data was collected by administering the OSTES to measure the perceived efficacy of 23 middle school teachers who had participated in a literacy coaching program. Further data was
collected by conducting interviews, focus groups, and taking observation notes of both teachers and literacy coaches. Twenty-three teachers in the study agreed to take the OSTES and participate in the qualitative portion of this study. Three literacy coaches were also included in the open-ended interviews.

Interviews were conducted after the administration of the OSTES during teachers’ lunch hours and after school. The interviews were based on open-ended questions, aimed at understanding how the teacher’s participation in the literacy coaching process influenced her or his efficacy and instruction. One month following the interviews a focus group was conducted. The focus group enabled the researcher to validate responses from the interviews and to explore in more depth some of the issues raised by the interviews or the OSTES data. The focus group also made the unique contribution to the research of allowing individual teachers to participate in a group discussion where different viewpoints and perspectives were discussed. As the group convened there was consensus of perspective.

As a participant researcher I kept observation notes of my literacy coaching planning sessions with teachers, and professional development workshops that I facilitated as a middle school literacy coach. I also made notes during and after observing coaches modeling teaching in classrooms of participating teachers. In addition, I recorded field notes during a Literacy Coaches’ Consortium. This Literacy Coaches’ Consortium gathered most of the literacy coaches in the suburban New York area for support and professional development. Field notes revealed that the dynamics of coaching found in this study were relevant to other demographic areas.
The results of the research yielded a number of themes. Results indicated that teachers in the study perceived themselves as having quite a bit of efficacy in the sub-areas of student engagement, classroom management, and instructional strategies in the content area of ELA. Teachers were most efficacious in the sub-area of instructional strategies and least efficacious in student engagement. Interview responses revealed that teachers believed the coaching process increased their confidence and capacity as an ELA teacher. As participants responded to interview questions it was evident that teachers valued the time spent with their literacy coach. Teachers repeatedly expressed how useful the modeled lessons were in helping them understand instructional strategies. Participants also believed the one-on-one planning sessions with the coach were helpful. Teachers further believed that engaging in the coaching experience increased their confidence and made them better ELA teachers.

Literacy coaches were also interviewed in this study. Responses from literacy coaches expressed a belief that their teachers made positive changes in their instructional delivery, level of student engagement, and implementation of new strategies as result of working with the literacy coach. However, some of the more interesting results from the focus group of teachers were a pattern of both negative and positive reactions to coaching. The focus group validated many of the positive responses made in teachers’ interviews. During the focus groups teachers concurred that the coaching process was beneficial to increasing teacher efficacy as well as increasing teacher capacity. However, the focus group also provided an opportunity for teachers to reach a consensus view that emphasized the crucial importance of the personality and character of the literacy coach. Teachers that participated in the focus group believed the coaching experience could be
ineffective, uncomfortable, and even unpleasant if it was led by literacy coaches who were not personable or empathic. Literacy coaches who were authoritarian or who did not respect the teacher as another professional educator, were highlighted as less likely to be effective and successful.

Field notes provided detailed descriptions of the interactions between literacy coaches and teachers. Field notes indicated the collegial exchange between the literacy coach and the teacher was valuable to the coaching process. Observations conducted during the Literacy Coach Consortium had similar themes to those presented by the interview data. The researcher observed that literacy coaches valued their position, and felt strongly about the impact they made on their teachers. Observation data also illustrated a strong belief on the part of literacy coaches that modeling and providing resources to teachers were the most important responsibilities of the literacy coach.

Overall, the results of this study were generally in accord with a social cognitive theory of self-efficacy. The data also strongly suggested that literacy coaching has a strong impact on teacher efficacy.

**Implications of Findings**

As I completed this research I acquired some insights about the process of research in the field that I was not fully aware of before beginning this study. The research is nestled in teacher beliefs and feelings. It is of the utmost importance to capture the essence of teachers’ confidence. Moreover, as a researcher it is important that you look at your data as a whole. The data must tell you a story. Segmenting interview data by individual can lead to a “cold” interpretation of data when a “warm” interpretation is needed. As a researcher, I approached my qualitative data from a
different angle. It was important that I understand the voices of the participants. In order to immerse myself in the data, I collected not only interview and focus group data but also research notes and observations. I converted all the data into digital audio files and listened to interview responses, observation notes, field notes, and group responses repeatedly. I listened to data before I went to bed, during exercise, and during my lunch period. I replaced my normal IPod playlists with audio versions of participant data. As I listened to my qualitative data I began to recognize nuances in the data such as voice inflection, pauses, and pitches. This revealed another perspective on data. It made coding the data much easier. As I listened to data I would casually jot down notes. In my opinion, it increased my familiarity with the data. It also influenced my writing. Data collected for this study was approached with a critical ear, making all the difference in interpretation.

The chief goal of the literacy coach is to “assist content teachers in addressing the reading comprehension, writing, and communication skills that are particular to their disciplines” through job-embedded professional development (IRA, 2006a, p. 7). My purpose was to present an understanding of the impact of the literacy coach on teachers’ sense of self-efficacy in middle school ELA classrooms. The most important idea learned through this study is that the literacy coach is highly valued by teachers as a form of professional development. Teachers wholeheartedly believed in the coaching process as a means of professional development. Moreover, teachers sought the support of the literacy coach to obtain a sense of collegiality and support needed to increase both self-efficacy and collective efficacy, an important aspect of the adult learning theory.
Literacy coaches have the power to transform a wide range of teachers with various perspectives, years of experiences, and years of education. The power to institute change is one of the most important attributes of effective professional development (Guskey, 2002) and that appears to be a crucial component of the literacy coaching process. Regardless of their demographics, participants appreciated the coaching experience. Garet et al. (2001) explained that professional development that is “sustained and intensive is more likely to have an impact.” The authors also argued that professional development that focuses on academic subject matter (content), gives teachers opportunities for “hands-on” work (active learning), and is integrated into the daily life of the school (coherence), is more likely to produce enhanced knowledge and skills (Garet et al., 2001). The data from the research conducted in this study supports this conclusion. Consequently, the most prevalent themes regarding effective methods in this research were hands-on professional development sessions, modeling, and collaborative lesson planning. These three coaching activities in turn enhanced the knowledge and skills of the teachers participating in this study. An influential way to create and strengthen efficacy is through vicarious experiences provided by social models (Bandura, 1995, p. 3). Participants felt invigorated by the new ideas presented by the coach and that led to increased teacher efficacy.

The presence of the teacher within the school building integrates the coach into the daily life of the school, which appears to be one reason why literacy coaching is such a beneficial form of professional development. Interview data showed that teachers appreciated the presence of the coach within the school. The coaching process studied in this research designated one coach for each school building. These coaches were directed
to work with the ELA teachers only. As a result, teachers felt supported at all times. Teachers believed that accessibility to the coach made the coaching experience more effective. This coaching model also allows the literacy coach to become a part of the school culture. The literacy coaches have a clear perspective of the school climate and culture because they live and work in the school. This is useful in their work with teachers and students. The professional development offered by the coach is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school building. Teachers and coaches were able to have candid conversations about real, specific, and contemporary issues concerning the school. Observation notes of the coaching process document the exchange during one-on-one coaching sessions. It is clear that the foundation of coaching sessions were based on the needs of each individual teacher and class. Reflections encouraged the conversations between the coach and the teacher. In the coaching sessions observed teachers were not afraid to candidly review a lesson or evaluate its outcome. Teachers and coaches were able to make strong connections that led to an effective coaching experience.

As coaches and teachers engaged in collegial conversation both parties acknowledged school climate and culture. They also recognized the positive and negative aspects of the school climate. Although teachers were overwhelmed at times, the coaches used their knowledge of instruction to improve climate and culture in the classroom. As a result, teachers reported that a noticeable change occurred in the school building after the coaches began their work in each school. Coaches continued to integrate the context of the school into each coaching and professional development session. This may be one reason why professional development provided by building-level coaches was valued much more than outside consultants.
Professional development facilitated by the literacy coaches in this study focused their attention and resources on one content area. The specificity of their work increased the coaches’ capacity to support teachers. In essence, it increased the coaches’ self-efficacy. Furthermore, it increased teacher capacity and confidence in their respective content area. While there was no empirical demonstration of this conclusion, the results of this study strongly suggest that when coaches focus on a particular content area there is a high level of effectiveness. Field notes taken during the Literacy Coaches’ Consortium summarized viewpoints from a number of experienced coaches. The most powerful of the conversations revolved around their own efficacy. Coaches shared experiences that decreased their confidence in coaching. When coaches were required to service multiple content areas or multiple schools they felt their effectiveness was decreased. In a study conducted by Smith (2006) he found literacy coaches that engaged in work other than coaching broke the coaching process into “disjointed bits”. He also indicated, “School-related roles associated with this responsibility presented a bleak picture of missed opportunities and lost time, suggesting a pronounced level of coaching-process fragmentation” (Smith, 2006). This fragmentation can lead to unsuccessful experiences and a loss of valuable time, thus decreasing the efficacy of coaches.

The coaches in my study believed wholeheartedly in the coaching process, but candidly affirmed that coaches have limitations. Coaches who confined their work to a specific area were able to better manage their duties and were more effective in influencing teacher instruction and efficacy. They believed it was imperative that administrators understood the difference between an instructional coach and a literacy coach. This would lead to clearly defined roles for the literacy coach that would not
compromise the ultimate purpose of literacy coaching. Further, coaches described the ineffectiveness of coaches who were multitasking as teachers while serving as a coach. Positionality and focused roles greatly affected the coaches’ efficacy and their ability to serve teachers. The coaches that participated in this consortium were reflective and thought-provoking in nature. A theme that emerged across the consortium was that it is a necessity that literacy coaches have one role within a school. The coaches’ commitment is to improving ELA instruction for the teacher and the student. Sturtevant (2003) described the literacy coach as the master teacher. Based on my analysis and interpretation of interviews, I learned that the coach is viewed as an educational expert, as a true colleague, and, most of all, a form of support. People seek proficient models that possess the competencies to which they aspire (Bandura, 1995, p. 2) and as I analyzed interview data it was evident that teachers viewed the literacy coach as a valuable resource. Teachers repeatedly referred to their coach as an amazing educator, a purveyor of knowledge, and a resource. Teachers explained situations where their coach was able to answer questions they felt were unanswerable. When teachers felt ineffective or distraught the literacy coach seemed to be able to provide them with the tools they needed to get back on track. The coach’s presence in the classroom helped them understand the needs of both the teachers and the students. Modeling lessons, co-teaching, and supporting students during a lesson were all valued by the teachers interviewed. “The observation of another's actions leads to a cognitive representation for that behavior that can be used as a model when an individual confronts related circumstances” (Taylor, 1998, p. 66). These activities which were executed within the classroom setting, proved to be the most meaningful parts of the coaching process.
Hoffman (2009) found in her research that literacy coaches who only provided resources and professional development were less effective because they were not in the classroom. Teachers in Hoffman’s study indicated they were disheartened and frustrated with implementing new ELA initiatives because their coaches were not supportive in the classroom.

The research conducted in my study supported Hoffman’s findings. As teachers described the usefulness of the coach, they emphasized the importance of classroom support and interaction that empowered teachers. They believed the additional support enabled them to implement new instructional strategies. As a result of implementing new instructional strategies student engagement increased. The high level of student engagement led to fewer discipline problems during the ELA teaching period. This transformed climate and culture for teachers and students. Teacher efficacy gradually increased and teachers had more positive interactions within the classroom. As teachers reflected upon successful lessons with their coach, their willingness to try more novel instructional strategies increased. Teachers believed they possessed the technique and the knowledge needed to implement best practices. Observation notes disclosed a certain spark of confidence that emerged each time a teacher was successful. A quite interesting finding revealed that this increased confidence occurred whether or not teachers delivered instruction independently or using the co-teaching model with the literacy coach. The collegial conversations and reflections brought to light that teachers were highly capable of delivering engaging and effective ELA instruction. The many components of the literacy coaching process were credited with influencing this increased confidence and capacity.
This research dissertation is entitled Coaching for Confidence, and the data reflected that theme. However, the data presented an unexpected finding. The effectiveness of the coaching process can be severely compromised by the personality of the coach. As participants responded to interview questions they described the characteristics and traits of an effective coach. Consequently, participants shared their perspectives, thoughts and beliefs about ineffective coaching. Teachers and literacy coaches indicated various personality traits of effective coaches, however the four traits of a coach most frequently mentioned were (a) approachable, (b) personable, (c) patient, and (d) good listener. Both teachers and coaches felt these four personality traits determined the effectiveness of the coach. A teacher stated,

I think it’s just that she has such a great personality and she’s open for suggestions, she’s open—her door’s always open. She makes it so easy and she’s very approachable that you never feel like, “Oh no, I can’t speak to her about this,” or “I’m having trouble with this, but I don’t want to say it.” She’s very easygoing and she always has a solution. . . . And she’s very organized: she makes a schedule so that you know exactly when she’s available and when she can come into your room, so she’s just, she’s very . . . she’s great.

A coach’s quality of being approachable encourages teachers to engage in the coaching process. Teachers were not afraid to work with their coach. The coach’s personality dictated the nature of the coaching experience for each teacher. Middle school teaching can be very isolated and teachers may be reluctant to engage in coaching. However, teachers expressed their willingness to work with their coach,
she’s personable, um, she’s likeable, she’s very loquacious, she’s very easy to talk to, and I never hesitate to come to her. I never feel like I’m in her space and I’m overwhelming her and she doesn’t have time for us.

This statement is not an unusual description of effective coaches. Alternative data collected from field notes revealed that coaches felt their character had a strong influence on their coaching outcomes. One coach stated,

“... approachable, perseverance, hard-working... [laughs], patience. Those are the three, I think. You have to have patience. When a teacher needs something, even if you are in the middle of something, you have to help that teacher. You know, you have to do something, whatever you can do for that teacher. You have to be open to all teachers not matter what, I never turn anyone away.”

Coaches related that to be a successful coach you must be hard-working and approachable. Schools where coaching was less effective faced a number of issues with personality conflicts which meant the literacy coaches were considered less approachable by the teachers. During the consortium, a coach of over three years stated that, “I had to come to veteran teachers with a different personality and attitude to make it work.” Focus group data also revealed teachers’ perceptions of an ineffective coach,

When someone comes in, there should not be—how can I say this? Um, like “I’m the big cheese, and you’re the little know-nothing peon.” Because it’s not how it should be. I mean, if you’re here to help the kids, and ostensibly this district says it’s always here to help the kids, fine, then there has to be a team effort and there shouldn’t be any lines of demarcation like, “I’m this and you’re that.” So it took a
while, there was not a warm and fuzzy start. . . . I just really think . . . humility.

Just a little humility.

Both coaches and teachers agreed that approach and personality could impose barriers between the coach and the teachers. This more often occurred with veteran teachers. The researcher’s field notes from the literacy coaching consortium and interview responses suggested that coaches’ personality must be conducive to building relationships with veteran teachers. One coach responded,

The old teachers, usually with the old teachers they think they know best, they know better than you. . . . I let them do what they have to do. But if I see that there are things that need structuring, then I go in and model or help them with what they’re doing, like building up their library, or building up their mini-lesson on how to teach characterization on a book, on a novel, and everything. You have to be with them. . . . But you don’t give up on them. I never give up on them. I still go and we still talk. And if they ignore me, I say, can we do this some other time? You have to deal with them in a nice extra way.

Although the coaching process was successful at increasing teacher efficacy, the success largely rested on the disposition of the coach. Coaches must be persistent in a manner that shows they care. This genuine devotion to teachers must be deep rooted in the coaches’ belief in themselves, their teachers, and the coaching process. A coach’s personality thus seems to weigh heavily on how teachers perceive them. When teachers perceive the coach as a true colleague and team player they appear to be more likely to engage in the coaching process. That is important because the intermediate goal is for teachers to immerse themselves in the coaching process. Research indicated that literacy
coaching in urban and suburban areas is beneficial to increasing the capacity of teachers and achievement of students (Steckel, 2003). This study affirms that coaching can influence a teacher’s most inner feelings and thoughts. The literacy coach can influence teacher’s perceptions of themselves as a professional. The facets of the coaching process are a means of professional development that focuses on the teacher’s perception of themselves and their practice. As a result a teacher’s sense of efficacy is directly influenced by the coaching process.

**Recommendations**

The findings of this study suggest the following topics for further study:

1. The OSTES was administered to ELA teachers that engaged in the coaching process for at least three years. Although this data was used solely to describe the efficacy of the participants and measure their personal teaching efficacy (PTE), it presented information that could lead to further exploration. All the participants worked in urban areas with high poverty rates. The teacher turnover rate was significant. It is interesting to note that under these conditions teachers still perceived themselves to have a high level of teaching efficacy. It would be beneficial to study the efficacy of teachers in urban areas from a longitudinal or developmental perspective. Such a study could explore the factors that influence efficacy in urban schools as well as map out typical patterns of efficacy development and/or deterioration.

2. The findings revealed the critical importance of personality in literacy coaches. Coaches are required to work with a myriad of staff members. Each staff member possesses their own experiences, personality, and point of view. It behooves literacy coaches to consider that to become a successful coach there are prerequisites that
reach beyond content area knowledge and teaching expertise. Further research should address the question, what personality traits support successful literacy coaching?

3. The position and job description of a literacy coach continues to develop. Considering the countless responsibilities imposed upon coaches, and the number of coaching models to choose from it would be beneficial to investigate which responsibilities should be emphasized for coaching. It would also be beneficial to investigate which responsibilities impede the effectiveness of the coaching process.

4. Research has shown that literacy coaches are change agents. Literacy coaches may be considered transformational leaders. Are literacy coach’s transformational leaders? A study exploring the leadership styles of literacy coaches in both elementary and secondary schools would provide an added dimension to the body of literature on school leadership and coaching.

5. Further studies could also increase the depth of knowledge on teacher efficacy and coaching. Such a study would be longitudinal and require the administration of the OSTES before teachers engage in the coaching process as well as at different points in the coaching process. Observations, field notes, and interviews throughout the first two years of the coaching process would be conducted. Data from multiple administrations of the OSTES could be analyzed and compared. Interview data could be used to explain quantitative data from a survey instrument.

6. Finally, the data analysis procedure I used in this study was not standard operating procedure. Further research exploring the effectiveness of immersive and repeatedly listening to interview data may lead to a better understanding of where this approach is effective and appropriate.
Limitations of Study

This study does not come without limitations and these limitations impact the degree to which these findings can be generalized. Limitations also affect how confident we can be that the quantitative data is reliability and valid and whether the qualitative data is believable or not. The purpose of this study was to identify how professional development experiences impact teachers’ self-efficacy. This research was limited to teachers’ and literacy coaches perceptions of their practice. There is therefore an element of the subjectivity of the respondent’s perspectives. Since I am a practicing literacy coach and I used myself as a part of the study, I did not approach the research with an objective, neutral stance. I approached it with a subjective judgment that literacy coaching has great potential to impact both the efficacy and expertise of literacy teachers and through that to impact the quality of instruction that students receive. Further, I used the school where I worked and the staff of that school in the research. This was not the only school I studied but it is likely that my broad knowledge of the school and staff where I worked was a factor in my interpretation of the data from that school. This is not a guarantee that I misinterpreted or misunderstood the data. In fact, I believe my knowledge of literacy coaching in general, my knowledge of the school districts where the study was done, and my knowledge of the school where I worked as a literacy coach actually enhanced and enriched my analysis of the data. However, I did not approach this study as an unbiased, objective observer and that would be considered by some to be a limitation.

Another potential limitation is who participated in the study. The teachers discussed experiences as a teacher as well as interactions with literacy coaches. The literacy coaches expressed the perceptions of their role, the construct and context of their
position, in addition to their perceived effectiveness. A limitation of the survey, interview, and focus groups was the willingness of participation. Only 23 of 32 potential participants actually participated and while there were no apparent differences between those who did and those who did not participation, there remains the possibility that there were unknown but important differences between participants and non-participants.

Another limitation was the timely response of participants to complete surveys, return signed waivers, and candidly respond to interviews. There was less quantitative data for analysis because some forms and surveys were not returned by deadlines. The nature of questions for the interview and focus groups may have also been a limitation. The questions were quite reflective in nature. Questions that were geared to participants’ teaching ability may have been difficult for teachers to honestly answer.

Time was also an inevitable limitation. Due to tight research timelines as well as constraints on the availability of participants, some data was not collected. There was not an opportunity, for example, to complete a pre-and post-survey tool, as well as conducted multiple interviews of participants. Conducting more than one interview or longer interviews with each participant would have increased the depth of responses. Another limitation was the number of schools and participants utilized for this study. All of the participants were from urban schools which was also a limitation in terms of generalization.

Another potential limitation was my position in the professional and power structure of the school system. My positionality as a literacy coach in a participating school may have affected the responses of some participants, It was necessary to engage in a conversation with each of the participants to discuss my role and assure them that our
work together would be kept confidential. Further, because I am not an administrator I had to assure them that I would not be involved in work performance evaluation. A conversation about power and positioning was conducted with all participants within the program. This did not negate the fact that I was aware of the power dynamics that may have occurred because of my position. In keeping with my theoretical framework, I paid particular attention to the ways in which race, age, gender and position impacted interactions with participants. In addition, I had to be conscious of the ways in which my role as a literacy coach may have skewed observations and analyses in the middle school where I work.

Conclusion

“Professional development programs based on the assumption that change in attitudes and beliefs comes first are typically designed to gain acceptance, commitment, and enthusiasm from teachers and school administrators before the implementation of new practices or strategies” (Guskey, 2002).

Literacy coaches help teachers acquire instructional strategies with ease because of their consistency and their presence in the school building. A coach’s proficiency in communication and content dually support teachers. As teachers participate in the coaching process they reflect on their practice to identify areas of improvement. Coaching is systematic, using reflection to move teachers toward greater effectiveness.

Coaching makes better teachers by acting as the champion of the teacher. Throughout this study teachers indicated that their coach genuinely cared about the teachers and students. Their dedication to the improvement of instruction positively impacted school climate.
Coaches have the potential to recreate a school’s culture. The qualities of an effective coach seem to help mend the dysfunction of a school building. Coaches listen to the needs of the teachers and understand the needs of the student. They provide resources when needed. Moreover, they ensure that there is follow through with initiatives, policy, and procedure.

Coaches choose to listen instead of dictate. As they listen to the cries of our children and requests of staff they are able to put the pieces of a dysfunctional school back together. Coaches view the school from multiple lenses, a teacher, an administrator, and a staff developer. This deepens and broadens their knowledge. As a result, they are able to take the pieces of the puzzle and connect them together in order to obtain a true and authentic representation of a school. Coaches utilize this critical information to assess, plan, and support.

Coaches make a difference. The difference lies within the souls and the spirits of the teachers and students they interact with. The coach empowers teachers from the inside out. Coaches take teachers by the hand through a journey of growth and change. The most important aspect just may be that they never loosen their hold. Although coaching is based on a gradual release of responsibility coaches are always accessible. Their steadfast disposition forges even tighter bonds between them and the teacher. These bonds foster a trust that is difficult to gain from secondary teachers. The trust that exists between a successful coach and his or her teachers epitomizes collegiality and respect. This type of relationship demands an earnest, genuine exchange of thoughts and opinions. Teachers value the advice of their coach, devouring each morsel as professional nourishment.
This research revealed the candid beliefs and perceptions of middle school coaches and teachers during the coaching process. The voices of the participants genuinely expressed their feelings and opinions. As participants overcame the initial uneasiness of interviews they began to respond to questions genuinely. Teachers openly admitted their need for support, and, moreover, they acknowledged those areas of literacy that challenged them. They expressed the daily challenges they faced in the areas of classroom management, instructional strategies, and student engagement. The testimonies reinforced the notion that America’s middle schools are in crisis. But, as they continued to engage in the interview they spoke of hope. This hope was embedded in their participation in the coaching process. Coaching opened their eyes, ears, and minds to possibility of change.

As teachers and coaches recounted their experiences of the coaching experiences the language of the interview responses changed. The responses spoke of new found relationships in turbulent school climates, a new sense of cohesiveness, and of new instructional strategies. Participants spoke of the changes with a sincere expression of happiness. As coaches proudly shared the improvements of teachers it reinforced their purpose. Teachers proudly itemized the changes they had made in their classrooms. Both parties were very satisfied with the results of the coaching process.

Based on the findings of this research, literacy coaching can be effective by increasing teacher efficacy. The coaches recognized the skills and potential of teacher, and as a result the teachers were able to renew their love of teaching. Teachers believed in themselves. They believed they were capable of making a difference in the lives of their students. This set in motion a change in instruction that was unprecedented in each
of the three middle schools. This exchange of positive energy and confidence created a cycle of continuous progress. An increase in efficacy was achieved by both the coach and teacher.

The most important finding of this study is the ideal that coaching helps teachers believe in themselves, and in turn they believe in the children, which is the very essence of education.
References


RAND Reading Study Group. (2002). Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.


Snow, C. E., Ippolito, J., & Schwartz, R. (2006). What we know and what we need to know about literacy coaches in middle and high schools: A research synthesis and proposed research agenda. In International Reading Association *Standards for middle and high school literacy coaches* (pp. 35-51). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.


Appendix A

Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale

Directions for Scoring the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale

Developers: Megan Tschannen-Moran, College of William and Mary Anita Woolfolk Hoy, the Ohio State University.

Construct Validity


Factor Analysis

As we have used factor analysis to test this instrument, we have consistently found three moderately correlated factors: Efficacy in Student Engagement, Efficacy in Instructional Practices, and Efficacy in Classroom Management. At times, however, the makeup of the scales may vary slightly. With preservice teachers we recommend that the full scale (either 24-item or 12-item short form) be used, because the factor structure often is less distinct for these respondents.

Subscale Scores

To determine the Efficacy in Student Engagement, Efficacy in Instructional Practices, and Efficacy in Classroom Management subscale scores, we compute unweighted means of the items that load on each factor. Generally these groupings were:

**Long Form**

**Efficacy in Student Engagement:** Items 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 14, 22

**Efficacy in Instructional Strategies:** Items 7, 10, 11, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24

**Efficacy in Classroom Management:** Items 3, 5, 8, 13, 15, 16, 19, 21

Reliabilities

In the study reported in Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy (2001) above the following reliabilities were found:

**Long Form Short Form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TSES</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Because this instrument was developed at the Ohio State University, it is sometimes referred to as the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale. We prefer the name, Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy.
Teacher Beliefs – TSES
This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create challenges for teachers. Your answers were confidential.

Directions: Please indicate your opinion about each of the questions below by marking any one of the nine responses in the columns on the right side, ranging from (1) “None at all” to (9) “A Great Deal” as each represents a degree on the continuum.

Please respond to each of the questions by considering the combination of your current ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your present position.

None at all 1-2
Very Little 3-4
Some Degree 5-6
Quite a Bit 7-8
A Great Deal 9
### Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale (long form)

**Teacher Beliefs**

Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinion about each of the statements below. Your answers are confidential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How much can you do?</th>
<th>Nothing</th>
<th>Very Little</th>
<th>Some Influence</th>
<th>Quite A Bit</th>
<th>A Great Deal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How much can you do to help your students think critically?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To what extent can you make your expectations clear about student behavior?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. How much can you do to help your students value learning?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. How much can you gauge student comprehension of what you have taught?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. How much can you do to foster student creativity?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. How much can you do to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. How much can you do to adjust your lessons to the proper level for individual students?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. How well can you keep a few problem students from ruining an entire lesson?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. To what extent can you provide an alternative explanation or example when students are confused?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. How well can you respond to defiant students?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students?</td>
<td>(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Letter Requesting Permission to Use Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale

Date: July 20, 2010
To: Ms. Woolfolk-Hoy

I am requesting official permission to use the Woolfolk-Hoy Teacher Efficacy Scale in my doctoral dissertation entitled “Literacy coaching: A Champion for Teacher Efficacy” at St. John Fisher College”. My dissertation will explore the correlation between literacy coaching and teacher efficacy in middle school English Language Arts classrooms. I believe that your scale will support my study by measuring efficacy of the participants. Your scale will compose of the quantitative portion of my data collection. Coupled with interviews and focus groups I feel that my dissertation will add to the body of research. I would greatly appreciate your support in this endeavor.

Sincerely,
Gayle N. White
Appendix C

Permission to Use Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale

Dear Gayle,

You have my permission to use the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale in your research. A copy of both the long and short forms of the instrument as well as scoring instructions can be found at:

http://www.coe.ohio-state.edu/ahoy/researchinstruments.htm

Best wishes in your work,

Anita Woolfolk Hoy, Ph.D.
Professor
Psychological Studies in Education

Anita Woolfolk Hoy, Ph.D.
Professor
Appendix D

Demographic Survey

Demographic Information

25. Gender
   Male  Female


27. Grade Currently Teaching:  6  7  8

28. Subjects currently teaching:  AIS  ELA  Reading

29. Years of full-time teaching:  0–5  6–10  11–15  16–20  20 or Above

30. Certification areas (Circle all the apply)
   Early childhood  English 7–12
   Elementary Education  K–12 Special Education
   English 7–9  Other____________________

31. Highest degree earned _____________________________________________

32. My average class size this year:  Less than 20  21–25  26–30  More than 30

33. The socioeconomic standing of most of our school families would be considered:
   Low  Low-Middle  Middle  Upper Middle  Upper
Appendix E

Interview Questions

Questions for the Literacy Coach Interview

1. Can you tell me what influenced you to become a coach?
2. What do you feel your most important role or “job” is as a literacy coach in this school?
3. In terms of your personal experiences teaching literacy, what do you see as your “success” or strengths? How would you describe your experiences and your tenure as a literacy teacher?
4. You have been working as a literacy coach in your building. Can you tell me what that means? What have you been doing with your teachers?
5. What do you see as the major barriers to developing a strong and successful working relationship with your teachers?
6. How do teachers perceive the role of the literacy coach within the school community? Were their perceptions different from yours? How? Why?
7. What approaches do you use to figure out what areas to focus on with a teacher?
8. Has the literacy coaching process been more effective in some areas, or with some teachers, than others? If yes, why do you think that is the case?
9. Has working with teachers had an impact on how confident they were as literacy teachers? How do you know?
10. Can you think of some examples of changes in the way the teachers work with students that led to improvements in the students’ literacy performance?
11. You were now an experienced coach in a literacy coaching project. Based on that experience what changes or revisions would you make to improve the quality and impact of the project?
12. What are the character traits of a good coach?
13. What types of professional development do you offer your teachers?
Questions for Teacher Interview

1. Can you tell me what influenced you to become a teacher?
2. What do you feel is your most important role or “job” is as a teacher in this school?
3. In terms of your personal experiences teaching literacy, what do you see as your “success” or strengths? What areas do you particularly want to improve on?
4. Can you talk a bit about your experiences with different types of professional development? What types have been useful? Not as useful? Why were some more useful than others?
5. You have been working with a literacy coach in your building. Can you tell me what that means? What have you been doing with your coach?
6. How would you describe your relationship with your coach?
7. What approaches does your literacy coach use to help the two of you figure out what areas in your teaching to focus on?
8. Overall, how effective has the literacy coaching process been in helping you become an even better literacy teacher? Has the process been more effective in some areas than others? If yes, why do you think that is the case?
9. Has working with your coach had an impact on how confident you were as a literacy teacher? Can you give me some examples of how more confidence, or lack of confidence, has an impact on your work with students?
10. Can you think of some examples of changes in the way you work with students that led to improvements in their literacy performance?
11. You were now an experienced participant in a literacy coaching project. Based on that experience what changes or revisions would you make to improve the quality and impact of the project?
12. What were the character traits of a good literacy coach?
Questions for the Focus Group

1. What is professional development? What would a good definition be?
2. Can you talk a bit about your experiences with different types of professional development? What types have been useful? Not as useful? Why were some more useful than others?
3. What were the best things, and the most problematic things, about your relationship with your literacy coach? How does, or should, the relationship make the literacy coaching process more successful and more enjoyable?
4. What were the major approaches that were used to figure out what areas of literacy teaching to focus on?
5. Overall, how effective has the literacy coaching process been in helping you become an even better literacy teacher? Has the process been more effective in some areas than others? If yes, why do you think that is the case?
6. Has working with your coach had an impact on how confident you were as a literacy teacher? Can you give me some examples of how more confidence, or lack of confidence, has an impact on your work with students?
7. Can you think of some examples of changes in the way you work with students that led to improvements in their literacy performance.
8. You were now an experienced participant in a literacy coaching project. Based on that experience what changes or revisions would you make to improve the quality and impact of the project?
Appendix F

Doctoral Study Participation Permission Request Letter

Dr. Wallace Sean
XXXXX School District

Re: Doctoral Study Participation Permission Request

Dear Superintendent:

I am currently a doctoral student at St. John Fisher College in the area of Executive Leaders. I am conducting a research study dealing with teacher efficacy and literacy coaching in middle schools. I would appreciate your assistance. Please consider having your district participate in the study. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision.

The purpose of this study is to gain information regarding literacy coaching and teacher efficacy. More specifically how the presence of literacy coaches affect teacher efficacy. While it is known that there is a correlation between teacher efficacy and student achievement, there is limited information on what actually promotes and increases teacher efficacy.

I am enclosing the instruments that will be used in this study. Your literacy coach and teachers will be asked to complete a 10-point Likert Scale Survey and several demographic questions. The survey should take approximately seven minutes to complete. After the initial survey a literacy coach interviews and teacher focus groups will be conducted. The interview will consist of non-leading, open-ended questions that
give participants an opportunity to discuss their professional development and teacher self-efficacy in more detail.

Your school district’s participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you choose to participate, all information will be kept confidential and no individual will be identifiable from the final report.

I would greatly appreciate your willingness to participate in this study. I will forward study information and surveys to building principals upon receipt of your consent.

Respectfully,

Gayle N. White
Ms. Manhattan Sky  
XXXXXX Middle School  

Re: Doctoral Study Participation Permission Request  

Dear Principal:

I am currently a doctoral student at St. John Fisher College in the area of Executive Leaders. I am conducting a research study dealing with teacher efficacy and literacy coaching in middle schools. I would appreciate your assistance. Please consider having your district participate in the study. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision.

The purpose of this study is to gain information regarding literacy coaching and teacher efficacy. More specifically how the presence of literacy coaches affect teacher efficacy. While it is known that there is a correlation between teacher efficacy and student achievement, there is limited information on what actually promotes and increases teacher efficacy.

I am enclosing the instruments that will be used in this study. Your literacy coach and teachers will be asked to complete a 10-point Likert Scale Survey and several demographic questions. The survey should take approximately seven minutes to complete. After the initial survey a literacy coach interviews and teacher focus groups will be conducted. The interview will consist of non-leading, open-ended questions that give participants an opportunity to discuss their professional development and teacher self efficacy in more detail.

Your school district’s participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you choose to participate, all information will be kept confidential and no individual will be identifiable from the final report.
I would greatly appreciate your willingness to participate in this study. I would greatly appreciate your participation in my study.

Respectfully,

Gayle N. White
Mr. Bronx Eason  
XXXXX Middle School  

Re: Doctoral Study Participation Permission Request  

Dear Principal:  

I am currently a doctoral student at St. John Fisher College in the area of Executive Leaders. I am conducting a research study dealing with teacher efficacy and literacy coaching in middle schools. I would appreciate your assistance. Please consider having your district participate in the study. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision.  

The purpose of this study is to gain information regarding literacy coaching and teacher efficacy. More specifically how the presence of literacy coaches affect teacher efficacy. While it is known that there is a correlation between teacher efficacy and student achievement, there is limited information on what actually promotes and increases teacher efficacy.  

I am enclosing the instruments that will be used in this study. Your literacy coach and teachers will be asked to complete a 10-point Likert Scale Survey and several demographic questions. The survey should take approximately seven minutes to complete. After the initial survey a literacy coach interviews and teacher focus groups will be conducted. The interview will consist of non-leading, open-ended questions that give participants an opportunity to discuss their professional development and teacher self efficacy in more detail.  

Your school district’s participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you choose to participate, all information will be kept confidential and no individual will be identifiable from the final report.
I would greatly appreciate your willingness to participate in this study. I would greatly appreciate your participation in my study.

Respectfully,

Gayle N. White
Mr. Cooper James
XXXXX Middle School
Re: Doctoral Study Participation Permission Request

Dear Principal:

I am currently a doctoral student at St. John Fisher College in the area of Executive Leaders. I am conducting a research study dealing with teacher efficacy and literacy coaching in middle schools. I would appreciate your assistance. Please consider having your district participate in the study. The following information is provided in order to help you make an informed decision.

The purpose of this study is to gain information regarding literacy coaching and teacher efficacy. More specifically how the presence of literacy coaches affect teacher efficacy. While it is known that there is a correlation between teacher efficacy and student achievement, there is limited information on what actually promotes and increases teacher efficacy.

I am enclosing the instruments that will be used in this study. Your literacy coach and teachers will be asked to complete a 10-point Likert Scale Survey and several demographic questions. The survey should take approximately seven minutes to complete. After the initial survey a literacy coach interviews and teacher focus groups will be conducted. The interview will consist of non-leading, open-ended questions that give participants an opportunity to discuss their professional development and teacher self efficacy in more detail.

Your school district’s participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you choose to participate, all information will be kept confidential and no individual will be identifiable from the final report.
I would greatly appreciate your willingness to participate in this study. I would greatly appreciate your participation in my study.

Respectfully,

Gayle N. White
Appendix G

Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

Dear Ms. White:

Thank you for submitting your research proposal to the Institutional Review Board. I am pleased to inform you that the Board has approved your Expedited Review project, “Literacy Coaching to Increase Teacher Efficacy.” Following federal guidelines, research related records should be maintained in a secure area for three years following the completion of the project at which time they may be destroyed. Should you have any questions about this process or your responsibilities, please contact me at 385-5262 or by e-mail to emerges@sjfc.edu, or if unable to reach me, please contact the IRB Administrator, Jamie Mosca, at 385-8318, e-mail jmosca@sjfc.edu.

Sincerely,

Eileen M, Merges, Ph.D.

Chair, Institutional Review Board
Appendix H

Informed Consent Form

Dear Colleague,

I am a literacy coach, as well as a Doctoral Candidate at St. John Fisher College. I am conducting a research study dealing with teacher efficacy and literacy coaching in middle schools. I would appreciate your assistance. Please consider participating in the study.

The purpose of this study is to gain information regarding literacy coaching and teacher efficacy. More specifically, how the presence of literacy coaches affect teacher efficacy. While it is known that there is a correlation between teacher efficacy and student achievement, there is limited information on what actually promotes and increases teacher efficacy.

I am enclosing the instruments that will be used in this study. You will be asked to complete a 10-point Likert Scale Survey and several demographic questions. The survey should take approximately seven minutes to complete. Please be aware the cover page of the survey asks for your name. This is necessary so that I am able to assign a code number to your survey. After a master list is completed, I will remove your name from the survey and destroy it. Your confidentiality and identity will be protected.

After the initial survey you may be asked to participate in an audio-taped teacher focus group or interview. You will be compensated for your time. The interview and focus group will consist of non-leading, open-ended questions that give participants an
opportunity to discuss your interactions with the literacy coach and teacher self efficacy in more detail.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Should you choose to participate, all information will be kept confidential and no individual will be identifiable from the final report.

I would greatly appreciate your willingness to participate in this study. I would greatly appreciate your participation in my study.

I understand the terms and conditions of this study. I am agreeing by my signature on this form, to take part in the research of this project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

I understand the terms and conditions of this study. I would not like to participate in this study.

_____________________________________________   ____________
Participant’s Signature                      Date

_____________________________________________   ____________
Researcher’s Signature                      Date