



# **THE ADOLESCENT LITERACY COACHING PROJECT (ALCP)**

## **YEAR 1 EVALUATION REPORT**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Overview**

The Adolescent Literacy Coaching Project (ALCP) was created when the Kentucky General Assembly passed legislation in 2005 requiring that students who are struggling with reading and mathematics or are not proficient on statewide tests be provided with interventions and instructional modifications. While much of the law focused on providing mathematics support, a small section of the legislation required the development of a statewide program to train literacy coaches to assist teachers of grades 4-12. The Kentucky Department of Education contracted the development and management of the program to the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development (CCLD), a collaborative of eight state universities housed at the University of Kentucky.

The first cadre of ALCP coaches began their two-year training experience in summer 2006 with eight-day summer institutes at each of four regional universities. They also received two days of training in instructional strategies from the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), and monthly follow-up sessions throughout the 2006-07 school year. A similar format will be followed for the second year of training. In addition, new cadres of coaches will be added each year. At the end of the two years, coaches receive 12 hours of graduate credit. While the program was funded to train 20 coaches per year at eight regional universities, participation was low in the first year; only 22 coaches participated statewide.

### **The Research**

This report shares the results of research on the first year of the ALCP. The research sought to learn:

- How coaches were selected, prepared, and supported in their work;
- What roles and responsibilities coaches assumed, and how these aligned with the International Reading Association's (IRA) *Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches* (2006);
- What impact coaches had on teacher practice and on students;
- What factors facilitated and hindered the work of coaches; and
- How the literacy environment and test results in schools with literacy coaches compared to that of schools without literacy coaches.

Data on these questions were gathered through interviews with nearly all participating literacy coaches and a sample of principals in schools served by coaches, site visits to six ALCP schools, review of documents and web sources, and surveys of teachers of grades 4-12 in ALCP schools and a set of comparison schools. In the future, tests scores of these two sets of schools will be compared.

### **Limitations of the Research**

The findings and implications shared below are drawn from a very small number of cases due to low participation in the ALCP. In addition, the first-year data are heavily weighted toward self-reports from coaches, principals, and teachers. As more coaches, schools, and districts join the project and research is conducted over a period of years, it can be determined whether the relatively positive findings after one year of implementation will continue.

## Major Findings

- Selection and qualifications of coaches: Most of the coaches were identified for the position by their principal or a district administrator; only three coaches had to compete for the position. All applicants had at least five years' teaching experience, but only about one-fourth held a reading or language arts endorsement.
- Preparation of coaches: The eight-day summer institutes were consistent in their content and structure across the four regional sites, with the bulk of time spent on instructional strategies, coaching and mentoring, and strategic planning. Institute directors and participants reported that the institutes were effective in preparing coaches to begin their work in schools.
- School-year support for coaches: Monthly follow-up sessions included required participation in specified professional conferences and meetings, most of which were valued by participants. Follow-up support within the regional cadres varied in its intensity, structure, and focus. While participants in all regions found the regional cadre support among the most helpful of the follow-up activities, institute directors remarked on the lack of consistency across regional sites.
- Schools served by coaches: In the first year of the ALCP, 22 coaches served 26 schools; 15 were elementary schools, and 11 were middle and high schools. The majority of schools were rural, with enrollment ranging from 98 students to 891 students. 17 of the coaches were full-time in one school; 5 coaches served more than one school.
- Coach interactions with school staff: The coaches appeared to mostly stay within the parameters of the ALCP model in working with teachers in grades 4-12 in the four main content areas: reading/English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. All coaches had regular interactions with building principals or assistant principals.
- Receptivity to coaches: Principals in all schools were supportive of the literacy coach; a majority of principals were involved in and informed about the coaches' work. Coaches built support among teachers by working with those who were open to assistance, and then expanding their reach as more teachers heard positive reports and became open to the coaches' help. District leaders were relatively uninvolved in the work of most literacy coaches.
- Alignment of coaching activities with IRA coaching standards: Coaches spent most of their time engaged in activities that align with IRA Coaching Standards 1 and 2: Facilitating strategic planning around literacy, promoting productive relationships with and among school staff, strengthening their own professional knowledge and skills, and providing practical support to teachers.
- Activities of literacy coaches: The most common coaching activities reported by coaches, principals, and teachers were sharing strategies with teachers (including modeling lessons

and assisting teachers with writing instruction), helping teachers select instructional materials, providing or facilitating professional development, assisting teachers in analyzing assessment data, and linking teachers with research. About half of coaches also reported conducting classroom observations, working with teachers on selecting and using assessment tools, and coordinating school-wide literacy events.

- Professional qualities of coaches: Coaches received high marks from principals and teachers for exhibiting a host of professional and personal qualities that inspired trust and respect. Coaches were also engaged in regular professional development of their own by virtue of their participation in the ALCP.
- Most beneficial coaching activities: Teachers reported that the sharing of strategies—particularly through demonstration lessons—was among the most beneficial of the coaching activities.
- Effectiveness of coaches in staying within the coaching role: Coaches stayed within the coaching role reasonably well, although most performed a few extra duties in order to “do their part” at the school. Eight of the 20 coaches reported serving in other non-teaching roles simultaneously with being literacy coach, such as curriculum coordinator; but these roles were often compatible with the work of a literacy coach.
- Facilitators of the coaches’ work: The factors that contributed most prominently to the coaches’ success was the training and support provided by the ALCP, serving as full-time literacy coach in one school, having the support of the principal, having a prior positive relationship with the school faculty, thoughtful selection of coaches by local administrators, and the literacy coaches’ decision to work with willing teachers first.
- Hindrances to the coaches’ work: The main barriers to the work of literacy coaches were being assigned to more than one school, lack of time to serve all the teachers who could benefit from the assistance, lack of district understanding and support for the role of literacy coach, and lack of funding to support the position of literacy coach.
- Impact of coaches on teachers and students: The main impact of the literacy coaches in their first year appears to have been on teachers. Coaches, principals, and teachers alike reported that teachers have implemented many new literacy strategies learned from the literacy coach. These same sources also report some early effects of the coaches’ work on students, including improved scores on school-based assessments, improved student classroom performance, increased student enthusiasm for reading, and increased use of reading strategies by students.
- Differences in literacy environment in ALCP schools vs. comparison schools: When survey results from teachers in ALCP schools were compared with those of teachers in schools that did not have literacy coaches, it was found that: (1) a higher percentage of ALCP schools were engaged in strategic planning around literacy; (2) higher proportions of teachers in ALCP schools received professional development on improving student reading skills in their content areas; (3) teachers in ALCP schools reported more frequent use of a variety of

*strategies to improve student literacy skills in their classrooms; (4) teachers in ALCP schools reported requesting help with literacy issues more frequently; and (5) teachers in ALCP schools reported receiving more frequent help in selecting literacy materials, developing literacy strategies in the classroom, developing and administering classroom literacy assessments, and receiving information and resources around literacy. There were no significant differences between the two types of schools in the amount of assistance teachers received in the area of writing instruction, or in analyzing and using assessment data.*

### **Lessons Learned**

- The Adolescent Literacy Coaching Project (ALCP) was planned and implemented effectively in the space of only a few months by contracting the work to the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development, an organization with experience implementing intensive professional development programs for teachers around literacy.
- The ALCP model included 8-day summer institutes, two days of training by the Kentucky Department of Education on strategies, and monthly follow-up sessions, which resulted in coaches being able to call upon ALCP staff, institute directors, and fellow coaches for support, and to continue strengthening their professional knowledge and skills on the job. Support from the regional cadres and ALCP staff via email, the on-line community, and cadre meetings was especially valued by coaches.
- Using the International Reading Association’s *Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches* as a framework gave the ALCP a focus and structure that has shaped the work in accordance with the latest national-level thinking and research on literacy coaching models.
- The strong emphasis on literacy strategies in both the summer institutes and follow-up sessions was valued by coaches and used by them at their schools. Nearly all coaches developed a repertoire of literacy strategies, which they shared with teachers in various ways, including modeling strategies in the classroom—a form of embedded professional development that was highly valued by teachers.
- Educational research has identified many “best practices” that lead to improved student achievement, but such practices often fail to make it to the classroom level because teachers and school administrators are too consumed with their day-to-day work to make deep changes in classroom practice. A program like the ALCP provides a vehicle for taking these practices directly to the classroom through a staff person dedicated to this goal.
- Requiring that coaches be employed full-time in schools meant the schools had a staff person with the time and expertise to help principals and teachers keep literacy in the forefront. In some cases, schools or districts combined the literacy coach position with an existing role, such as curriculum coordinator, but there was enough overlap in job responsibilities that this may be a sensible approach for providing literacy coaching when resources are limited.

- While improved student achievement is the ultimate goal of literacy coaches, such improvements will take time. More immediate measures of the coaches' impact include changes in teacher practice resulting in more varied instruction for students, increased use of reading and writing strategies by students, and increased student enthusiasm for reading.
- The requirement that districts fund the position of literacy coach has proven to be a barrier for many districts, resulting in low numbers of participants in what appears to be a program that may well lead to changes in teacher practice that will result in improved student achievement.

### **Recommendations**

- In its first year of operation, the ALCP received positive reviews from institute directors, literacy coaches, principals, and teachers. Although these findings are based on a very small number of coaches, the data suggest that the training and support program for coaches should be continued in essentially its current form, with only minor adjustments. Areas in which the project may want to consider making adjustments include:
  - a. Involve principals and possibly district officials in ALCP training and support sessions
  - b. Develop a structure for school-year support to coaches that is consistent across regional training sites;
  - c. Consider whether there is a need to enhance coaches' training in these areas: achieving clarity about the coaches' role with principals and teachers; literacy strategies specific to the content areas of science, social studies and mathematics; analyzing student work and using results to shape teacher practice; structures for observing teachers and providing feedback; and characteristics of effective demonstration lessons;
  - d. Continue to strongly emphasize to schools and districts the advantages of assigning a literacy coach to one school full-time.
- Some consideration should be given to how to increase participation in the ALCP, thus building a more extensive network of literacy coaches across the state. Some possibilities are for the state to support all or part of the coach's salary, or to develop alternate positions that combine literacy coaching with other, compatible roles (as some schools and districts have already done). More information about the program may need to go out to district-level officials, perhaps through their own professional networks and conferences.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In 2005, the Kentucky General Assembly passed House Bill 93, which indicated that reading and mathematics proficiency are “gateway skills” necessary for all Kentucky students to achieve the state’s academic goals. The law mandates that students who are struggling with reading and mathematics or are not proficient on statewide tests “be provided research-based and developmentally appropriate diagnostic and intervention services, and instructional modifications necessary to learn.” While much of the law focuses on providing mathematics support, a small section of the legislation required the development of a statewide program to train literacy coaches to assist teachers of grades 4-12. The program was to be implemented no later than June 1, 2006.

The legislation directed the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to coordinate the literacy coaching program, with recommendations from the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development (CCLD). CCLD, established by the legislature in 1998 to promote literacy, is a collaboration among eight state universities, and is housed at the University of Kentucky.

The Kentucky Department of Education contracted out most of the responsibility for training and supporting literacy coaches to the CCLD, which named the program the Adolescent Literacy Coach Project (ALCP). The first cadre of literacy coaches was trained in summer 2006 and began their work in the fall. This report shares findings from research on the project’s first year of operation: 2006-07.

The report begins with a description of the design of the ALCP, followed by a review of the literature on literacy coaching and a description of the research design. Findings are then shared on how coaches were selected, trained, and supported; what the work looked like in the schools; and how the work of coaches impacted teachers and students. Information is shared on how the literacy environment in schools with coaches differed from that of schools without literacy coaches. The report concludes with a discussion, and a set of lessons learned and recommendations.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE ADOLESCENT LITERACY COACHING PROJECT**

The mission, framework, and structure of the ALCP were developed by CCLD staff, education faculty at the eight universities that comprise the CCLD, and Kentucky Department of Education literacy staff. Because a decision to contract the work out to CCLD was made in spring 2006 and the first round of training was to begin in summer 2006, the planning timeline was very tight. The situation was further complicated by the need to hire director for the project. Because planning had to begin immediately, the Associate Director of CCLD served in this capacity until an ALCP director could be found—which did not occur until October.

Three planning meetings were held with CCLD and KDE staff, and with the university faculty who would serve as directors of the ALCP institutes in their region. The meetings resulted in the development of a mission statement, goals, “essential questions,” core materials, and a general framework and structure for the training and support for literacy coaches.

According to the CCLD website, “The mission of the Adolescent Literacy Coaching Project is to develop a statewide cadre (network) of literacy coaches to support teachers in grades 4-12 by enhancing content area literacy instruction and practice to promote student literacy proficiency.”<sup>1</sup> The project also aims to develop teacher knowledge and expertise in using literacy strategies across content areas in grade 4-12.

The ALCP is described on the CCLD website as “a professional development initiative offered by CCLD in collaboration with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and Kentucky’s eight public universities.” The ALCP trains literacy coaches to assist teachers of grades 4-12 in using and integrating content-area literacy strategies into their classrooms. Training for literacy coaches consists of eight-day summer academies held at regional universities, and led by university faculty with expertise in literacy and experience working with classroom teachers. The institutes use the IRA’s *Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches* (2006) as a framework, and focus on a set of “essential questions” that are grouped into the following categories:

- Literacy coaching and mentoring
- Strategic planning
- Effective literacy instruction
- Content area literacy strategies
- Action research project aimed at improving teacher practice (year 2 only).

In addition to the summer academies, participants attend a two-day content literacy professional development program sponsored by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE). Throughout the academic school year, literacy coaches participate in monthly professional development and coaching networking sessions. The focus of some of these sessions is specified by the project, while others are left to institute directors. More information about the content of those sessions is shared in the Findings section of this report.

Participants earn six hours of graduate credit per year as they participate in the project: three hours for each summer institute, and three hours for the follow-up activities. Thus, over the course of two years, participating literacy coaches earn 12 hours of graduate credit.

Teachers who wish to participate in the ALCP must submit an application that is signed by their principal and the district superintendent. The following qualifications are listed on the application:

- Eligible for Kentucky Consultant Certification (typically requires a Master’s degree in content area and minimum of three years teaching experience);
- Experience and/or personal qualities that predict success collaborating with others;
- Experience and/or personal qualities that predict success coaching others;

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<sup>1</sup> This and other information in this section was obtained from the website of the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development: <http://www.kentuckyliteracy.org/alcp/>

- Experience and/or personal qualities that predict success acting as a resource to educators;
- Ability to effectively communicate with parents and all stakeholders;
- Excellent reading and writing skills;
- Ability to manage multiple priorities and challenging work environment; and
- Commitment to ongoing professional growth and excellence.

The website states that applicants do not have to be a reading specialist or English language arts teacher to apply, although some background in reading is helpful. The ALCP grant specifies that participants must be full-time literacy coaches, but does permit literacy coaches to hold other duties, such as portfolio cluster leader or curriculum coordinator. The project states that the literacy coach must be a school-level (not district-level) position. The project recommends one coach per school, although exceptions to this and other requirements were made in the first year of the project.

The project was initially set up to train up to 20 coaches at eight regional sites each year, for a total of 160 coaches trained per year. The project is funded for four years, with each cadre receiving training in two-year blocks. Thus, if each of the eight universities held an institute for beginning coaches each year, over 500 literacy coaches could be trained across the state. The project itself pays for all of the training and materials, and includes a mini-grant of no less than \$7,000 to each coach to use for training, materials, and school-based needs. School districts must fund the position of literacy coach.

In reality, participation in the ALCP has been much lower than anticipated. In 2006-07, 22 coaches participated in the project representing 14 districts and 26 schools. Because of these reduced numbers, summer institutes were held at only four universities: Eastern Kentucky University, Northern Kentucky University, the University of Louisville, and Morehead State University. The number of participants at each site ranged from four to seven. It was initially thought that participation was low because planning for the institutes did not begin until spring 2006, information was late being disseminated, and district budgets were already in place—making it difficult for schools and districts to fund the literacy coach position on short notice.

ALCP staff spread the word about the project more widely in spring of 2007, holding four regional “literacy summits” to recruit participants to the project, and sharing information about the ALCP through various professional networks and communication systems. These efforts failed to produce a significant increase in enrollment, however, with just under 30 participants registered to be trained in the second cadre. ALCP staff and directors learned that the main barrier for districts is funding the position of literacy coach. This was made especially problematic by a mandated salary increase for teachers, which restricted district flexibility in use of personnel funds. Thus, in summer 2007, the original four universities will do the second year of training for Cadre 1 coaches, and three universities will train Cadre 2 coaches: Eastern Kentucky University, Northern Kentucky University, and Western Kentucky University (new in 2007-08).

## RESEARCH SUPPORTING THE LITERACY COACHING MODEL

### Background

The rationale for establishing a literacy coaching program in Kentucky is firmly rooted in research on professional development, which has found that to be effective, professional development must be sustained, ongoing, intensive, and supported by modeling, coaching, and collective problem-solving (International Reading Association, 2006; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Poglinco et al, 2003). The idea is that teachers receive assistance, support, and coaching from someone on-site to help them make changes in classroom practice.

Numerous types of coaching models have been developed in recent years. These include *cognitive coaching* to help teachers reflect on their own practice to improve their effectiveness, *technical coaching* to teach new teaching practices; *peer coaching* in which two or more teachers work together to improve their professional knowledge and skills, *mentoring* of a novice teacher by an experienced teacher; *change coaching* that addresses whole-school organizational improvement; and *content coaching* that focuses on improving teachers' instructional strategies in specific content areas (Costa & Garmston, 2002; Joyce & Showers, 1996; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Poglinco et al, 2003). Literacy coaches are content coaches who focus on helping teachers help students improve their literacy skills.

The evolution of the role of literacy coach occurs amid a push by state and federal policymakers to improve reading and literacy skills, particularly among adolescents. The International Reading Association (IRA, 2006) reports that over six million U.S. students in grades 8-12 are struggling readers; one in four adolescents cannot read well enough to identify the main idea in a passage or to understand informational text; and three-quarters of students who exit third grade as struggling readers continue to read poorly in high school. Equally alarming results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) showed that 69% of eighth graders and 65% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders are reading below the proficient level; and 69% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders and 76% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders are writing below the proficient level (Learning Point Associates, 2005; <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde/>). In Kentucky in 2004—the year that preceded passage of House Bill 93, which resulted in the creation of the ALCP—67% of elementary students scored proficient or higher in reading, compared with 60% of middle school students and 34% of high school students. Thus, the need to improve the literacy skills of adolescents in Kentucky reflected national data trends.

One approach to helping struggling readers is through reading specialists—a role that pre-dates, but may have begun to evolve into, the literacy coach. The difference in the two roles is that reading specialists work directly with students to improve student skills, while literacy coaches try to improve student achievement by working directly with teachers (Toll, 2005). The literacy coach's task is to help teachers recognize what they know and can do, assist teachers in strengthening their ability to make more effective use of what they know and do, and support teachers as they learn and do more (Toll, 2005, p. 4).

Literacy coaches are to work not only in the area of reading/language arts, but with teachers in other core content areas (such as mathematics, science, and social studies) to help

them incorporate literacy instruction into their classrooms. Research suggests that teachers in other content areas need to become teachers of reading and writing appropriate to their disciplines. Middle and high school content area teachers have resisted this idea because they perceive teaching reading as the job of primary school teachers, they have no expertise in literacy, and they fear it will take too much time away from their subject matter. Data exist, however, showing that teachers who infuse literacy instruction into their classes are able to cover more content effectively, and their students are able to learn the content more successfully (International Reading Association, 2006). The ALCP approach is very strongly rooted in this research, and has a strong emphasis on assisting teachers across the content areas.

### **Desired Qualifications of Literacy Coaches**

In 2004, the IRA (2004) laid out roles and qualifications of reading coaches, noting that because the demand for reading coaches has grown so rapidly, there is little consistency in the training, backgrounds, and skills required for such positions, and in the general competence of coaches. At the same time the IRA acknowledged that, given the immediate need for reading coaches, school districts may select candidates who do not meet the highest standards. The Association, therefore, spelled out these minimum qualifications for reading coaches:

- Are excellent teachers of reading, preferably at the levels at which they are coaching;
- Have in-depth knowledge of reading processes, acquisition, assessment, and instruction;
- Have expertise working with teachers to improve their practices;
- Are excellent presenters and group leaders; and
- Have the experience and preparation that enables them to model, observe, and provide feedback about instruction for classroom teachers.

The Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse (LCC) labeled these minimum qualifications “The Gold Standard,” but noted that given the demands for literacy coaches, most districts are unlikely to find candidates who meet the five minimum qualifications. The LCC, therefore, offered two additional sets of qualifications, entitled “The Great Choice,” and “Good Enough for Now;” although the LCC noted that the IRA discourages hiring coaches in the latter category (Frost & Bean, 2006). These reduced qualifications would permit literacy coaches to have a master’s degree in another area, would require successful teaching experience but not necessarily in reading, would not require in-depth knowledge of reading processes and instruction, but would still require experience working with teachers and observing and modeling lessons, and that candidates be effective presenters. The potential lack of strong reading background is offset by additional qualifications of being hard-working and dedicated, having good people skills, being respected by peers and having their trust, being organized and using time efficiently, and being a learner willing to do what is necessary to gain expertise.

Indeed, the scant research that exists on literacy coaches suggests that it is difficult to find coaches who meet the “Gold Standard” established by the IRA. Poglinco et al (2003), in their study of literacy coaches working within the America’s Choice whole school reform program, reported that only five of 29 coaches studied had specific knowledge of or experience with teaching reading and/or literacy. Cathy Toll, former director of the Center for Literacy at NCREL and now director of a consulting firm specializing in literacy coaching, states that

effectiveness does not hinge on the coach's knowledge of reading, but that coaches should develop respect, listen to teachers, provide resources, make suggestions, demonstrate strategies, etc. (Toll, 2005). The ALCP does not require literacy coach applicants to meet the minimum qualifications set by the IRA in that applicants do not have to have a reading background or in-depth knowledge of reading. However, the ALCP qualifications for coaches are generally consistent with the "Gold Standard" identified by the LCC.

## **Training and Support for Coaches**

The ALCP training and support program for coaches, including the eight-day summer institutes and monthly follow-up and networking sessions, is quite consistent with the research and literature on the training needed for literacy coaches. The IRA (2004) states that even coaches who meet the minimum qualifications should be involved in ongoing professional development to strengthen their knowledge, skills, and effectiveness. The IRA coaching standards document (2006) notes that it takes 2-3 years to develop the full complement of coaching skills, which lines up well with ALCP's two-year training program. Buly et al (2006) recommend that professional development and ongoing support for coaches be part of the program design before coaches are hired. One of the IRA standards for literacy coaches specifies that coaches should strengthen their professional teaching knowledge, skills, and strategies by staying current with literacy and research on adolescent literacy, routinely examining best practices and curriculum, being open to new ideas, meeting regularly with other coaches to build professional skills and community, and attend professional seminars, conventions, and other trainings (IRA, 2006). Other sources have noted the need for ongoing support for coaches as they do their work (Fisher, 2007).

Regarding the content of training for literacy coaches, Toll (2005) suggests that literacy coaches must be well-versed in the characteristics of adult learners; processes for successful coaching; essential elements of effective instruction, literacy learning and processes; and measures of reading achievement. At the middle and high school levels, literacy coaches must have sufficient knowledge of specific content areas in which they are assisting teachers. They need not hold a degree or be an expert in those areas, but they need to be adept enough, and understand the content enough, to be able to assist with the literacy aspects of the lesson they are coaching. Again, the ALCP model lines up well with this research, in that the focus areas for the training include literacy coaching and mentoring, which includes strategies for working with adult learners; effective literacy instruction; and content area literacy strategies. The ALCP model also emphasizes strategic planning.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of Literacy Coaches**

The primary role of the literacy coach is to work directly with teachers to help them more effectively teach or integrate literacy into their classrooms. The ultimate goal is improved student achievement, but the immediate focus is the learning of teachers (IRA, 2006; Toll, 2005). In recent years, a number of organizations and researchers studying literacy coaching have developed a set of activities and/or standards for literacy coaches that spell out the types of

activities in which coaches are likely to engage. The ALCP model uses as its framework the coaching standards developed by the IRA (2006). Below is a list of the possible roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches that draws on the IRA standards and other literature:

- Assist the school with literacy needs assessment and development of a school literacy plan (IRA, 2006; Shanklin, 2006);
- Assist teachers in selecting, scheduling, and administering literacy assessments; and in interpreting assessment data and information from student work in order to inform instruction (Bean & DeFord, N.D.; Buly et al, 2006; IRA, 2006; Shanklin, 2006; Toll, 2005);
- Model instructional strategies for teachers (IRA, 2006; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Shanklin, 2006);
- Observe teachers and provide feedback on their instruction (IRA, 2006; Neufeld & Roper, 2003, Shanklin, 2006);
- Provide information and resources on literacy (Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Toll, 2005);
- Provide professional development to small groups of teachers (Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Shanklin, 2006);
- Know literacy demands of the various content areas (Neufeld & Roper, 2003; IRA, 2006);
- Encourage and facilitate sharing of strategies among teachers (Neufeld & Roper, 2003; IRA, 2006);
- Assist teachers in planning and implementing lessons (Neufeld & Roper, 2003);
- Assist/mentor new teachers (Neufeld & Roper, 2003);
- Engage in productive relationships with school staff (IRA, 2006); and
- Strengthen own professional knowledge and skills (IRA, 2006).

Poglinco et al (2003), who studied America's Choice literacy coaches in action, reported that most literacy coaches did some modeling and/or demonstration lessons in which they taught first, then co-taught with the teacher, then allowed the teacher to teach the lesson alone. Ongoing classroom observations by coaches were less common. However, informal one-on-one coaching happened more often than expected and seemed important to teachers. Coaches sometimes mentored new teachers.

America's Choice literacy coaches also facilitated some small group professional development. Teachers and principals, however, reported that job-embedded professional development (such as demonstration lessons and one-on-one conversations with teachers) was more helpful than group professional development, but that the latter reinforced the work of the coach and helped build professional communities (Poglinco et al, 2003). Similarly, Shanklin (2006) reported that in-classroom coaching was viewed by teachers and coaches as the coaching activity with the most potential for impact. In contrast, Neufeld and Roper (2003), who studied coaching in a number of contexts, observed that coaching models that relied solely on one-on-one interactions between the coach and teacher did not show as much promise as those that incorporated small group learning, the latter of which led more quickly to the development of instructionally-focused school cultures.

Some sources offered a list of "don'ts" for literacy coaches. Topping the list for all sources was that coaches *should not* play an evaluative role with teachers (Bean & DeFord, N.D.; Buly et al, 2006; Fisher, 2007; Joyce & Showers, 1996; Shanklin, 2006; Toll, 2005). Dialogue and interactions between coaches and teachers should be free of judgment so that teachers feel

safe working with the coach, and will be more open to the changes the coach is trying to facilitate. It is important, then, for principals to understand that coaches should not be used to assist in teacher evaluation. Fisher explained, “To support the coach as a resource, knowledgeable other, and ally, administrators cannot ask the coach about an individual teacher’s performance” (2007, p. 3). Neufeld and Roper (2003) ) suggest that coaches and principals must work out the delicate balance between confidentiality and reasonable feedback, and that the issue of coaches and teacher evaluation needs to be addressed directly from the outset.

A second important “don’t” for literacy coaches is to not try to play the role of expert (Bean & DeFord, N.D.; Fisher, 2007; Toll, 2005). When coaches portray themselves as the expert, teachers will view the work of the coach more critically, expecting them to have all the answers, demonstrate lessons flawlessly, etc. Instead, the coach should establish a collegial relationship, working with teachers to solve problems, find resources, and try out new strategies.

### **Facilitators and Barriers to Literacy Coaching**

Those who have studied literacy coaching have identified a number of factors that can facilitate or hinder the work of literacy coaches. Some of the most commonly mentioned factors are listed below:

- *Principal support* may be the most important factor that can facilitate or hinder the work of literacy coaches (Bean & DeFord, N.D.; Kral, N.D.; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Poglinco et al, 2003). Kral (N.D.) states that principals play an essential role in the effectiveness of literacy coaches because teachers watch for the principal’s reaction to the work of the coach. Principals can show support for coaches by creating schedules for teachers to work with coaches, participating in professional development facilitated by the coach, and encouraging teachers to try new strategies.
- *Clarity about the coaching role*: It is important for coaches to have well-specified roles that are clear to all stakeholders. This sort of clarity from the outset can ensure that teachers accept coaching, and that everyone is clear about what the coach is to do (Bean and DeFord, N.D.; Buly et al, 2006; Neufeld & Roper, 2003).
- *Assignment of days and schools*: Neufeld & Roper (2003) in their research on districts that initiated literacy coaching, note a dilemma in trying to determine how many schools to assign to literacy coaches; and/or how many days coaches will devote to coaching. The ideal is to assign coaches full-time to a single school, but in the face of limited resources, some districts opt to provide several schools with at least some coaching time. This approach has proven to be minimally effective because coaches are spread too thinly and teachers have insufficient opportunities to learn from them. Some districts assign coaches to work with teachers in two or more schools for 1-2 days per week. This approach has also not worked. Coaching in this arrangement is fragmented and lacks continuity, and teachers and coaches find it difficult to build trust. As a result, some districts now prefer to have coaches in one school four days a week, with the 5<sup>th</sup> day used for professional development. Other districts cycle coaches, so that they work with a few teachers or one school for several weeks and then move to another.
- *Human relations skills of coaches*: “People skills” have proven to be very important to coaches’ success. Coaches must be able to establish a relationship of trust through listening, maintaining confidentiality, working with teacher-identified needs and interests, being

positive, and following through on teacher requests in a timely way (Bean & DeFord, N.D.; Poglinco et al, 2003).

- *Prior relationship with school/teachers:* Oftentimes, literacy coaches are hired from among the teaching faculty at a given school, which can have advantages as well as disadvantages. Having worked as a teaching colleague can be advantageous when the coach is well-respected by the faculty and viewed as a credible source of literacy expertise and assistance. If the coach is not regarded in this manner, there may be resentment from teachers. In addition, coaches may face a challenge in changing their role from peer to resource person for teachers, and from “underling” to colleague with the principal (Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Toll, 2005).
- *Teacher acceptance or resistance:* Teacher acceptance of the coach’s role is critical to the coach’s effectiveness. One way to achieve this is to begin with those who want to work with the coach in order to help the coach gain self-confidence, and to let the good news about the coach’s work spread by word-of-mouth. Once reluctant teachers hear from their colleagues that the coach is a resource and not a threat, these teachers are more likely to be receptive to working with the coach (Bean & DeFord, N.D.; Poglinco et al, 2003).
- *District support:* Neufeld and Roper (2003) state that “the most important condition for successful coaching is district support for coaches’ work” (p. 16). Such support includes making sure the coaches’ roles are clear to all the districts’ educators, ensuring a rigorous process for selecting coaches, and providing professional development to principals so that they may provide proper support to coaches.
- *Coach’s background and experience:* The research of Poglinco et al (2003) on America’s Choice literacy coaches pointed to a number of important factors related to the coach’s background and experience. Seen as advantageous were the coaches’ prior instructional support experience, having been a staff member in the building previously and selected by the principal to serve as coach, mastery of subject matter knowledge, and proven teaching ability. Limited exposure to balanced literacy and standards-based instruction was a significant barrier to coaches’ effectiveness.
- *Training and support from project leaders:* Support from program or project leaders was identified as important for coaches’ effectiveness within the America’s Choice model (Poglinco et al, 2003). These literacy coaches felt that the timeliness of their training was critical, and that they were staying only one step ahead of teachers. They also felt their training should have included more information on balanced literacy. Other key issues these coaches felt were lacking in their training was dealing with English Language Learners and special education students, managing change including teacher resistance and motivation, basic knowledge about writing, and effective coaching, especially how to provide feedback to teachers.

## **Impact of Literacy Coaching**

Many researchers lament the dearth of evidence about the effectiveness of literacy coaching, particularly the lack of any linkages between literacy coaching and student learning (Buly et al, 2006; IRA, 2006; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Poglinco et al, 2003). At the same time, there is some question about whether student achievement is even the most appropriate measure

of the effectiveness of literacy coaching, as evidenced by these remarks from key individuals and organizations:

- “A literacy coach working at any grade level is more concerned with teachers’ learning and growth than with students’ learning and growth” (IRA 2006, p. 43).
- “Though student learning and growth are the eventual goals of all coaching programs, the immediate need is to focus the coach’s role on adult learning” (IRA 2006, p. 44).
- “It takes two to three years for most [coaches] to develop the full complement of coaching skills” (IRA, 2006, p. 5).
- As a literacy coach, your most significant clients are teachers. Student achievement is the teachers’ desired outcome, and you are there to help achieve that goal, but your focus is teachers” (Toll, 2005, p. 4).
- “Change should be the outcome of coaching. That change might be defined in terms of teacher behaviors or student learning or both. Of course, schooling is about student learning. However, those who implement coaching programs might be wise to accept some surrogate measures of student learning, such as increased student engagement, change in teaching repertoires, and the like, as evidence of their impact.” (Fisher, 2007, p. 4).

These remarks—as well as the definition of the literacy coach’s work—suggest that the most appropriate measure of the coach’s effectiveness is change in teacher practice. Neufeld and Roper (2003), based on their extensive research on coaching, believe there is evidence that coaching can produce the following outcomes, which are likely to improve instruction:

- Better targeted school-based professional development that addresses teacher and principal needs in light of student needs;
- Teacher learning that carries over into classroom practice;
- Willingness among teachers to share their practice, and assume collective responsibility for student learning;
- High quality principal leadership of instructional improvement; and
- School cultures in which instruction is the focus of much teacher and principal discussion.

At the same time, in this age of testing and accountability, as pointed out by Buly et al (2006), the systematic collection of data on individual students “is essential if coaching is going to receive the funding and support needed to continue” (p. 28). Measures of impact on students are important, then, but should go beyond achievement data to also include measures of student engagement, and student use of reading strategies.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **Research Questions**

The research design for the ALCP evaluation is shaped around a set of research questions designed to gauge the extent to which the implementation of the program adhered to the framework specified at the outset, including alignment of the coaches’ work with the IRA coaching standards. Other questions are designed to address questions posed by ALCP staff and institute directors, and to contribute to the research base on literacy coaching. The questions also include a “value-added” component to determine how the literacy environment and student

achievement in schools with ALCP coaches differs from that in schools without literacy coaches. The main research questions may be summarized as follows:

- A. How are coaches selected, prepared to do their work, and supported on the job? Which training and support activities appear to be most effective?
- B. What does the coaching model look like in practice? In what areas does the coach work, and how do these align with the IRA literacy coaching standards? How is the model enacted differently in different settings?
- C. What factors facilitate and hinder the work of coaches?
- D. How does the work of the coach impact teachers and students?
- E. How does the literacy environment in schools with literacy coaches compare with the literacy environment in schools without coaches?
- F. How do test score trends in schools with literacy coaches compare with trends in schools without coaches?

## Methodology

To address these questions, the following research methods were employed for the first cadres of coaches (2006-07):

**Observations.** A researcher observed one day of each of the four summer institutes to obtain an overview of the content of the institute, collect institute materials, administer profiles to participants (see next item), and get a sense of the kind of preparation provided to coaches. Observations were also done of two follow-up sessions during the school year attended by coaches from all cadres.

**Surveys and questionnaires.** Two survey instruments were administered: (1) A participant profile was completed by all coaches during the summer institute, providing information on coaches' qualifications, background, and selection process; and (2) surveys on the school literacy environment were administered in May 2007 to teachers in grades 4-12 of reading/ELA, mathematics, social studies, and science. These surveys were sent to all 25 schools employing literacy coaches serving grades 4-12,<sup>2</sup> as well as to a set of comparison schools with similar reading test score trends and demographics. (More information on selection of comparison schools is provided below.) Survey responses were received from 76 percent of ALCP schools and from 78 percent of comparison schools. At most schools, surveys were administered during a faculty meeting, resulting in a very high response rate of about 90 percent.

**Site visits.** To get a better sense of what the coaching model looks like in practice, site visits were made to a sample of schools with ALCP coaches. These visits took place in February and March, 2007 after coaches had been working in their schools for 6-7 months. The schools include three elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school (reflecting the proportion of school levels involved in the ALCP). A researcher spent one day at each school interviewing the principal, coach, and teachers with whom the literacy coach had worked (as

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<sup>2</sup> One of the ALCP coaches served a primary school with grades K-3.

identified by the literacy coach). Interview protocols are provided in Appendix A. At some schools, the researcher observed the coach's activities, including demonstration lessons, teacher meetings, and book study groups. During these observations, the researcher made notes on number and role of participants, materials used, pedagogical approaches, activities, and reactions of participants.

**Phone interviews.** Phone interviews were conducted in April and May 2007 with ALCP staff and all four institute directors to obtain their perspective on the preparation and support for literacy coaches, and on how coaching was going in the schools. Phone interviews were also conducted in April and May with literacy coaches and a sample of principals in schools that had not received site visits. The same protocol was used for phone interviews and site visits. When interviews conducted by phone and through site visits were combined, 20 of 22 literacy coaches were interviewed, as well as 14 of 26 principals.

**Document and web review.** Key documents and websites related to the ALCP were reviewed and analyzed. These included agendas and planning materials for institute director meetings, course syllabi and related materials from summer institutes, documentation of the coaches' work gathered during site visits, profiles of schools obtained on the web, and minimal monitoring of the ALCP on-line community.

**Test score analysis.** State test data for reading, English/language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science were compiled for all participating schools for 2001 – 2006 as a baseline. Similar data have been compiled on the set of comparison schools with similar reading test score trends and demographics. Test data will be added and analyzed each year of the project to observe trends. State test data from the 2006-07 school year will not be available until fall 2007, so this report does not share test score data from the first year of coaching.

**Value-added component: Comparison schools.** To put the data gathered at ALCP schools into context, the researchers identified a set of comparison schools in order to determine whether there were significant differences in the literacy environment and test scores of schools with ALCP coaches and schools without literacy coaches. The comparison schools were identified using two primary and several secondary criteria. The primary criteria were (1) reading test score trends on the state test; and (2) free-reduced lunch rate. For each ALCP school, a set of several potential comparison schools was identified. The 2003 and 2006 state reading scores for these schools were very similar to the corresponding ALCP school. The rationale for this criterion was that the research team wanted to compare schools that were at the same basic "starting place" on students' reading performance at the time the ALCP project began. The rationale for using free-reduced lunch rate was because this statistic has been found to correlate with student performance, and so provided an indication of whether the population in the two types of schools was comparable. Secondary criteria that were used once the first two criteria had been satisfied were school size, type (rural, urban, etc), percent minority, and grade configuration.

To identify a comparison school for each ALCP school, the researcher began with the schools that most closely matched the ALCP school on the first two criteria noted above. Phone calls were made to the principal of each school to determine if the school had a literacy coach or

intended to institute the role of literacy coach in the next two years. If they did not, the research was explained to the principal and s/he was asked to participate in the research as a comparison school. If the principal declined, the researcher moved to the next school on the list that most closely matched the ALCP school on the specified criteria. This process was followed until a comparison school was identified for each ALCP school.

## **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed as follows:

- Materials and field notes from summer institutes and follow-up sessions were categorized by topics that correspond to IRA Coaching Standards and/or the Essential Questions identified by ALCP staff and institute directors to determine the extent to which coaches were receiving preparation in the areas and activities reflected in the standards and in the ALCP framework.
- On-line conversations were reviewed twice to determine the nature and extent of coaches' participation in the on-line community.
- Data from individual participant profiles were compiled to create a group profile of the qualifications and characteristics of coaches; as well as the process used to select coaches.
- Transcripts from interviews and observations obtained during site visits and by phone were analyzed by a team of three researchers. All of the data for each ALCP school was reviewed and analyzed independently by two researchers, and findings categorized according to the research questions to provide an overall picture of the range of contexts, coaching models, areas of influence of the coach, overall effectiveness of coaches, and factors facilitating or hindering the work of coaches. The full team then compared and contrasted findings and agreed on a set of findings across sites.
- Results of school surveys administered in the spring to ALCP schools and comparison schools were subjected to statistical analysis to obtain a picture of the literacy environment in ALCP and comparison schools, and to determine what differences exist in the literacy environment at schools with coaches as compared to schools without coaches.
- Test score data will be compiled and trends analyzed annually. Test data are not yet available on the first year of coaching, 2006-07. As test scores data are compiled over time, the above sources of information about the schools and coaches will be compared against test score trends to determine what patterns, if any, exist between the overall school climate and/or work of the coaches and test score trends, as compared against a set of schools that do not have literacy coaches.

## **Advisory Panel**

As a quality control measure, a three-member research advisory panel was formed at the outset of the project to provide the research team with feedback on research design, implementation, data analysis, and report drafts. The team consists of members who provide expertise in research, literacy coaching, and reading instruction. Advisory panel members are:

- Gail Gerry, President, Research Planning and Evaluation, Inc., Jupiter, Florida. Former Director of Professional Development at the Kentucky Department of Education, former principal and Director of K-12 Language Arts and Reading in Duval County, Florida. Lead

researcher on evaluation of the America's Choice Ramp-Up to Literacy Program for the Consortium for Policy Research in Education, Philadelphia, PA.

- Barbara Neufeld, President, Education Matters, Inc., Cambridge, MA. Expertise in middle school reform. Studied the design and implementation of literacy coaching in Boston from 1997-2006 in elementary, middle and high schools; as well as the coaching model used in San Diego schools.
- Cathy Roller, Research and Policy Director, International Reading Association, Newark, DE.

## **Study Limitations**

Findings for Year 1 of the ALCP are based on a very small number of cases due to low participation in the ALCP. In addition, the research design relies heavily on self-report data from coaches and teachers, through both interviews and surveys. These data could be strengthened by more observational data, including observations of coaches' activities and of changes in teacher practice. Resources for the research, however, permitted site visits to a very small number of schools. Even here, the research team had to rely on interviews with teachers recommended by literacy coaches. Every attempt was made to triangulate data to the extent possible. For instance, data gathered from coaches about their activities can be triangulated through interviews with principals and from teacher survey data. Interview data gathered from teachers recommended by the coaches during site visits can be triangulated by survey data from all of the target teachers in a larger number of schools, and by principal interview data. Even so, it is possible that teachers and coaches overestimate the degree of change in teacher practice. In addition, coaches may report modeling lessons in the classroom, but the effectiveness of this modeling is difficult to judge without more observational data. As more coaches, schools, and districts join the project and research is conducted over a period of years, the research team hopes to address some of these limitations.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Selection and Qualifications of Coaches**

- *Overview of Major Finding: Most of the coaches were identified for the position by their principal or a district administrator; only three coaches had to compete for the position. All applicants had at least five years' teaching experience, but only about one-fourth held a reading or language arts endorsement.*

Because of limited lead time in the start-up to the ALCP in spring 2006, there was little opportunity for the project to actively recruit participants. Information and the application were sent out via email and professional networks. In some ways, it was left to happenstance as to who applied after that. During interviews with 20 coaches, they were asked how they were selected to participate. Results were:

- Urged by principal to apply (9/20, or 45%);
- Urged by a district administrator to apply (4/20, 20%);

- Selected through application process (3/20, 15%);
- Heard about ALCP, asked superior for permission to pursue (3/20, 15%); and
- Already serving as literacy coach and wanted the training (1/20, 5%).

As these results show, the largest number of coaches were urged by their principals to apply; and a few by a district administrator. In these cases, there was not an application process; principals or district administrators learned of the project and identified the person they thought would be appropriate for the position. The three coaches who went through an application process were all in the same district. This district had made the decision to place literacy coaches in all of its elementary and middle schools, and wanted to ensure that the coaches received training.

Participants were asked during interviews why they wanted to be a literacy coaches. Responses were:

- Love of reading, interest in literacy, realization of need for focus on literacy (12, or 60%);
- Looking to use the experience to advance career or apply toward a certification (4, 20%); and
- Ready for a change (4, 20%)

Because application materials went out to districts relatively late in the spring of 2006, there was little opportunity or incentive for project leaders to screen applicants, particularly with the very low numbers who applied to participate. Applications were sent directly to the ALCP project at the University of Kentucky; institute directors at the regional universities then received a list of participants. Some institute directors saw this as problematic, as one director explained:

*One thing that has concerned us is that there is no control about who is selected from the districts to be coaches. We have some who came in with a better background for it and better inclination to be coaches than others.*

A problem encountered in one institute due to inadequate screening was that one participant resided in a neighboring state, which meant the participant would have to pay out-of-state tuition, thus stretching the project's resources. Another participant turned out to be a literacy coach in a primary school. In both cases—possibly because enrollment was so low—the coaches were allowed to continue with the project.

Participants completed a profile during the summer institute that asked about their background and qualifications. The results of these profiles are displayed in Table 1.

**Table 1: Profile of Cadre 1 ALCP Coaches, Summer 2006**

		<b>EKU</b>	<b>MoSU</b>	<b>NKU</b>	<b>UL</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Numbers</b>	Number of participants	5	6	4	7	22
	Number of schools represented	5	8	4	13	26
	Number of districts represented	2	4	4	5	14
<b>Teaching exper.</b>	% w/5+ yrs teaching experience	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	% w/11+ yrs teaching experience	60%	83%	50%	43%	59%
	% with Master's degree or higher	100%	83%	100%	22%	73%
<b>Grade level</b>	% elementary school coach	60%	67%	0%	57%	50%
	% middle school coach	40%	17%	75%	43%	41%
	% high school coach	0%	17%	25%	0%	9%
<b>Coaching exper.</b>	% with prior experience as coach	0%	17%	75%	29%	27%
<b>Certification</b>	% with reading/lang. arts endorsement	40%	17%	0%	29%	23%
	% Rank I	20%	67%	50%	43%	45%

As this table shows, this was a relatively experienced group—all coaches had been teaching more than five years, and nearly 60 percent had been teaching more than 10 years. Three participants reported that they did not yet have a master's degree, however.

About one-fourth of the participants indicated that they had been a literacy coach prior to joining the ALCP. Interviews later revealed, however, that only one of the coaches had been a literacy coach in the ALCP model; i.e., full-time at a single school focused exclusively on literacy. Others had served as curriculum coaches or a literacy resource teacher for a number of schools. Less than one-fourth of the participants had a reading or language arts endorsement.

Given the lack of time or incentive to screen coaches and make sure their qualifications matched project requirements—and/or to provide guidance to administrators on how to select a coach—it might be expected that some under-qualified or minimally skilled applicants might have been accepted into the program. In reality, relatively few problems were reported. In only a very few cases were there early indications from institute directors or ALCP staff that coaches were not “doing the job.” For the most part, institute directors reported that the applicants were dedicated, hard-working, and competent. This finding is especially interesting given that the majority of coaches were hand-picked by a school or district administrator. Such a practice could result in favoritism rather than selecting the most qualified person for the job, but this does not seem to have occurred in most cases. The Poglioco et al (2003) study of America's Choice literacy coaches found that principal selection of current staff members to serve as coaches contributed to the coaches' success, and the same seems to have been true for the ALCP. It could be that the accountability pressures on principals compel them to identify coaches who they believe are most capable of helping improve student achievement. The sample of schools and coaches is still small, however, and this issue will continue to be studied over the next four years as more coaches are added to the project.

## Preparation and School-Year Support for Coaches

- *Overview of Major Finding: The eight-day summer institutes were consistent in their content and structure across the four regional sites, with the bulk of time spent on instructional strategies, coaching and mentoring, and strategic planning. Institute directors and participants reported that the institutes were effective in preparing coaches to begin their work in schools.*
- *Overview of Major Finding: Monthly follow-up sessions included required participation in specified professional conferences and meetings, most of which were valued by participants. Follow-up support within the regional cadres varied in its intensity, structure, and focus. While participants in all regions found the regional cadre support among the most helpful of the follow-up activities, institute directors remarked on the lack of consistency across regional sites.*

### Summer Institutes

**Planning, structure, and materials.** Eight-day summer institutes were held in July 2006 at four regional universities over a period of two consecutive weeks. The institutes were led by university faculty in the education department who had expertise in reading and literacy. At least two institute directors specialized in middle grades education. In addition to the eight days, coaches were required to enroll in two days of training on literacy strategies provided by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE).

Institute directors played a strong role in planning for the summer institutes. They were involved in developing a set of “essential questions” to guide the institutes, and selecting a set of “core materials” to use, including the IRA coaching standards as a framework. The essential questions were grouped under the headings of strategic planning, effective reading/literacy instruction, strategies, and coaching and mentoring. The core materials were:

- *Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches* (IRA, 2006);
- *The Literacy Coach’s Survival Guide* (Toll, 2005);
- *Subjects Matter: Every Teacher’s Guide to Content-Area Reading* (Daniels & Zemelman, 2004);
- *Tools for Teaching Content Literacy* (Allen, 2004);
- *Using Student Engagement to Improve Adolescent Literacy* (Learning Point Associates, 2005); and
- Resource binder of research articles and strategies compiled by institute directors.

Institute directors later reflected that these core materials had been well-chosen. Some institute directors supplemented the core materials with other resources they believed would be helpful to coaches. Several coaches commented that they had found the materials very helpful and used them a great deal in their work as coaches. For instance, some coaches used the materials for book studies at their schools, or shared strategies from the materials.

Institute directors devised a general outline of how the institutes should be structured, as follows:

- Coaching standards: first day
- Mentoring: 1 day
- Strategic planning: 1 day
- Effective reading/literacy instruction: 2 days
- Strategies: 1 day
- Demonstrating: 1 day
- Coaching plan: last day

With the essential questions, core materials, and general outline in hand, institute directors planned their own schedules and structures. Most directors were the chief presenters and facilitators at their institutes, but also brought in resource people and additional presenters as needed. The coaching plan referenced above was a required element designed to get the coaches to plan ahead for what they would do at their schools.

An analysis of institute schedules gathered at the 2006 summer institutes, which provides a rough (but not precise) estimate of how much time was devoted to each topic, is displayed in Table 2.

**Table 2: Focus of 2006 ALCP Summer Institutes**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Approx. % of institute time devoted to topic</b>
Instructional strategies/effective literacy instruction	29%
Coaching	23%
Strategic planning	19%
Demonstrations	8%
Content area focus	7%
Research	5%
IRA standards	4%
Coaching plan	2%
Providing professional development	1%
Student assessment	1%
Meeting diverse student needs	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

Even though the directors had only a few months to plan the institute, their prior experience in doing similar work eased the burden of planning. One director commented:

*As far as the institute goes, I have done institutes like this before, not with the literacy coaching focus, but I have done big and little PDs and institutes before. We have had several reading academies funded by the state that I was director for, so I had the skill set to pull this together real fast. I had an idea what to do.*

Directors of all four institutes shared a strong commitment to the concept of literacy coaching, and were excited about being part of an initiative that they considered “cutting edge.”

Most directors spoke of the personal and professional satisfaction they received from their involvement with this work. Sample comments were:

*Being on the cutting edge of this new thing, and we are getting trained, whereas other states are designating coaches in Striving Reader schools or Reading First without training... We are doing it the right way, and I find that to be very rewarding.*

*The two-week [summer institute] really was a highlight of my summer, and really just a highlight of my experience here at [this institution]...It reminds me of being a doctoral student again, that passion for the topic, and [the literacy coaches] can't wait to share it with people. That is what this summer institute reminds me of; sharing ideas and thoughts and having people challenge them and offer suggestions. It has really been a great experience.*

*I am proud to be involved in it. It is cutting edge, and I think it will turn out to be the foundation for bigger state things in the future.*

**Participant reactions to institutes.** Evaluations administered at the close of the institutes were overwhelmingly positive, with participants checking “strongly agree” or “agree” on nearly every positive indicator; including questions about the presenters, resources, structure, and usefulness of activities. More in-depth reactions obtained in spring 2007 interviews continued to be overwhelming positive. The most typical response given was something like, “It was wonderful!”

Coaches named several aspects of the institute as “most beneficial,” including the strategies and resources provided (mentioned by 50% of coaches), learning the role of the literacy coach (40%), establishing a support group within the cadre (30%), developing the coaching plan (10%) and working with the school improvement plan and school-level data (10%). When asked what was least beneficial about the institute, the most common response (made by 45% of coaches) was “nothing. Two coaches said working with the school improvement plan and school data were not beneficial, but one of these explained that she already knew how to do this; the other reported that she needed to spend *more* time on that activity.

Sixteen of the 20 coaches who were interviewed (80%) said they were adequately prepared by the institute to begin working as a literacy coach; the remaining responses were “not entirely,” or that they were prepared even before the institute. When asked what they had used most from the institute, the most common response (made by 17 coaches, or 85%) was strategies and resources, with 10 of these mentioning strategies generally, 4 citing the Toll book, and one citing a Cris Tovani book. Two people each said what they had used the most were book studies or other professional development strategies; support within the cadre; and the coaching plan.

When asked how the institutes could be improved, few suggestions were offered. The most common response, made by five coaches, was that they could think of no improvements. Four coaches suggested improvements around the logistics of the institutes, three suggested involving principals, and two requested more information on integrating technology.

## School-Year Support

**Structure.** As noted earlier in the report, coaches were to participate in monthly activities throughout the year. Institute directors were to plan one fall and one spring session with their regional cadres, which was envisioned as a one-day event each time. Other school-year activities were planned by the ALCP for all coaches, and included one day of training to use the ALCP on-line community, participation in a book study through the on-line community, and attendance at conferences of the Kentucky Council on Teachers of English (KCTE), Kentucky Reading Association (KRA), and Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference (KTLC).

The school-year support provided by institute directors for participants in their own institutes varied from site to site. All institute directors held the required fall and spring sessions. The directors of one of the institutes also met monthly with the coaches over dinner to share stories and build camaraderie. Directors of another institute made at least one site visit to each of the coaches' schools, which was not required by the project. These same directors met with administrators in one district after learning that the coaches were not working as effectively as they might. The director of the ALCP also visited each school once during the year. All institute directors reported staying in email communication with their cadre, and all directors had coaches in their cadre working on course assignments throughout the year. One institute director commented:

*I meet with mine at least once a month, sometimes twice a month. We have those scheduled follow-ups where we had the day-long encounters with them. But I have met with mine basically monthly, just sharing their experiences. They all keep a journal and submit entries to me. There are several reflective assignments, so I always know what is going on. But we meet monthly, we have our email chain going and communicate as far as different issues that are surfacing. If one has a question, we post it to everyone and get dialogue going.*

Institute directors were aware that there was some unevenness in the level of school-year support being offered across the various institutes. One director expressed some frustration about the lack of consistency, and her own inability to offer more support because of other commitments:

*I don't think there was a clear expectation among the directors about what their role should be... I sit in the [ALCP institute directors'] meetings and everyone is doing something different.*

Another director shared these thoughts;

*I definitely think the most effective was the two-week summer component. As a whole it was excellent. What really needs to be polished would be the year-long sort of practicum experience. I think it just goes back to we spent so much time focusing on the summer institute component that we did not necessarily have the forethought to develop the first year as well.*

**Participant reactions to school-year support.** As with the summer institutes, participants were generally positive about the support they received during the school year. When asked which of the activities had been most helpful, responses were:

- Conferences in general, or specific conferences, most notably KCTE and KRA (9 coaches);
- Support group in cadre (7);
- On-line community (5) with 3 of these mentioning the book study in particular;
- KDE training on strategies (2);
- District literacy coach meetings (from coaches in the one district that sent all coaches to ALCP); and
- Support within the school (1).

Participants were also asked which follow-up activities were least helpful, and responded as follows:

- KTLC conference (5);
- Online community (3);
- *Lenses on Literacy* book used in the on-line book study (2); and
- Can't think of anything not helpful (2);

Participants were asked specifically whether the on-line community that was set up for their benefit had been useful. Coaches were almost evenly split on this issue. Nine coaches said the on-line community had been an effective tool for coaches across the state to communicate; and/or that they liked the book study especially. Another seven coaches believed the on-line community to be ineffective, unwieldy, and/or too time-consuming. There was a pattern by institute with these responses. Coaches in two institutes that had set up their own structures for on-line discussion found the ALCP on-line community to be extra work that was not especially helpful. Participants in the other two institutes appreciated the on-line community.

## **Summary of Coaches' Training and Support**

Overall, the ALCP model for training and supporting coaches appeared to work well, which is significant given the tight timeline for planning and implementation. The summer institutes were viewed as highly successful by both institute directors and participants. The majority of participants had no experience with and very little information about literacy coaching, so they were eager to learn and appreciative of the concrete strategies and materials they received at the institutes. Because they knew they had to begin their work when school started in the fall, they found the training to be highly relevant. Some participants had been in teacher leadership positions before, and remarked that they had not received such extensive training and preparation in the past for these sorts of roles.

In addition to the strong felt need of participants for this sort of training, two factors appear to have been central to the success of the summer institutes. One was the decision by the Kentucky Department of Education to contract with CCLD, which had in place structures and expertise to support programs like the ALCP. While institute directors found it difficult logistically to pull the program together on such a tight timeline, developing the essential

questions, core materials, and overall structure were activities with which they had considerable experience. Second, the decision by ALCP staff and institute directors to shape the project around a set of core materials (including the IRA coaching standards) and essential questions that were grounded in the research ensured consistency across sites and, according to participants, prepared them well for their first year as literacy coaches.

The school-year support provided to literacy coaches was also highly valued by the coaches, especially the opportunity to attend professional conferences, and to network with coaches and institute directors in their regional cadres. In their first year as literacy coaches, ALCP participants appeared to desire and need the ongoing support that they received. By planning monthly activities, ALCP staff and institute directors ensured that year-long support would not fall to the wayside.

The level of individual support varied from one institute to the next, however. The inconsistency did not appear to be problematic in the minds of coaches (who were likely unaware of inconsistencies), but was a source of frustration to institute directors. From the coaches' point of view, receiving regular support during the school year was something very new to them. They were grateful for the support they received, and were not disposed to be critical of the support or offer suggestions for improvement. It may well be, however, that the development of guidelines for the role of institute directors in supporting coaches individually throughout the year would ensure greater consistency and quality in the school-year support component of the ALCP. For instance, the project may want to consider whether institute directors should make site visits to schools, and establish structures for meeting with coaches more than twice a year. Another possible area for improvement suggested by coaches is to include principals in some of the training sessions, either at the summer institute or during the school year.

## **The Coaching Model in Practice**

### **Schools Served**

- *Overview of Major Finding: In the first year of the ALCP, 22 coaches served 26 schools; 15 were elementary schools, and 11 were middle and high schools. The majority of schools were rural, with enrollment ranging from 98 students to 891 students. 17 of the coaches were full-time in one school; 5 coaches served more than one school.*

During 2006-07, the 22 ALCP coaches served a total of 26 schools. Of these, 15 were elementary schools, nine were middle schools, and two were high schools. For the purposes of this report, a school is classified "elementary" if it serves grades K-5 even if it serves more grades than that, and "high school" if it serves grades 9-12 even if it serves additional grades. The actual configuration of the 26 schools is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Grade Configuration of ALCP Schools**

<b>Elementary Schools</b>	<b>Middle Schools</b>	<b>High Schools</b>
K-5 Schools: 10	6-8 Schools: 7	7-12 Schools: 1
K-6 Schools: 2	6-7 Schools: 1	9-12 Schools: 1
K-3 Schools: 1	7-8 Schools: 1	
4-6 Schools: 1		
K-8 Schools: 1		

Six of the schools (23%) were in urban/suburban areas, and the remainder were rural. Although the project was designed to serve teachers in grades 4-12, one of the coaches served a primary school with grades K-3. This occurred because the school district in which the coach worked had employed literacy coaches in all schools except the high school, and wanted all of its coaches to receive training through the ALCP. Institute directors did not realize until the coach appeared at the summer institute that she was a primary coach.

Except for the district mentioned in the preceding paragraph, few districts sent a team of coaches. There were two other districts represented at the institutes with more than one coach, but this seemed to have occurred incidentally rather than through an effort on the part of the school districts. The more typical pattern was for a principal to recruit a teacher to serve as literacy coach although in some instances, a district administrator urged a teacher from a single school to attend (perhaps trying the model out before investing in the approach).

Table 4 shows the range and average number of students and teachers in the ALCP schools:

**Table 4: Number of Students and Teachers in ALCP Schools**

	<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Middle School</b>	<b>High School</b>
<b>Enrollment: average</b>	368	650	648
<b>Enrollment: range</b>	98 to 645	492 to 879	405 to 891
<b>No. of teachers: average</b>	27	42	44
<b>No. of teachers: range</b>	8 to 43	26 to 57	35 to 52

Of the 22 coaches in the project, 17 served as literacy coaches for a single school. One coach served three elementary schools, and two coaches served two elementary schools each. Two coaches served as coaches or consultants at the district level, and worked with more than one school. In both cases, however, these coaches were only assigned as literacy coaches to one of these schools. Even so, these two coaches were not able to be at the target schools daily, but typically visited the schools 2-3 days per week.

**With Whom Does the Coach Work?**

- *Overview of Major Finding: The coaches appeared to mostly stay within the parameters of the ALCP model in working with teachers in grades 4-12 in the four main content areas: reading/English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. All coaches had regular interactions with building principals or assistant principals.*

The coaches appeared to mostly stay within the parameters of the ALCP model in working with teachers in grades 4-12 in the four main content areas: reading/English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The main exception was the coach who worked in a school that serves grades K-3. Three additional coaches indicated that they worked with primary-level teachers, but at least one of these did so in her role as curriculum coordinator, not as literacy coach. About half of the coaches indicated that they worked with special education teachers. Most of the ALCP schools did not have many ELL students, and only one coach reported working with ELL teachers.

Roughly 65 percent of the coaches who were interviewed indicated working in some capacity with teachers in all four of the main content areas. Sometimes this interaction was through book study groups or other small group professional development, but some coaches worked one-on-one with teachers in the four content areas. A small number of coaches indicated experiencing difficulty making inroads with mathematics teachers. One middle school coach attributed this to resistance from math teachers to the notion of teaching literacy:

*I have really had trouble with math teachers. They are finally getting it now that we are in the seventh month of school, but at the beginning it was, "I will not use reading strategies to teach math." The first three pages of Connected Math is reading so the students have to be able to read it.*

Another middle school coach said she had not worked as much with math teachers because of her own lack of knowledge in this area:

*Math has been my hardest content area to really approach because it is an area where I don't feel I have enough to offer them yet to really make it worth their while. I like to make sure I am bringing something good when I bring it.*

Eight of the 20 coaches who were interviewed reported stepping outside the four main content areas and working with teachers of special areas, such as art, music, P. E., library or practical living. Work with these teachers was often around the state-mandated writing portfolio, with literacy coaches assisting the teachers in helping their students develop writing pieces for the portfolio. Some of the coaches reported working with new teachers, and a very few reported training instructional assistants to work with students in reading, or working with the family resource/youth services center<sup>3</sup> staff.

All of the coaches had regular interaction with their building principals. In a few cases, an assistant principal took primary responsibility for working with the coach. Typically, interaction with the principals was informal, but some coaches served on leadership teams with principals or met with them more formally on a regular basis. More information on linkages with principals is provided in subsequent sections.

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<sup>3</sup> Family resource centers (elementary schools) and youth services centers (middle and high schools) are located in schools serving a certain percentage of students in poverty, and provide a variety of family and student services designed to help students overcome barriers to learning the emanate from outside the school.

## Receptivity to the Literacy Coach

- *Overview of Major Finding: Principals in all schools were supportive of the literacy coach; a majority of principals were involved in and informed about the coaches' work. Coaches built support among teachers by working with those who were open to assistance, and then expanding their reach as more teachers heard positive reports and became open to the coaches' help. District leaders were relatively uninvolved in the work of most literacy coaches.*

As noted earlier in this report, in most cases, sending someone to the ALCP institute was a school or individual initiative. Only one district was actively deploying literacy coaches in nearly all of its schools, and opted to send the coaches to the ALCP training. It is unclear why there was a general lack of district initiative in this particular project, but the result is that in most cases, district leaders were not particularly engaged with the work of the literacy coaches. In six cases, coaches reported a general lack of district support for or understanding of their role.

Principals, on the other hand, appeared to be supportive across the board. Nine of the 20 coaches who were interviewed for this research reported that they had signed up for the ALCP training at the urging of their building principals. All principals who were interviewed expressed appreciation and support for the literacy coach; there were no negative comments from any of the principals. Thirteen of the 20 coaches who were interviewed indicated that not only were their principals supportive, but were involved and well-informed about their work. The remaining seven indicated that the principals were supportive but not particularly well-informed. No one indicated that their principal was unsupportive of their work.

The majority of teachers also appeared to be receptive to the work of the literacy coach. In 16 of the 20 cases, all or nearly all teachers were reported by the coach, principal, and/or teachers themselves to be receptive to the literacy coach. In only four schools was there reportedly a vocal minority of resistant teachers. Even in these cases, reluctant teachers did not seem to have thwarted the work of the coach because coaches chose to work with teachers who were receptive to the assistance. A few coaches reported that this approach had led to some initially-resistant teachers becoming more open to having the coach work with them. A high school literacy coach shared her experience:

*My biggest challenge is to convince them that I am here as a resource for them, and that I can help them come up with some good ideas. It was slow going. Initially, they would say, "I don't think I need anything." I was like, "Okay, I need somebody to use me; I can't just sit here and not do anything." So [the teacher] next door said, "Honey, I will use you...You can come and model for me." Then it's kind of word of mouth, "Oh, yeah, this really worked." Then it kind of took off. Teachers were saying, "Why don't you come to my room and do this?"*

A middle school literacy coach noted that teachers had become more receptive to her after she took on the role of building assessment coordinator when the first coordinator quit and

the school needed someone to assume that responsibility. The coach reported that teachers appreciated her willingness to pitch in and do what had to be done:

*The teachers are responding pretty well by now, but not at the beginning of the year. A lot of them perceived me as too young. They thought I didn't have any experience because I hadn't been at this school for very long. The best thing I did was taking that assessment job. It let me work closely with teachers...taking that on in an emergency situation kind of cemented the idea that "She'll do what needs to be done to help us out." It was almost like, "She's one of us." They are more comfortable with me now than they were at the beginning, but it got dark and dreary there for a little while.*

Overall, then coaches did not face major resistance to their work, and dealt with any resistant teachers by leaving them alone and working first with those who were open to their help. The strong support from principals is likely due to the fact that schools entered this program voluntarily, often at the principal's initiative. The results may have been different had the literacy coaching program been mandated by districts (although this did not seem to be an issue in the one district that implemented literacy coaching district-wide).

It is interesting that district leaders were not active players in the work of most of the literacy coaches—especially given the finding by Neufeld and Roper (2003) that district support is the most important condition for successful coaching. In the case of the ALCP, it could be that literacy coaches were so well-received in schools because it was the school itself (typically through the principal) that took the initiative to hire a literacy coach. In this situation, district leaders did not need to play a strong role in ensuring school-level acceptance of the coach. However, lack of district support did prove to be problematic for two coaches, who lost their positions at the end of the school year because of funding issues.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of Coaches**

- *Overview of Major Finding: Coaches spent most of their time engaged in activities that align with IRA Coaching Standards 1 and 2: Facilitating strategic planning around literacy, promoting productive relationships with and among school staff, strengthening their own professional knowledge and skills, and providing practical support to teachers.*
- *Overview of Major Finding: The most common coaching activities reported by coaches, principals, and teachers were sharing strategies with teachers (including modeling lessons and assisting teachers with writing instruction), helping teachers select instructional materials, providing or facilitating professional development, assisting teachers in analyzing assessment data, and linking teachers with research. About half of coaches also reported conducting classroom observations, working with teachers on selecting and using assessment tools, and coordinating school-wide literacy events.*
- *Overview of Major Finding: Coaches received high marks from principals and teachers for exhibiting a host of professional and personal qualities that inspired trust and respect.*

*Coaches were also engaged in regular professional development of their own by virtue of their participation in the ALCP.*

- *Overview of Major Finding: Teachers reported that the sharing of strategies—particularly through demonstration lessons—was among the most beneficial of the coaching activities.*

In examining the roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches, careful attention was given to alignment of the coaches' work with the IRA's *Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches* (2006), which provided the framework for the ALCP. The section begins with an overview of the standards, followed by a discussion of the roles and responsibilities undertaken by ALCP coaches.

**The IRA standards.** The *IRA Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches* (2006) were developed by pooling the talents of the IRA and key disciplinary organizations representing secondary school teachers. There are four categories of standards; the first three are leadership standards, and the fourth category includes content area standards. Each of the four standards is subdivided into "elements," which are subdivided into "performances." A summary version of all of the standards is provided in Appendix B, while Table 5 provides an overview.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The standards may also be downloaded in their entirety at <http://www.reading.org/resources/issues/reports/coaching.html>

**Table 5: Overview of IRA Coaching Standards and Elements**

No.	Standard	Elements: Literacy coaches...
1	Content area literacy coaches are skilled collaborators who function effectively in middle school and high school settings.	1.1: Working with school literacy team, determine school strengths and needs in area of literacy to improve students' reading, writing, and communication skills in content areas.
		1.2: Promote productive relationships with and among school staff.
		1.3: Strengthen professional knowledge, skills, and strategies (of coaches).
2	Content area literacy coaches are skilled instructional coaches for secondary teachers in the core content areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.	2.1: Provide practical support to teachers (individually or in teams/depts.) on a range of reading, writing, and communication strategies.
		2.2: Observe and provide feedback to teachers on instruction related to literacy development and content area knowledge.
3	Content area literacy coaches are skilled evaluators of literacy needs within various subject areas and are able to collaborate with secondary school leadership teams and teachers to interpret and use assessment data to inform instruction.	3.1: Lead faculty in selection and use of a range of assessment tools to help make decisions about student literacy needs.
		3.2: Conduct regular meetings with content area teachers to examine student work and monitor progress.
4	Content area literacy coaches are accomplished middle and high school teachers who are skilled in developing and implementing instructional strategies to improve academic literacy in the specific content area.	4.1: Are familiar with English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies content areas and know how reading and writing processes intersect with each discipline.
		4.2: Demonstrate multiple comprehension strategies to assist content area teachers in developing active and competent readers within their content areas. <sup>5</sup>

To summarize, Standard 1 focuses on the coaches' involvement in three areas: *strategic planning* to improve students' literacy skills, *productive relationships* with staff, and *strengthening their own professional knowledge and skills*. Standard 2 focuses on *providing practical support to teachers* through sharing strategies, helping select materials, providing professional development on literacy and reading, assisting with writing instruction, observing and giving feedback, and demonstrating literacy strategies. Standard 3 emphasizes assisting teachers with *assessing student literacy skills* and designing instruction based on assessment results. Standard 4 is focused on *assisting content area teachers* to improve their students' literacy skills around the specific content they teach.

<sup>5</sup> Elements 4.1 and 4.2 actually appear four times each in the standards document, once for each of the four main content areas. Performances under each element differ somewhat across the content areas. Wording of Element 4.2 differs somewhat for the science content area.

**Alignment of ALCP coaches' work with IRA standards.** Data gathered from interviews with coaches, principals, and teachers in site visit schools—combined with survey results from teachers in a larger number of ALCP schools—revealed that ALCP coaches spent most of their time working primarily in the areas outlined in IRA Standards 1 (strategic planning, productive relationships, and strengthening own professional knowledge) and 2 (providing practical support to teachers). They were also doing work that fell under Standards 3 (student assessment) and 4 (knowledge of specific content areas), but the data were less clear about the extent to which ALCP coaches' work aligned with those standards. More details are provided below—beginning with Standard 2, which is the IRA standard with which the coaches' work appeared to be most strongly aligned.

***Providing practical support to teachers (IRA Standard 2):*** In virtually all cases—with the possible exception of coaches who served in district positions—literacy coaches served as their school's instructional leader in literacy; a kind of hands-on literacy person for the principal. The kinds of practical support provided by *nearly all coaches* were:

- Sharing instructional strategies with teachers through a variety of methods;
- Working with teachers on writing instruction;
- Demonstrating instructional strategies/modeling lessons in classrooms or meetings;
- Helping teachers select instructional materials;
- Providing or facilitating small- or large-group professional development on literacy strategies; and
- Linking teachers with research.

About half of the coaches reported engaging in classroom observation, although it was unclear how structured these observations were, and whether they involved reflective dialogue before or after the observation.

The most commonly reported activity of the ALCP coaches was sharing instructional strategies. Virtually all of the coaches had amassed a wealth of resources on literacy strategies through the ALCP training and their own research. Coaches shared these strategies during faculty meetings, team meetings, book studies, and one-on-one sessions with teachers. Detailed information was not gathered on how coaches identified strategies to share, but interview data suggest that coaches typically shared literacy strategies that addressed common problems for adolescents, such as vocabulary and comprehension. The researchers did not hear many stories of coaches doing more detailed analysis with individual teachers or teacher teams to identify particular problems they were experiencing and then identify strategies to ameliorate those problems. More research is needed on this issue.

Coaches also provided a great deal of assistance with writing instruction, partly because writing portfolios and on-demand writing tasks are a key component of the state assessment program. Several coaches had been writing portfolio leaders in their schools before assuming the role of literacy coach, and they believed this work blended nicely with their new role.

A common technique used by coaches for sharing strategies was modeling lessons. All 20 coaches who were interviewed reported that they had demonstrated instructional strategies for teachers, usually in classrooms and sometimes in the context of team meetings or faculty

meetings. While the research team was not able to gather detailed information on the structure and quality of these demonstration lessons, this was the coaching activity identified by the largest number of sources (including coaches, principals, and teachers) as most beneficial to teachers.

Even so, there were a few indications that at least a few coaches either didn't ensure that teachers understood the purpose of the demonstration lesson—or had to make the structure of the demonstration clear to teachers. In two cases, researchers were present for a demonstration lesson and observed that the classroom teachers engaged in other tasks while the coach taught the lesson. One literacy coach remarked on establishing a structure for demonstration lessons:

*What I began to find out was that if I do it more than one time, they [classroom teachers] begin to use it as time at their computer. So I learned to do it only one time. One coach said that it worked to model all day long, but it didn't work for me because they used it as time to catch up on what they need... I was not successful to say, "I am going to model and then I want you to do this." I say, "I am going to do this lesson this period, next period I will step out and then I will be back next period." That lays out the sequence.*

Another form of support that most of the coaches reported providing to teachers was helping them select instructional materials. In some cases, coaches had direct involvement in selecting the school's reading program. More commonly, they helped content area teachers identify reading materials to supplement the content that was being taught. Several coaches mentioned finding materials for specific student needs, such as boys or low-level readers. A few coaches worked with librarians to select more varied reading material for the school library.

Of the 20 coaches who were interviewed, 17 reported that they were providing or had provided some type of professional development to teachers. While the research team did not gather detailed information on the focus of the professional development, interview data suggest that sessions on literacy strategies were the most common. On the survey, 87% of teachers reported receiving professional development on strategies to improve reading in their content area (although the survey did not specify who provided the professional development). There were indications that at least a few coaches covered metacognitive reading strategies and vocabulary development in the professional development they provided.

Seventeen of 20 coaches believed they had linked teachers to evidence-based research by providing them with journal articles or web-based information, and/or through book studies and other strategies they shared that they believed to be research-based.

An activity reported by about half of the coaches was classroom observation, although the data are unclear on how structured these observations were. One coach reported that she was beginning to have success persuading content area classroom teachers to allow her to do informal observations:

*Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ was so nervous when he found out I was going to come in, and I said, "All I want to do is just watch you. How can I help you if I don't know how you are conducting your class on a regular basis? I can sit here and talk to you and you can tell me what*

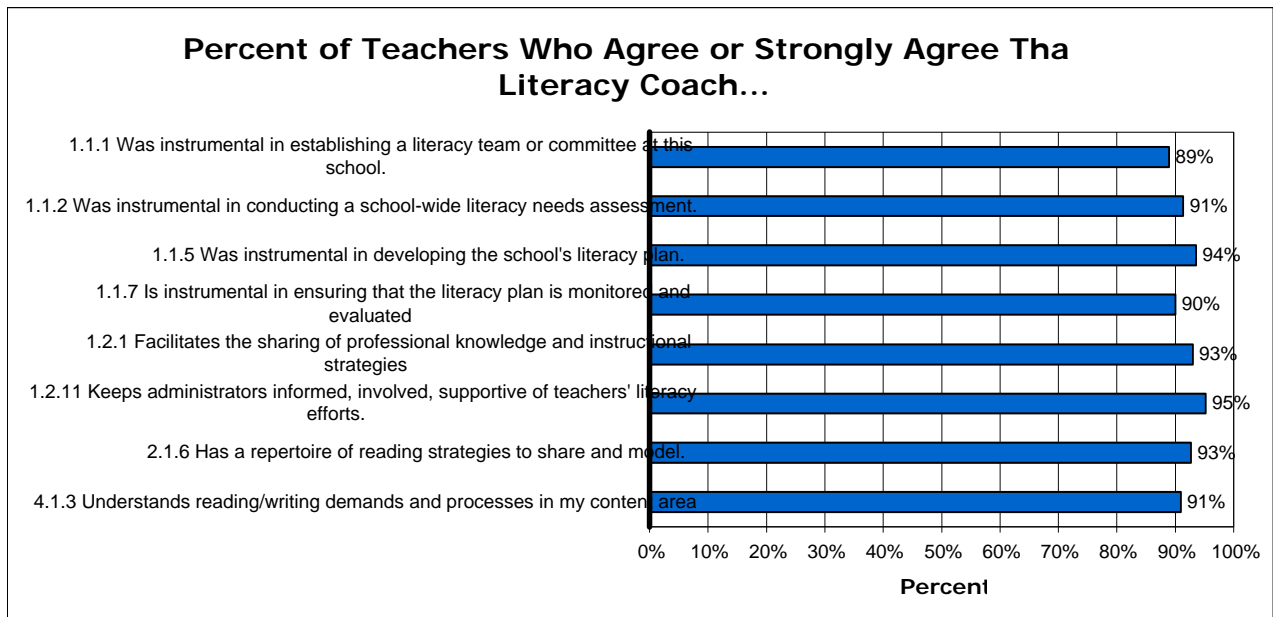
*you want to tell me, but until I see you in action, I really don't know what works for you. I might be trying to suggest a strategy for you that won't work with the style of teaching you are doing. When I can see you in action, then I can try to look through what I've got and come up with something that will help you and make your job easier."*

For the most part, it appeared that coaches understood that observations should be supportive and not threatening, and that teachers were learning this to be the case once they allowed the coaches into their rooms.

***Skilled, effective collaborators, including strategic planning, promoting productive relationships, and strengthening their own professional knowledge (IRA Standard 1):***

Interview and survey data indicate that literacy coaches were relatively active in working in the areas delineated in IRA Standard 1. Figure 1 shows teacher survey results for several items related to this standard. The numbers to the left indicate which IRA standard is reflected in the item. As can be seen on the chart, nearly all teachers who responded to the survey reported that their literacy coaches were instrumental in strategic planning around literacy at the school, and in working with administrators to support teachers' literacy efforts.

**Figure 1: Teacher Survey Results: Activities of the Literacy Coach**



The majority of coaches (16 of 20) reported that they were involved in strategic planning at some level. While this IRA standard suggests that coaches actually facilitate the forming of a literacy team, conducting needs assessments, developing a plan, and overseeing its implementation, none of the ALCP coaches were required to play such a pivotal role in literacy planning. This was because a Comprehensive School Improvement Planning (CSIP) process has been in place in Kentucky schools for several years, so schools were already doing strategic planning that incorporated literacy. The coaches, then, would not need to initiate a new process, although a few did form literacy teams at their schools.

A more typical scenario for ALCP coaches was that they served on a committee or leadership team that worked with the CSIP and/or the literacy component of the plan. One elementary coach facilitated grade-level meetings weekly and facilitated planning in all areas, with literacy as a major focus. Another coach oversaw development and implementation of the entire CSIP—a role she had held prior to becoming literacy coach. She believed this role supported her work as literacy coach because she participated in developing the literacy component of the plan, knew what teachers were supposed to be doing, and was familiar with teachers' general approaches to literacy:

*Having control of the CSIP as manager, I know the literacy strategies are in there, I know it is there and supported. It also helps because I monitor and collect evidence every month. We have a check sheet and they have to check whether they have implemented an activity, partially, or not at all. They submit that at the end of each month, and if they implemented it they must provide evidence, so I can see what they are doing and whether it is working. That gives me an advantage. Where I have worked with it so long, I know what their habits are and some want to use the same strategies, and I can see that. I may say, "I notice you really like this strategy; how effective has it been? Would you like to try something new?"*

While it might seem that having the coach play the role of monitoring the CSIP would put her in an evaluative position, teachers at the school did not seem to perceive it this way. The coach had been a teaching colleague prior to becoming coach, and was well-respected by the faculty for her knowledge and support.

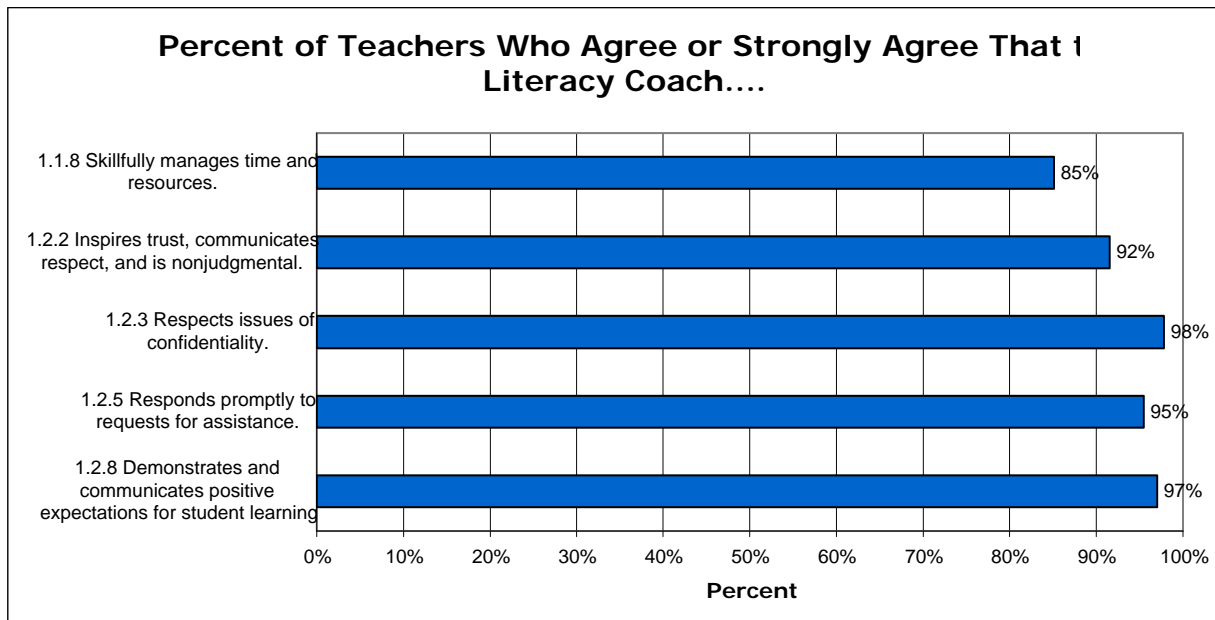
Another aspect of IRA Standard 1 is promoting productive relationships with and among school staff. Much of this standard emphasizes professional qualities and "people skills" required for coaches to be effective collaborators. Data on this standard were gathered through teacher surveys, and through interviews with principals and teachers, who were asked to rate the coaches on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) on their effectiveness at inspiring trust and respect, respecting confidentiality, responding promptly to requests for assistance, and demonstrating positive expectations for student learning. In no case did any coach receive less than a 4 rating; responses were overwhelmingly positive on these measures. Said one middle school teacher:

*I am very hard to impress when it comes to someone who is out of the classroom. If they are not just busting it, I have no use for them. We have had so many float through and they just do nothing but show up at a faculty meeting and look good to the administration. That is not the case with [the literacy coach]. She rolls up her sleeves and gets in there and is truly concerned with the literacy of students.*

In addition, the research team surmised from the comments of principals, teachers, and the coaches themselves that virtually all of the coaches understood the difference between coaching and supervision, and had effectively communicated this to teachers by their behavior and attitudes. In only one or two cases were there any hints that the coaches may have been perceived as judgmental by a few teachers.

Survey data also indicated that coaches were highly regarded for the professional qualities identified in IRA Standard 1, as shown in Figure 2. Again, numbers to the left of survey items indicates the IRA standard represented by this survey item. These results show that 85% or more of teachers believed the literacy coach exhibited the professional qualities identified in the IRA coaching standards.

**Figure 2: Teacher Survey Reports on the Professional Qualities of Literacy Coaches**



The third component of Standard 1 is that coaches strengthen own professional knowledge and skills. This element includes staying current with professional literature and research on adolescent literacy, routinely examining best practices and curriculum materials, demonstrating openness to new ideas, meeting regularly with other coaches in the school or district, and attending professional seminars, conventions and other training. With the exception of meeting regularly with other coaches, all of the ALCP coaches engaged in all of these activities because those activities were built into the model. The summer institutes and follow-up training included professional literature and research, best practices, and a wealth of strategies and resources materials. Part of the coaches' follow-up training during the school year was attending key conferences and professional meetings. In the district that sent all of its coaches to the ALCP, the four coaches met weekly with one another and a district leader to share information and offer mutual support. This was one of the follow-up activities that these coaches valued the most. Other coaches met with their cadres at least twice during the course of the year.

***Skilled evaluators of literacy needs and collaborate to interpret and use assessment data to inform instruction (IRA Standard 3):*** This IRA standard casts the literacy coach as the assessment coordinator and expert. Performances listed under this element include that the coach develops a comprehensive assessment program, sets schedules for administering and analyzing formative and summative assessments, aids in the design and implementation of formative assessments, helps teachers standardize the scoring of writing, and knows current research trends and methodologies in assessment.

ALCP coaches, as a group, did not appear to play the pivotal leadership role in assessment suggested by this IRA standard. Typically, literacy coaches did not have to develop an assessment program because something was already in place in the school or district due to state, federal, and local policy. However, about half of the coaches reported that they played some role in managing the school's literacy assessment program, often in conjunction with overseeing or managing the overall reading program for the school.

This standard also includes an element on introducing content teachers to ways to observe students' literacy skills, hosting periodic meetings to assist teachers in examining student work and evaluating their success with literacy strategies, helping teachers analyze trends on content area achievement tests, and helping teachers use analysis of assessment results to identify strategies to help students move forward.

ALCP coaches reported assisting with analysis and use of assessment results more often than conducting regular meetings to examine student work. One-half to three-quarters of the coaches reported assisting teachers with analyzing and using assessment results. Only five reported that they held meetings to analyze student work, although a few additional coaches indicated that they had helped individual teachers do this—often in the context of writing portfolios.

***Skilled in developing instructional strategies to improve literacy in ELA, mathematics, social studies, and science (IRA Standard 4)***. This set of standards includes suggestions that coaches should be familiar with the professional standards and benchmarks in each of the content areas, know the specific demands of textbooks and reading material in each content area, help teachers know and understand text structures that students will encounter in their content area, know and model methods to get students actively engaged in learning, and a number of additional skills and activities specific to each content area.

The research team did not gather detailed data on the ALCP coaches' familiarity with each of the content areas, but did gather more general information. Only three of the coaches had certification or experience in a content area other than reading, English/language arts, or elementary education. Training provided through the ALCP focused more strongly on literacy strategies that can be used across the content areas than on literacy strategies and knowledge specific to content areas. An analysis of syllabi for the summer institutes showed that less than 20% of the time was focused on content-specific information or strategies. Some follow-up activities, however, may have been more content-specific. One coach described a session she attended at an English teachers' conference:

*Cris Tovani was maybe my favorite session, and this is my baby, content reading. She was talking about reading in math class, that you have to think about being a mathematician, to think like a scientist in science class. I knew you had to do that, but I didn't know how to make that happen. She gave us specific strategies, so that was helpful to me, and I think something our teachers really want.*

While coaches most typically shared strategies that could be used across the content areas, some coaches were familiarizing themselves with literature that could be used with specific content areas, and were beginning to expand their repertoire of content-specific knowledge and strategies. More research is needed on this issue.

**Other activities performed by coaches.** Coaches reported engaging in a few activities that are not directly addressed in the IRA standards. About half of the coaches reported coordinating school-wide literacy events, such as family literacy nights or reading events for students. Activities that were performed by some, but fewer than half of the coaches were:

- Work directly with students, for example on portfolios or in reading situations;
- Coordinate a school-wide reading program, which might include training teachers on the program, monitoring implementation, and coordinating the assessment aspects of the program;
- Facilitate teacher team meetings; and
- Help assess individual students.

### **Most and Least Beneficial Coaching Activities**

**Most beneficial.** Coaches, principals, and teachers were asked which coaching activities had been most beneficial to teachers. Mentioned by sources in about half of the schools was modeling lessons. An overlapping response, also heard in about half the schools, was sharing literacy strategies that teachers can use in their classrooms. Others responded more generally along the line of sharing research and resources. Several teachers particularly valued one-on-one conversations with the coach. A middle school science teacher commented:

*The whole idea of literacy in my room; I used to think if I had Science World magazines and we looked at those, I was incorporating literacy. But through [the literacy coach's] help and guidance, I have learned that there is a lot more I can do in my room with literacy. There are many different ways to incorporate literacy, such as the novel Jurassic Park. I would not have considered reading a book like that in my room [before].*

Smaller numbers of teachers, principals, and coaches (fewer than six schools represented) identified these activities as most beneficial:

- Observing teachers and giving feedback;
- Facilitating meetings or literacy planning;
- Offering professional development (some mentioned book studies in particular); and
- Helping select instructional materials.

**Least beneficial.** Only teachers interviewed during site visits were asked which activities were least beneficial, so data are available only from six schools. The most typical response to this question was that nothing was really *not* beneficial, but that information that did not fit with teachers' current needs or which they did not have time to process was not useful. For instance, some teachers reported that coaches occasionally shared strategies that the teachers were already using or that teachers did not think would work in their situations. Teachers at one school reported that sometimes during team meetings, the coach shared strategies when the teachers felt

it was more urgent to engage in lesson planning, data analysis, or some other activity that fit their current needs. Teachers at three schools said they did not find information sent to them by email or placed in their mailboxes to be useful because they often did not have time to process the information and determine how to use it.

**Summary of coaches' roles and responsibilities.** The activities of ALCP coaches, for the most part, aligned very well with the IRA standards that provided the framework for the ALCP. There was strong alignment with standards 1 and 2, which emphasize assisting with strategic planning around literacy, promoting productive staff relationships, strengthening the coaches' own professional knowledge and skills, and providing practical support to teachers through professional development, modeling lessons, and generally serving as a resource. Coaches were also involved in assisting with analysis and use of assessment results, although the nature of this assistance was not always clear. Generally, interview data suggested that the coaches provided strategies and assisted with analyzing assessment data in a more general—rather than student-specific—manner. That is, the descriptions provided by teachers and coaches suggested that coaches typically shared strategies to address common literacy problems of adolescents, rather than assisting teachers in helping individual students with specific literacy problems. Few coaches indicated that they helped teachers analyze individual student work to identify problems and develop solutions to individual student literacy problems.

Another unknown is the quality of the some of the work coaches were doing. Teachers reported valuing the coaches' activities, but the research design did not permit the researchers to observe many of the coaches' activities. As noted above, demonstration lessons could be problematic if coaches do not make clear their role to teachers. Observations, as well, will only be helpful if coaches engage in reflective dialogue with teachers about the observations. Research in ensuing years will attempt to gather more detailed information on these issues.

### **How Well Did Coaches Stay in the Coaching Role?**

- *Overview of Major Finding: Coaches stayed within the coaching role reasonably well, although most performed a few extra duties in order to “do their part” at the school. Eight of the 20 coaches reported serving in other non-teaching roles simultaneously with being literacy coach, such as curriculum coordinator; but these roles were often compatible with the work of a literacy coach.*

For the most part, coaches seemed to stay within the literacy coaching role reasonably well. About half of the coaches who were interviewed for this research indicated that the great majority of their activities were within the role of literacy coach. Most of the coaches, however, performed at least a few extra duties, such as bus monitor, judge for academic competitions, or graduation coordinator. They indicated that they did this to be part of the team and show they were willing to take on their share of extra duties in the same way as other teachers. Particularly in elementary schools, coaches felt it was important to be part of the team, as indicated by these remarks:

*I don't have to do lunch duty, hall duty, and such, but I do them by choice so my colleagues won't think, "She thinks she's better than us."*

*You have to show that you are willing to go that extra mile in order to get the trust in your staff. Sometimes you have to do things that are not in your job description so they see you as someone they can trust and who understands.*

*It is hard to say, "That is not my job" when it takes all of us to run the school. When a teacher sends you a student with a skinned knee, you can send them on [to someone else], or clean them up and put on a Band-aid.*

A middle school coach reported being asked to take on a role that took time away from her literacy coaching responsibilities, but she recognized the reality that she was the most likely person to do the job:

*One [job] I will not do again is building assessment coordinator. That was a situation where the assessment coordinator resigned and they had divided up half of her job to the curriculum coach, and there was no other place to put the other half of her job, so it came to me, and it was too much. It is understood that I won't do it anymore....The reality on the ground is that there was no one else to do it [assessment coordinator].*

Even though the majority of coaches were satisfied that most of their work fell into the realm of literacy coaching, several coaches held roles in addition to that of literacy coach. Of the 20 coaches interviewed for this research, eight reported serving in another non-teaching role prior to becoming literacy coach, and continuing with those duties after becoming literacy coach. The original role was typically something like curriculum coach or coordinator or curriculum resource teacher. The responsibilities they held as part of those original duties were often compatible with that of literacy coach, such as assisting teachers with planning, data analysis, and even providing professional development. However those duties sometimes extended beyond the parameters of the ALCP. For instance, one coach who was also curriculum coordinator in three elementary schools continued to work with primary as well as intermediate teachers, and worked with teachers in areas other than literacy (although literacy was a major focus of the school's work).

Several of the coaches had been writing portfolio cluster leaders for their schools prior to becoming literacy coach, and continued to do that work. As cluster leaders, they oversaw the writing portfolio program and assisted teachers in integrating writing into the classroom, which appears to be a natural fit with the literacy coaching position. As portfolio cluster leader, the coaches sometimes devoted a good bit of attention to helping teachers with test preparation strategies, or might find themselves conferencing with individual students on writing portfolio pieces. There was no indication that the coaches felt that these sort of duties were in conflict with their role as literacy coaches.

## Helps and Hindrances to Coaches' Work

- *Overview of Major Finding: The factors that contributed most prominently to the coaches' success was the training and support provided by the ALCP, serving as full-time literacy coach in one school, having the support of the principal, having a prior positive relationship with the school faculty, thoughtful selection of coaches by local administrators, and the literacy coaches' decision to work with willing teachers first.*
- *Overview of Major Finding: The main barriers to the work of literacy coaches were being assigned to more than one school, lack of time to serve all the teachers who could benefit from the assistance, lack of district understanding and support for the role of literacy coach, and lack of funding to support the position of literacy coach.*

**Helps.** The factors that contributed most prominently to the literacy coaches' acceptance and success are described below.

Training, support and funding through the ALCP project: The training and support that coaches received through the ALCP was critical to their work, and likely contributed strongly to the success coaches experienced during their first year. Coaches began the year with an understanding of their role, a wealth of strategies and resources, and a support network within their cadre and the ALCP. They received at least monthly follow-up support, and strengthened their skills and knowledge at professional conferences. Each coach also received substantial funds to spend at their schools or on their own professional development. These funds enabled the coaches to do such things as purchase materials for teachers; provide books, refreshments, and/or stipends for book studies and other professional development activities; purchase laptop computers and projectors to assist with presentations; and develop professional libraries.

Being assigned as literacy coach at one school full-time: The fact that the ALCP grant specified that districts were to fund a full-time literacy coach position at each school meant that many of the coaches began their work in a position dedicated to literacy coaching. There were situations where coaches had more than one school or position, but those who did not were able to focus almost exclusively on literacy, and were able to be a constant resource to teachers in their schools.

Support of principals: The nearly universal support that coaches received from their principals was important to their work. In many cases, it was the principal who had urged the coach to apply for the position, so the support was there from the start. The extent to which principals were actually engaged in the work of the coaches varied—and a few principals called on coaches to do other tasks. But for the most part, principals gave coaches the flexibility to determine their work based on school needs and goals.

Prior relationship with school faculty: Several of the coaches had been teachers in their schools prior to assuming the position of literacy coach. While research has shown that this situation may sometimes work against a coach (Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Toll, 2005), the research team did not encounter any such scenario. In all cases among the ALCP coaches, the prior relationship enhanced the work of the coach because teachers in the building respected the

coaches and believed they were the right ones for the job. One teacher made these comments, when asked how the school's literacy coach was selected:

*I assume [the principal] or site-based council chose her—I know they chose her because she was best for the job because she is a hard worker. She was just starting here (as a teacher) when I was in high school, but I have known her awhile. She is really good at what she does, and the students really like her.*

Thoughtful selection of coaches: There is a bit of irony in listing this factor as a facilitator, because the ALCP project had to get up and running quickly, and did not oversee selection of literacy coaches. The project listed desired qualifications on the website, but beyond that, it was left to districts and principals to find someone to send to the training. Only three coaches (all in the one district that sent all of its coaches to the training) had to actually apply for the position. Given these circumstances, one would expect that there could be many coaches who were not carefully chosen. Interview data indicate, however, that principals and/or district officials made wise choices in the coaches they selected. In only a few cases were any problems reported with coaches' skills, the work they were doing, or teacher receptivity to the coaches.

Working with willing teachers: The fact that coaches chose to work with the most willing teachers first made their jobs easier, and helped gradually build support for literacy coaching as positive reports of the coach's work spread among the faculty.

**Hindrances.** Factors that hindered the work of some coaches are described below.

Being assigned more than one school: Coaches assigned to more than one school found it difficult to be available to as many teachers as often as they would like. The principal at a school served by one of these coaches remarked, "We all ask for help, and she is pulled in four directions at once." A coach remarked, "Given that I am in three different buildings, it is hard to be consistent. When I need to go back the next day, sometimes I am not here to go back."

Other time issues: Several coaches identified the lack of sufficient time as a hindrance to their work as literacy coach. The perception of insufficient time may have been due to being assigned other duties, or because the school was so large they could not get to everyone, or because there were too many "needy" teachers in the building. One coach explained:

*I have the two first-year teachers in the fifth grade, and I feel I give them more support than the fourth grade. The fourth-grade teachers are doing a good job, but do we punish them for doing a good job? I wish I could help more people the way I help the fifth-grade teachers.*

Lack of district understanding and support: A small number of coaches or principals mentioned that there were issues around district understanding and support that were getting in the way of their success. Sometimes this had to do with organizational issues or turmoil in the district, and sometimes with lack of support for the literacy coaching model. Two coaches lost their positions at the end of the year because the district decided not to fund the position a second year.

Lack of funding to continue the position: Related to the previous point is that many districts perceived it as a hindrance that they were required to fund the position of literacy coach. As noted earlier in the report, ALCP project leaders believe that the low numbers of applications to the project is due to the fact that many districts are unwilling or unable to fund a full-time literacy coach. Some project leaders report that the problem has been exacerbated by a salary increase mandated by the state legislature, which consumed district funds that might otherwise be used to support literacy coaches.

When these helps and hindrances are viewed as a whole, a few emerge as especially critical. First, the fact that these coaches received intensive training and ongoing support that was shaped around research-based knowledge and practices seems to have equipped coaches well for understanding their roles and having a repertoire of resources and strategies to share with teachers. Those who were assigned as full-time literacy coach in one school had a clear advantage over those who had to divide their time among more than one school. The absence of a strong district presence in the work of most of these coaches is interesting. Most of the coaches did not seem hindered in their daily work by this factor; however, two of the coaches lost their positions at the end of the first year because the district would no longer fund the position. Project leaders may want to give some thought to how to inform district leaders across the state about literacy coaching and its benefits.

### **How is Coaching Enacted Differently in Different Settings?**

As this project continues and more longitudinal, in-depth information is obtained on the ALCP schools, the research team hopes to be able to address this question more fully. After one year of work, however, perhaps the most striking observation is how similar coaching looked across the sites. Most coaches were working with willing teachers, sharing strategies in a variety of ways, helping with data analysis, and often doing book studies or other kinds of professional development. These similarities are likely due to the fact that the coaches were all trained around the same set of “essential questions” and the framework of the IRA standards.

### **Impact of the Coaches’ Work**

- *Overview of Major Finding: The main impact of the literacy coaches in their first year appears to have been on teachers. Coaches, principals, and teachers reported that teachers have implemented many new literacy strategies learned from the literacy coach. These same sources also report some early effects of the coaches’ work on students, including improved scores on school-based assessments, improved student classroom performance, increased student enthusiasm for reading, and increased use of reading strategies by students.*

**Impact on teachers.** As noted early in this report, the target of literacy coaches’ work is teachers, and the first change that should be observed is a change in classroom practice. When literacy coaches and principals were asked what evidence they had of the coaches’ effectiveness, the most common response (heard in 15 of 20 schools) was that teachers either reported or were

observed using literacy strategies learned from the coach. When teachers were interviewed during site visits, nearly every teacher could describe a strategy learned from the coach that they had used in their classroom, with positive results. Below is a just a sampling of the strategies teachers described.

*She [literacy coach] did a think-aloud and she did it with a book... Snowflake Bentley. She had the [thought] bubble with her and gave us the bubble to use in class. As an intermediate teacher, I have heard of think-aloud but hadn't seen, so she did that. She has also done the different perspectives, how someone reads something may not be how someone else reads it. So we highlight, "This is how the teacher would read, this is how a student might read it," leaving things out. That is a strategy to show students to re-read the information to make sure it makes sense (4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher).*

*We are working with the culture part of drama; we are reading the Appalachian version of Cinderella, a Native American version, a West African version, because these are the cultures we are hitting in drama. She [the literacy coach] is providing us with what we are using, making sure we are using literature through drama. It has been great, the kids have enjoyed it and we have enjoyed it. I was scared, we both were, we were terrified, but the students... are so excited about that (elementary art and music teachers).*

*We had talked about some ways to incorporate literacy into the classroom and she looked at all the units I would teach; one being geologic time. She had used Jurassic Park in her room and thought it would be a really good book to read. So I took her word and we have gone from there. She purchased the books, and we are reading it now. It is a long book, and I said, "Man, this is going to take forever, this is difficult putting all this literacy in along with all the other content I have to get through." She said, "It is okay if it takes two months, that is okay, no rush to get through it." So that put me at ease (middle school science teacher).*

*I know "X marks the spot" is a strategy that we talked about in our [book study] group, and I have used it successfully. A student gets a certain amount of post-it notes and certain symbols mean certain things, like X is a key point, a question mark is a confusing point, an exclamation mark is an interesting point. I give them, like, 8 post-it notes, and we decide on, "We should be able to find five new facts, one thing might confuse us, and two things might surprise us and interest us." So as they read they are to put the post-it notes in the reading packet where they have interest. To ensure they do it in the correct way, I also have a class discussion and they have to pick one of the post-it notes and tell us why they put it there. It is fun, too... (middle school art teacher).*

*She comes in and observes my class and tries to give me ways to improve the reading skills of my students. She gave me this paper here about how to get students acquainted with the textbook. Coming from college and being a high school teacher, I didn't think, "Well, I need to sit and explain to these kids where their index is and what the bold letters on the page mean." I just assumed that kids know that kind of stuff, but a lot of them didn't, so I was glad she brought that to my attention. Mainly what we focused on the last couple of times was note-taking skills, getting them to use notes, and I use the*

*Framer model. It seems like it made the kids think more about what the notes were saying, trying to figure out where to put this and that, and how to abbreviate and put it in their own words. It seems like the students were more receptive to what I was trying to teach them, it seemed like they liked the notes better (high school math teacher).*

**Impact on students.** As noted earlier in this report, the impact of the work of literacy coaches on student achievement—as measured by test scores—is indirect, and may take 2-3 years to observe. The coaches concentrate on working with teachers, with the goal of improving teacher practice so that student achievement improves. This research will follow test scores trends of schools with literacy coaches—and a set of demographically similar schools without literacy coaches—over the next four years. Test score data on the first year of coaching, 2006-07, is not yet available.

There are, however, other ways in which the work of coaches might have already had a noticeable impact on students. To get a sense of what this influence might be, the research team asked literacy coaches, principals, and teachers what impact the coaches' work had on students in this first year. Their responses are summarized below.

Improved test scores: Interestingly, the most common response to the question about impact on students was that preliminary test scores had shown improvement. These test results were typically from school-level, formative-type assessments. Coaches, principals, and/or teachers in 12 of the 20 schools reported that they had already seen improvements in reading and/or writing test scores:

*First, the rise in writing scores—we have seen a major rise--and that is where she started out. Also, in our education performance testing, Scantron, scores. We do it three times a year in reading and math and see how our students are progressing. We see that [progression] with the scores (middle school principal).*

*We have seen that specifically in portfolio writing and also on norm-referenced tests; we have to check grade level, to check performance in reading. We've seen improvement over the year (middle school principal).*

Improved classroom performance: Another common response, heard from coaches, principals, and/or teachers in 9 of the 20 schools, was that student reading and writing skills in the classroom had improved:

*I am seeing students really reading in my class and not just skimming for information, and really giving me feedback and discussing something in class. (middle school art teacher)*

*My kids have actually become better at summarization, and they do really well now with reflecting on things (middle school math teacher).*

*I have seen individual improvement. They had some students who were major disruptions because they couldn't read. They've eliminated their being a problem because now they can read and understand something of what they are doing. They can stay engaged. That's not*

*isolated. I can think of a dozen kids that I watched them try to work with the first months of school disrupting class (high school principal).*

**Increased student enthusiasm and motivation:** Coaches, principals, and/or teachers in half (10) of the schools for which the team had interview data said that one sign of the coach's impact on students was the increased level of student enthusiasm and motivation for reading and/or writing:

*In my classroom, the books that we would read on Fridays, there would be students fighting over certain books because they were so interesting. There would be students wanting to take books home to finish because someone else will get it next time. They are looking forward to reading certain things. A bunch of the children I have, reading is not something they are really interested in, so she [literacy coach] is giving them content that is interesting to them and they are getting something out of it science-wise in my room (middle school science teacher).*

*The books the students were reading, I was amazed at what they were reading, and their enthusiasm for it. I was teaching a lower level class. They would come in and say, "You have to read this," and would point out sections to me. The enthusiasm of the students is exciting. We did presentations just today on two books the kids are reading: House of Scorpions about cloning and one on Vietnam. They all picked some form of that era, some aspect of a science fiction type, weapons of the future. The Vietnam part was fascinating that they all took part of the anti-war movement and had the best time doing their presentations. It is real exciting to see them want to get into it more. I think that is one thing she does really well. She doesn't just introduce a book and go through it, but has them do research on the time period and the things around it to make the connections (middle school language arts teacher).*

**Increased use of reading strategies:** Coaches, principals, and/or teachers in six schools reported that they had observed students using reading and/or writing strategies that the literacy coach had demonstrated and that teachers had begun using:

*I see them sometimes getting excited about using a strategy. [For instance], they will use it in science, and then they will use it in another class. They say, "We know how to do this," and take off and go with it. So they are developing a knowledge of strategies, and that is good. One thing they [teachers] have a problem with is getting kids to look at text features, and because I have worked with so many teachers, a lot of students are looking at those text features more than before (high school literacy coach).*

*I do see students using the terminology, following the techniques, using literacy skills. In math, I see them using techniques they didn't use a year ago. They know how to read charts and graphs... You hear a lot less of "I don't know" (middle school principal).*

**Summary of the coaches' impact.** Earlier in this report, it was noted that literacy coaching researchers and experts suggest that the most appropriate measure for the effectiveness of the literacy coach is change in teacher practice (Fischer, 2007; IRA, 2006; Toll,

2005). The data shared above indicate that teachers have implemented new strategies because of the work of the literacy coaches in their schools. It is not yet clear whether these teachers have changed their practice in fundamental and lasting ways, or whether they have simply tried out a new strategy or two. The fact that student performance is reported to improve in the classroom, and that students have been observed using literacy strategies shared by the coach suggests that at least a few of the strategies have taken hold. Future research will explore these issues more deeply.

### **Differences in Literacy Environment in Schools With Coaches and Schools Without**

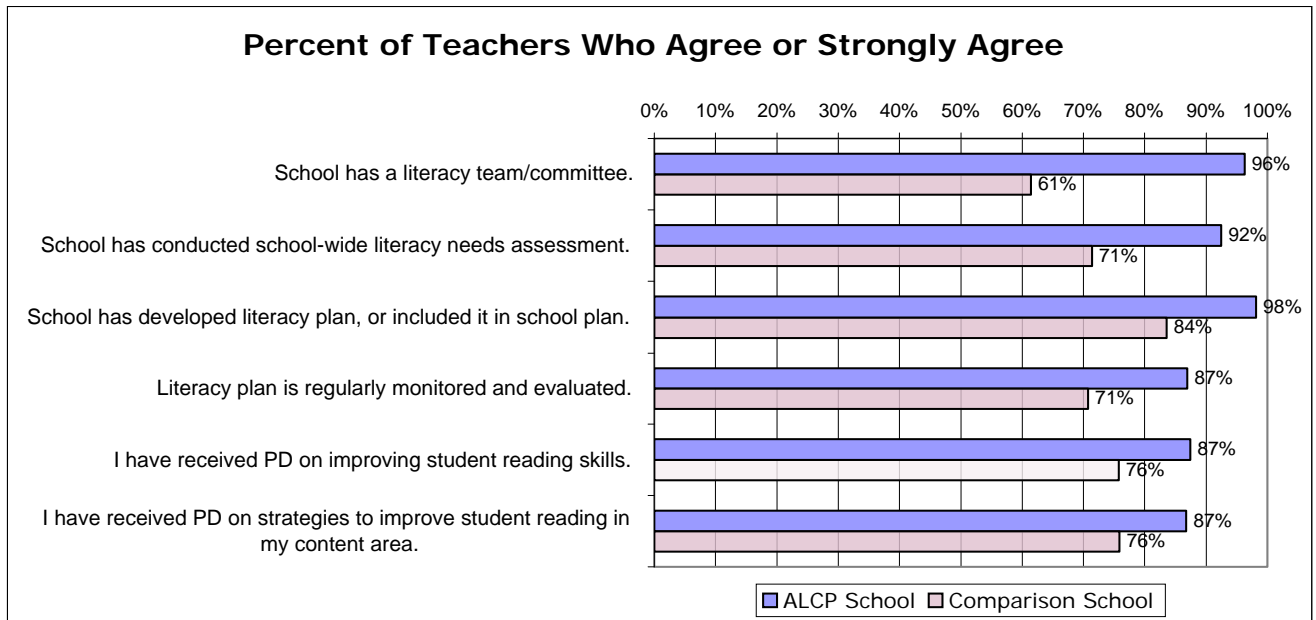
- *Overview of Major Finding: When survey results from teachers in ALCP schools were compared with those of teachers in schools that did not have literacy coaches, it was found that: (1) a higher percentage of ALCP schools were engaged in strategic planning around literacy; (2) higher proportions of teachers in ALCP schools received professional development on improving student reading skills in their content areas; (3) teachers in ALCP schools reported more frequent use of a variety of strategies to improve student literacy skills in their classrooms; (4) teachers in ALCP schools reported requesting help with literacy issues more frequently; and (5) teachers in ALCP schools reported receiving more frequent help in selecting literacy materials, developing literacy strategies in the classroom, developing and administering classroom literacy assessments, and receiving information and resources around literacy. There were no significant differences between the two types of schools in the amount of assistance teachers received in the area of writing instruction, or in analyzing and using assessment data.*

The preceding sections provided a description of the literacy environment in schools served by an ALCP literacy coach for nearly one year. To put this information into context, the researchers identified a set of comparison schools in order to determine whether there were significant differences in the literacy environment of schools with ALCP coaches and schools without literacy coaches. (Information on how the comparison schools were identified can be found in the Research Design section of this report).

In May 2007 after the state testing window had closed, ALCP and comparison schools were asked to administer a survey to all teachers of grades 4-12 in the content areas of English/language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. The survey posed questions about the school literacy environment. The survey that was sent to ALCP schools had an additional set of questions about the work of the literacy coach. In order to permit the comparison of items between the two types of schools, most of the survey questions asked about specific aspects of the literacy environment, but did not ask specifically about the role of the coach in developing those aspects of the environment. Survey instruments are provided in Appendix C.

Results of the surveys showed that responses of teachers in ALCP schools differed from those in the comparison schools by statistically significant margins on several items. Figure 3 displays the differences that were revealed on items related to strategic planning and professional development around literacy.

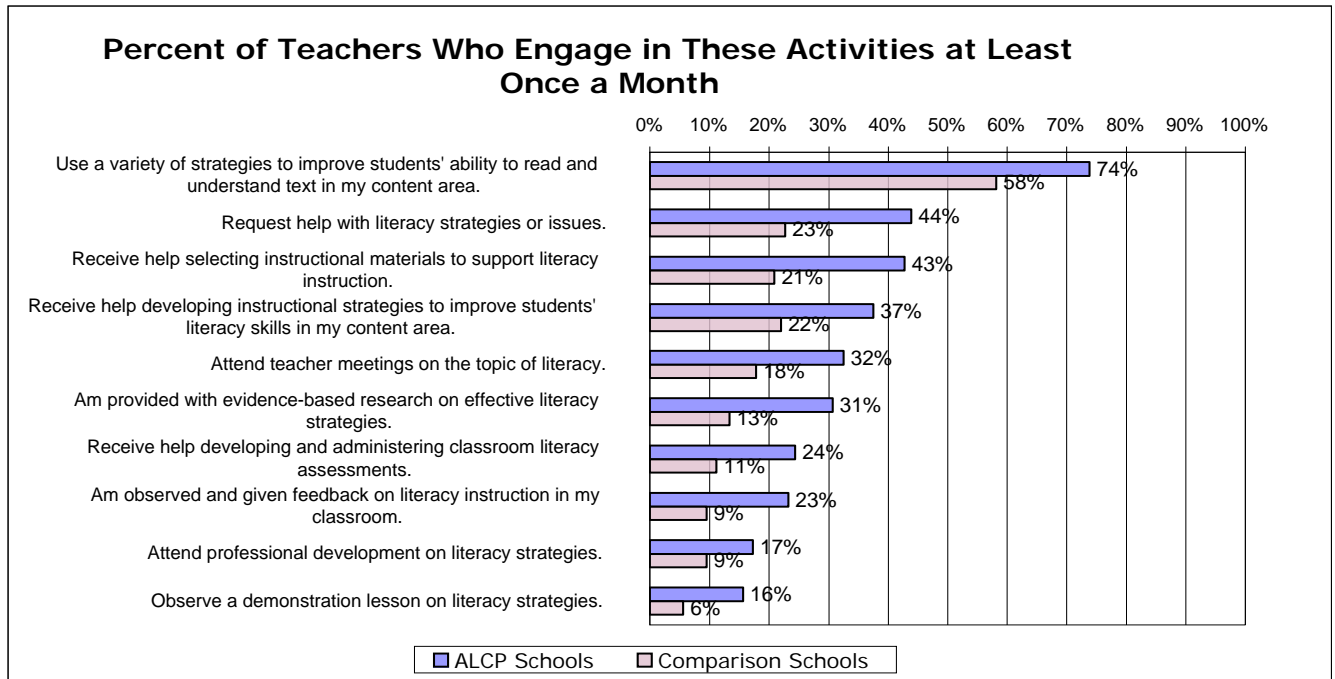
**Figure 3: Aspects of the Literacy Environment That Differed in ALCP and Comparison Schools by Statistically Significant Margins**



These results reveal that a larger percentage of teachers in ALCP schools than in comparison schools reported that the school had a literacy committee, had conducted a school-wide literacy needs assessment, and had a literacy plan that was regularly monitored. Teachers in ALCP schools also reported in significantly greater numbers that they had received professional development to improve students’ reading skills.

Another set of survey questions asked teachers how often they engaged in specific activities related to literacy. These activities correspond to the IRA coaching standards. Results for ALCP schools differed from those of comparison schools by statistically significant margins on several of these items, as shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 4: Literacy Activities That Differed in ALCP and Comparison Schools by Statistically Significant Margins**



For the items displayed in Figure 4, teachers were asked if they engaged in these activities never, a few times a year, once or twice a month, once or twice a week, or daily. The results show above aggregate response for teachers who said they engaged in the activities at least once or twice a month. As the graph reveals, a significantly higher proportion of teachers in ALCP schools reported more frequent use of literacy strategies in their classrooms, and that they requested help with literacy strategies. They also reported more frequently receiving help in a variety of areas related to literacy, including selecting instructional materials, developing instructional strategies, developing and administering classroom assessments, being observed, and observing demonstration lessons.

There were a number of items for which results for ALCP schools did not differ from those of comparison schools by statistically significant margins. These items included:

- Sharing of instructional strategies among teachers;
- Receiving assistance developing writing assignments and strategies;
- Receiving professional development on the reading demands of textbooks and materials in the content areas;
- Receiving alternative reading material to help improve student understanding in the content areas;
- Frequency of teachers assessing literacy needs of individual students;
- Frequency of analysis of student work in the area of literacy;
- Frequency with which teachers receive help analyzing test data in their content areas; and
- Frequency with which teachers receive help using analysis of test data to determine which strategies will improve student achievement.

These analyses revealed the following key differences between the literacy environment of schools with ALCP coaches and schools without literacy coaches:

- A higher percentage of ALCP schools appeared to be engaged in strategic planning around literacy;
- Higher proportions of teachers in ALCP schools received professional development on improving student reading skills in their content areas;
- Teachers in ALCP schools reported more frequent use of a variety of strategies to improve student literacy skills in their classrooms;
- Teachers in ALCP schools reported requesting help with literacy issues more frequently; and receiving more frequent help in selecting literacy materials, developing literacy strategies in the classroom, developing and administering classroom literacy assessments, and receiving information and resources around literacy.

There did not appear to be appreciable differences between the two types of schools in the amount of assistance teachers received in the area of writing instruction, or in analyzing and using assessment data on student literacy skills. It is likely that the lack of differences in these areas is due to the fact that the state assessment system has included for many years a strong writing component, and that the state-mandated school improvement planning process requires extensive analysis and use of assessment data. Thus, it is to be expected that most Kentucky schools would be providing teachers with assistance in these areas.

It does appear, however, that schools with ALCP coaches were providing more direct assistance and professional development to teachers around reading strategies, particularly in the content areas. Because of the design of the survey, which was based on the need to compare responses of the two type of schools, it cannot be stated with certainty that the differences noted above were due to the work of the literacy coach. However, the survey results correspond closely to interview data on the activities of literacy coaches. For instance, coaches, principals, and teachers reported that coaches spent much of their time sharing strategies and instructional materials with teachers, and the survey shows that a higher percentage of teachers in ALCP schools received this sort of help than did teachers in comparison schools. Thus, it seems likely that the coaches played a strong role in the differences that were noted between schools with coaches and schools without coaches.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Adolescent Literacy Coaching Project appears to have enjoyed much success in its first year of operation. The training and support program that was developed for literacy coaches was well-received by them and, by their own reports, prepared them effectively to serve as literacy coaches. The model was certainly consistent with recommendations from researchers and scholars on literacy coaching, who note that ongoing professional development and support of coaches should be built into the program (Buly et al, 2006; IRA, 2004; Neufeld & Roper, 2003). There were indications that the level of follow-up support for coaches differed across regional sites, which is an area project leaders may want to address.

The thoughtful and focused design of the ALCP training and support program was evident in the consistency of the coaching model across sites. Some coaches were limited by the fact that they had more than one school or job assignment, but even so, most coaches were able to spend a substantial portion of their time in the role of literacy coach. In keeping with definitions of literacy coaching provided in the literature (IRA, 2006; Toll, 2005), most of the coaches spent most of their time working with teachers to improve literacy strategies in the classroom. Overall, the roles ALCP literacy coaches played mirrored findings of research on literacy coaching in other locations (Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Poglinco et al, 2003).

Using the IRA literacy coaching standards as a framework appeared to be an effective tool for giving focus to the work of the coaches, and for ensuring consistency in how the model was implemented. The IRA standards to which the coaches adhered most closely were: assisting with strategic planning around literacy; working as a literacy liaison and support person to the principal; promoting productive relationships with and among faculty; strengthening their own professional knowledge and skills (built into the project); providing practical support to teachers in the form of sharing and demonstrating strategies, helping select instructional materials, and disseminating information and resources; assisting with analyzing results of state and other assessments; and offering job-embedded professional development both one-on-one and in small group settings.

The IRA standards that received somewhat less attention were those around looking more closely at the work of individual students and helping teachers identify strategies to move the students forward; helping design formative assessment; observing teachers and providing feedback; and familiarity and support around specific content areas. It was unclear from the data how much knowledge coaches had of each of the four content areas, and whether the assistance they provided was tailored to specific content areas. It appeared that coaches worked in a more general way with content area teachers, sharing literacy strategies that would be effective in any content area (such as strategies for teaching content-specific vocabulary). It may be that in the first year of the coaches' work, this sort of general approach is appropriate. More research is needed on whether it is necessary for coaches to have extensive knowledge of each of the content areas to provide the kind of literacy support teachers need.

The ALCP training appeared to be effective in conveying to coaches their role as resource and support person to teachers. In only a very few cases were there any hints that coaches might have been perceived as overly judgmental or evaluative. The vast majority of coaches appeared to have inspired trust and respect among faculty, and conveyed to them that they were there to support, assist, and mutually problem-solve with them—not to evaluate or serve as the expert. These are important aspects of coaching identified in the literature (Bean & DeFord, N. D., Buly et al, 2006; Fisher, 2007; Joyce & Showers, 1996; Shanklin, 2006; Toll, 2005).

Coaches who were assigned as full-time literacy coaches to one school were able to stay more focused on literacy, and to assist a larger number of teachers with literacy specifically. Those who had to visit many schools or play other roles were challenged to provide all the support for literacy that they felt was needed; a finding consistent with research on literacy coaching in other locations (Neufeld & Roper, 2003).

For the most part, principals were supportive of literacy coaches, giving them flexibility to determine their schedules, and facilitating structures and opportunities for coaches to do their work. This support has been identified as critical not only to literacy coaching, but to any kind of school change (Bean & DeFord, N. D., Kral, N. D., Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Poglinco et al, 2003). The strong support from principals is likely due to the fact that schools entered this program voluntarily, often at the principal's initiative. The results may have been different had the literacy coaching program been mandated by districts. Even though principals were support, some coaches suggested that principals needed to be involved in some of the ALCP training to increase their understanding of literacy coaching.

District leaders at most of the ALCP sites appeared to be relatively uninvolved in the model, suggesting that some work may need be done with district officials to get more buy-in to the concept of literacy coaching—particularly in light of the findings of Neufeld and Roper (2003) that district support is the most important condition for successful coaching. At present, support for the ALCP coaches appears to rest with a few individuals rather than with the systems in which the coaches are employed. This makes the coaches' position very tenuous unless support for the literacy coaching model can be built throughout the organization.

The decision by coaches to work first with those teachers who were receptive to the help went a long way toward building a positive climate for literacy coaching, and slowly increasing the number of teachers receptive to the coach's help—as predicted by Bean and DeFord (N.D.). The fact that several coaches had been teachers in their schools before assuming the position of coach appeared to work in their favor. Some researchers have suggested that this situation can work to the advantage or disadvantage of the literacy coach (Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Toll, 2005). In the case of the ALCP coaches, the prior relationship appeared advantageous, primarily because these coaches appeared to be well-chosen—they were already respected by faculty as hard-working, knowledgeable, and trustworthy.

As to the coaches' impact, survey results revealed that teachers in ALCP schools were receiving more assistance with literacy than were their counterparts in schools without coaches. At the same time, coaches, principals and teachers reported in interviews that teachers had begun implementing new strategies in their classrooms. While it is not yet known if teachers have changed their practice in fundamental and lasting ways (as opposed to trying a few new strategies), these early anecdotal reports are encouraging, and align well with the literature on literacy coaching, which states that the primary impact of literacy coaching is teacher learning and growth (IRA, 2006; Toll, 2005). In addition, there was anecdotal evidence after only one year that the work of coaches had begun to have an impact on students. Sources at several schools reported improvements in school-based test scores, and in the classroom performance of students. There were also reports that students were using new literacy strategies in the classroom, and that they were more engaged with reading because of the strategies or literature the coaches had introduced.

All indications would suggest that the ALCP needs only minor adjustments at this point. One issue to consider is how to deal with the fact that many districts do not feel they can support the position of full-time literacy coach, which results in very few districts taking advantage of the

opportunity to send teachers to receive intensive, research-based training at no cost. Another issue is the one of qualifications. There might be some question as to whether the majority of Cadre 1 ALCP coaches even met “The Gold Standard” identified by IRA and the Literacy Coaching Clearinghouse (Frost & Bean, 2006), although certainly many of them did. Even so, from their schools’ perspective, the overwhelming majority of these coaches appeared to be working effectively in their schools. Another issue to consider is in what direction the training and support for coaches should be “tweaked.” Some possibilities are to offer more information and training around: literacy in specific content areas, analyzing student work and using results to shape practice, and structures for observing teachers and providing feedback. Coaches may also need additional support in learning how to model lessons effectively so that they are not simply freeing up a teacher to pursue other activities. There were indications, as well, that there may need to be greater clarity about the coach’s role in some sites—an important issue if coaches are to be able to do the work they are trained to do (Buly et al, 2006; Neufeld & Roper, 2003). In the section that follows, the findings are summarized into some key “lessons learned,” and a few recommendations.

## IMPLICATIONS

### A Caveat

Before sharing Lessons Learned and Implications, it is important to re-emphasize that the findings shared above are drawn from a very small number of cases due to low participation in the ALCP. In addition, the data are quite heavily weighted at present toward self-reports from coaches, principals, and teachers. As more coaches, schools, and districts join the project and research is conducted over a period of years, it can be determined whether the relatively positive findings from the first year of implementation will continue.

### Lessons Learned

- The Adolescent Literacy Coaching Project (ALCP) was planned and implemented effectively in the space of only a few months by contracting the work to the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development, an organization with experience implementing intensive professional development programs for teachers around literacy.
- The ALCP model included 8-day summer institutes, two days of training by the Kentucky Department of Education on strategies, and monthly follow-up sessions, which resulted in coaches being able to call upon ALCP staff, institute directors, and fellow coaches for support, and to continue strengthening their professional knowledge and skills on the job. Support from the regional cadres and ALCP staff via email, the on-line community, and cadre meetings was especially valued by coaches.
- Using the International Reading Association’s *Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches* as a framework gave the ALCP a focus and structure that has shaped the work in accordance with the latest national-level thinking and research on literacy coaching models.

- The strong emphasis on literacy strategies in both the summer institutes and follow-up sessions was valued by coaches and used by them at their schools. Nearly all coaches developed a repertoire of literacy strategies, which they shared with teachers in various ways, including modeling strategies in the classroom—a form of embedded professional development that was highly valued by teachers.
- Educational research has identified many “best practices” that lead to improved student achievement, but such practices often fail to make it to the classroom level because teachers and school administrators are too consumed with their day-to-day work to make deep changes in classroom practice. A program like the ALCP provides a vehicle for taking these practices directly to the classroom through a staff person dedicated to this goal.
- Requiring that coaches be employed full-time in schools meant the schools had a staff person with the time and expertise to help principals and teachers keep literacy in the forefront. In some cases, schools or districts combined the literacy coach position with an existing role, such as curriculum coordinator, but there was enough overlap in job responsibilities that this may be a sensible approach for providing literacy coaching when resources are limited.
- While improved student achievement is the ultimate goal of literacy coaches, such improvements will take time. More immediate measures of the coaches’ impact include changes in teacher practice resulting in more varied instruction for students, increased use of reading and writing strategies by students, and increased student motivation to read and enthusiasm for reading.
- The requirement that districts fund the position of literacy coach has proven to be a barrier for many districts, resulting in low numbers of participants in what appears to be a program that may well lead to changes in teacher practice that will result in improved student achievement.

## **Recommendations**

- In its first year of operation, the ALCP received positive reviews from institute directors, literacy coaches, principals, and teachers. Although these findings are based on a very small number of coaches, the data suggest that the training and support program for coaches should be continued in essentially its current form, with only minor adjustments. Areas in which the project may want to consider making adjustments include:
  - a. Involve principals and possibly district officials in ALCP training and support sessions;
  - b. Develop a structure for school-year support to coaches that is consistent across regional training sites;
  - c. Consider whether there is a need to enhance coaches’ training in these areas: achieving clarity about the coaches’ role with principals and teachers; literacy strategies specific to the content areas of science, social studies and mathematics; analyzing student work and using results to shape teacher practice; structures for observing teachers and providing feedback; and characteristics of effective demonstration lessons;
  - d. Continue to strongly emphasize to schools and districts the advantages of assigning a literacy coach to one school full-time.

- Some consideration should be given to how to increase participation in the ALCP, thus building a more extensive network of literacy coaches across the state. Some possibilities are for the state to support all or part of the coach's salary, or to develop alternate positions that combine literacy coaching with other, compatible roles (as some schools and districts have already done). More information about the program may need to go out to district-level officials, perhaps through their own professional networks and conferences.

In conclusion, the ALCP appears to have been successful in its first year of operation in preparing a very small number of literacy coaches to provide support to content area teachers in their schools. The use of research-based materials and practices in training and supporting coaches seems to have resulted in coaching practices that are consistent across sites, and consistent with the current thinking about what literacy coaching should look like. The great majority of school staff who were interviewed or surveyed were quite positive about the work of the coaches, and early indications are that the coaches' work has begun to have an impact on teachers and students. As more coaches are added to the project and more research is conducted to supplement self-report data, the researchers will be able to more definitively determine whether the positive results will hold true across sites and over the years.

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## **APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS**

### **ALCP Interview Protocol: ALCP Staff**

#### **Background**

- Describe your professional background in terms of how it led to your involvement w/ALCP.

#### **Training and Support to Coaches**

- How and why were the core materials for coaches selected?  
[NOTE: Core resources are IRA Coaching Standards, Coaching survival book (Toll), Janet Allen flip book of Content Literacy strategies, Subject Matters (Harvey Daniels), McREL resource guide on Student Engagement]
  - a. Do you feel that these have turned out to be the “right” materials? Why or why not?
- How did you gather information about how the institutes went?
  - a. What is your overall feeling about the summer institutes and how they went?
  - b. Any differences across sites?
- Do you have a sense of what were the most/least effective aspects of the institutes?
- How will the institutes be similar or different in year 2?
- What kind of support are coaches receiving during the school year, and from whom?
  - a. Vary across sites?
- How did you decide to provide this kind of support?
- How effective is the online component for managing the work, maintaining contact, etc.?
- Any issues or problems around funding? Is funding adequate to train and support coaches? Is the allocation to schools adequate? How is it being used? Do you have any information about which kind of support is of greatest use to coaches?
- How effective are the Literacy Summits for recruiting? Did you meet/exceed your goals for new applications this year?

#### **How the work is going**

- How, if at all, are you kept informed about how the work is going in the schools?
- What do you feel best about in terms of the project and your role in it?
- What have been the biggest challenges?
- Have you modified your roll-out plan? If yes, why and how?

#### **Closing Comments**

- Any additional comments?

## ALCP Interview Protocol: Institute Directors

### Background

- Describe your professional background in terms of how it led to your involvement w/ALCP.

### Summer Institutes

- How do you assess the impact/success of the summer institutes?
  - a. Did you have adequate preparation time?
  - b. Did you receive clear directives from CCLD on the scope of work, and on training objectives? If not, what was lacking, and how to improve next year?
  - c. Did the essential topics (list) identified by institute directors turn out to be the “right” ones?
    - If not, what was missing or inappropriate?
- Did this group of coaches seem to have adequate background, skills, motivation to do the work?
- What did you feel were the most/least effective aspects of the institutes?
- Will you do an institute this summer for a new cadre? If so, when, and what will you do the same/differently this time?

### Support to Coaches

- What kind of support are you providing to coaches during the school year? (e.g., email communications, site visits, regular networking meetings, phone calls)
  - a. Do all coaches receive the same level of support? If not, how decide who to help?
- How did you decide to provide this kind of support?
- What kinds of help/support are coaches requesting of you?
- How effective is the online component as part of your coursework, or in terms of its usefulness to coaches? How could this component be improved?
- Describe any support coaches receive from other sources (i.e., KDE, districts).
- Which kind of support seems to be of greatest use to coaches?

### How the work is going

- What information, if any, do you have on how the work is going in the schools?
  - a. What is your perception of how the work is going in the schools?
  - b. Are any coaches struggling? If so, in what way? How are you or ALCP staff trying to assist these coaches?
- What evidence do you have that coaches are using information/strategies gained at the institutes?
- How is the quality of the coaches’ work ensured?
- What do you feel best about in terms of the project and your role in it?
- What have been the biggest challenges?
- What will year 2 summer institutes need to address to move coaches along?

### Closing Comments

- Any additional comments?

## ALCP Interview Protocol: Literacy Coach

### Background

- (Native to area, professional background)?
- How did you get involved in the ALCP (recruited by whom? Volunteered?)?
- Why did you want to be a literacy coach (needed credit? Job change? Fulfill school need?)?

### Training and support

- What was your overall reaction to the summer institute?
  - a. What was most beneficial?
  - b. What was least beneficial?
  - c. How could the institute be improved?
- Did the institute adequately prepare you to begin your work?
  - a. What have you used the most from the summer training?
- What kind of training and support have you received since the summer institute, and from whom?
  - a. Which of these experiences have been most/least helpful?
  - b. What do you wish had been included in the training?
- What kind of support do you most need from the ALCP now, and are you getting it?
- What do you hope the second summer institute will provide?
- How effective is the online component as a support mechanism, management tool, and for communication purposes?
- Is the coursework you are doing (3 credit hours per year) rigorous, relevant, and aligned with your job?
- How are you using the funds provided (general, don't need line-by-line detail)?

### The Coaching Model

- What roles and responsibilities do you have, and how are those determined?
  - a. **[possible probe:** describe a typical day; and/or a good/bad day]
  - b. Any tasks that you perform that you do not think you should be doing?
- How is the principal responding to you as a coach?
- In what way, if at all, do you work with the school leadership team/SBDM council?
- How are teachers responding to you as a coach?
  - a. Do they seek you out for help and support? Why or why not?
  - b. How many of target group of teachers (i.e. grades 4-12 content area) are you working with regularly? Why those teachers, and why not others?
  - c. Have you been able to respond promptly to requests for assistance? If not, why not?

### Influence of Coach on the School and Faculty

- Describe the work that you do in these areas **[probe only on areas not mentioned earlier]**:
  - a. Facilitate strategic planning around literacy?
  - b. Facilitate sharing of strategies among teachers?
  - c. Facilitate discussions between and among school leaders and teachers on literacy issues?
  - d. Assist the principal in supporting teachers' literacy efforts?
  - e. Strengthen your own professional knowledge and skills?
  - f. Help select instructional materials?

- g. Help develop instructional strategies to meet specific student needs?
- h. Provide content area teachers with PD related to reading and literacy strategies?
- i. Link teachers with evidence-based research?
- j. Assist teachers in the classroom (observation/feedback, demo lessons, etc.)?
- k. Help teachers with assessing individual students?
- l. Conduct regular meetings with teachers to examine student work and monitor progress?
- m. Any other tasks you perform that we have not mentioned?
- What evidence do you have that your work has influenced teachers?
- What has been your biggest success as a coach?
- What has been your biggest challenge?
- Which coaching strategies (i.e., modeling, meetings, conferencing with teachers) have been most beneficial to teachers?
- What factors facilitate or hinder your work? [**probe** these areas:
  - a. Skills/qualifications of the coach going into the work?
  - b. Training, preparation, and support by the ALCP?
  - c. State/district/local policy environment?
  - d. School accountability status?
  - e. District or school administrative support?
  - f. Resistant faculty?
  - g. School climate?
  - h. Budget issues?
  - 1. Other?
- In what area could your literacy coaching be improved?

### **Effects on Students and Student Achievement**

- Have you seen any impact of your work on students yet? If not, why not? If so, what impact have you seen?

### **Closing**

- Any further comments?

## ALCP Interview Protocol: Principals

### Background

- (Native to area, how long in districts/school, how long a principal; professional background)
- Describe the demographics of this school (SES, ethnicity, ELL).

### The Coaching Model

- How did your school get involved in the ALCP?
- How was \_\_\_\_ selected as literacy coach?
- Does the literacy coach serve on the leadership team/SBDM council? Part of a department?
- How often do you interact with the literacy coach; and what is nature of interaction?
- With whom does the coach work, and how is that determined?
- How are teachers responding to the coach?

### Influence of Coach on the School and Faculty

- What roles and responsibilities does the coach have, and how are those determined?
  - a. [**probe** on the areas below if they are not mentioned]
    - i. Facilitate strategic planning around literacy?
    - ii. Facilitate sharing of strategies among teachers? (is there time allotted for this?)
    - iii. Facilitate discussions between and among school leaders and teachers on literacy issues?
    - iv. Help you support teachers' literacy efforts?
    - v. Strengthen his/her professional knowledge and skills?
    - vi. Help select instructional materials?
    - vii. Help develop instructional strategies to meet specific student needs?
    - viii. Provide content area teachers with PD related to reading and literacy strategies?
    - ix. Link teachers with evidence-based research?
      - x. Assist teachers in the classroom (observation/feedback, demo lessons, etc.)?
      - xi. Help teachers with assessing individual students?
      - xii. Conduct regular meetings with teachers to examine student work and monitor progress? (is there time allotted for this?)
- What evidence do you have of the coach's effectiveness (May want to probe on some of the specific areas mentioned in #9 above)?
- On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being "very effective," to what extent does the coach effectively:
  - a. Inspire trust between herself and teachers?
  - b. Manage time and resources?
  - c. Respect issues of confidentiality?
  - d. Respond promptly to requests of assistance from staff and leaders?
  - e. Demonstrate and communicate positive expectations for student learning?
- Which coaching strategies have been most beneficial to teachers?
- Are any school-wide literacy strategies being used? If so, what role did coach play in instituting those?
- Has the school climate changed in terms of all teachers accepting responsibility for literacy since the coach began working?
- What factors facilitate or hinder the work of the literacy coach?
- What has been the greatest benefit of having a literacy coach?

- How could the literacy coaching model be improved?
- When the grant ends, do you anticipate continuing funding for the coach position?

**Effects on Students and Student Achievement**

- Have you seen any impact of the coaches' work on students yet? If not, why not? If so, what impact have you seen?

**Closing**

- Any further comments?

## ALCP Interview Protocol: Teachers

### Background

- Background: grade/subject taught, years teaching, years at this school.
- How did your school get involved in the ALCP?
- How was \_\_\_\_ selected as literacy coach?

### The Coaching Model

- How often do you interact with the literacy coach?
  - a. What is the nature of this interaction?
  - b. Who initiated the interaction [**probe** on whether teacher has sought help from LC]
  - c. Has the coach interacted with you in any other ways this year? If so, describe.

### Influence of Coach on the School and Faculty

- Give an example of one strategy the coach introduced to you that you used?
  - a. How did the coach support you as you implemented?
  - b. What were the results?
  - c. What kind of follow-up did the coach do?
  - d. Any other examples (of strategies introduced by coach that you used)?
- I will list a number of areas in which the coach might be working. For each one, tell me whether you have worked with the coach in this way and if so, what were the results [**probe** only on areas not already mentioned]
  - a. Facilitate strategic planning around literacy?
  - b. Facilitate sharing of strategies among teachers?
  - c. Facilitate discussions between and among school leaders and teachers on literacy issues?
  - d. Help the principal support teachers' literacy efforts?
  - e. Help you select instructional materials?
  - f. Help you develop instructional strategies to meet specific student needs?
  - g. Provide you with PD related to reading and literacy strategies?
  - h. Link you with evidence-based research?
  - i. Assist in the classroom (observation/feedback, demo lessons, etc.)?
  - j. Help you assess individual students?
  - k. Conduct regular meetings with teachers to examine student work and monitor progress?
  - l. Any other activities in which the coach is engaging that I have not asked about?
- Which coaching strategies have been most beneficial to you as a teacher?
- What coaching activities have been least beneficial?
- How effective has the coach been in doing the following:
  - a. Inspire your trust?
  - b. Manage time and resources?
  - c. Respect issues of confidentiality?
  - d. Respond promptly to your requests of assistance?
  - e. Demonstrate and communicate positive expectations for student learning?
- What factors facilitate or hinder the work of the literacy coach?
- How could the literacy coaching model be improved?

**Effects on Students and Student Achievement**

- Have you seen any impact of the coaches' work on students yet? If not, why not? If so, what impact have you seen?

**Closing**

- Any further comments?

## APPENDIX B: IRA Standards for Middle and High School Literacy Coaches (2006)

[NOTE: This is a summary version of the standards. The standards maybe downloaded in their entirety at: <http://www.reading.org/resources/issues/reports/coaching.html>]

### Standard 1

1. LC's are **skilled, effective collaborators** in MS and HS settings.
  - 1.1 Determine school's strengths and needs for improvement
    - 1.1.1 Assist principal in developing literacy team
    - 1.1.2 Collaborate w/team to conduct school-wide literacy needs assessment
    - 1.1.3 Provides opportunities for small and large group discussions
    - 1.1.4 Communicate findings of needs assessment to staff and other stakeholders
    - 1.1.5 Prioritize needs and guide development and impl of literacy improv action plan
    - 1.1.6 Help staff align curriculum to state and district requirements
    - 1.1.7 Conduct ongoing evaluations of literacy improvement action plan
    - 1.1.8 Manage time and resources.
  - 1.2 Promote productive relationships with and among school staff
    - 1.2.1 Showcase effective strategies and encourage teachers to share
    - 1.2.2 Listen, learn, and respond in a non-judgmental manner that inspires trust, respect
    - 1.2.3 Respect issues of confidentiality
    - 1.2.4 Know how coaching differs from being supervisor
    - 1.2.5 Respond promptly to requests for assistance
    - 1.2.6 Facilitate discussions among L team and teachers; set meeting agendas based on staff input and their own assessment of student needs
    - 1.2.7 Understand secondary school culture and students
    - 1.2.8 Demonstrate positive expectations for student learning, including ELL
    - 1.2.9 Apply concepts of adult learning and motivation
    - 1.2.10 Encourage language specialists to work w/tchrs to work w/ELL students
    - 1.2.11 Keep administrators informed, involved, and supportive of teachers
  - 1.3 Strengthen their own professional teaching, knowledge, skills, strategies
    - 1.3.1 Stay current with professional literature and research
    - 1.3.2 Routinely examine best practices and curriculum materials
    - 1.3.3 Demonstrate openness to new ideas
    - 1.3.4 Meet regularly (at least monthly) w other coaches
    - 1.3.5 Attend professional meetings, seminars, etc.

### Standard 2

2. LC's are **skilled instructional coaches** for teachers in the core content areas.
  - 2.1 Work with teachers individually, in teams, or depts. providing practical support on reading, writing, and communication strategies.
    - 2.1.1 Assist tchrs in selecting texts and materials to meet diverse student needs
    - 2.1.2 Assist tchrs in designing instruction to improve student skills and motivation
    - 2.1.3 Provide content area tchrs with PD related to metacognitive reading strategies
    - 2.1.4 Provide PD related to literacy strategies that can be used by content area tchrs
    - 2.1.5 Explore with content area tchrs crosscultural communication patterns
    - 2.1.6 Have repertoire of reading strategies to share and model
    - 2.1.7 Provide PD related to vocabulary development

- 2.1.8 Assist tchrs in increasing amount, quality, appropriateness of writing instruction
- 2.1.9 Provide PD related to helping students evaluate and use Internet sources
- 2.1.10 Link teachers to evidence-based research.
- 2.2 Observe and provide feedback to teachers on instruction related to literacy development and content area knowledge.
  - 2.2.1 Ensure that teachers see observations as helpful rather than threatening
  - 2.2.2 Regularly conduct classroom observations to collect informal data
  - 2.2.3 Engage in reflective dialogue with teachers before and after observations
  - 2.2.4 Demonstrate instructional strategies and provide support as tchrs try them

### **Standard 3**

- 3. LC's are skilled **evaluators of literacy needs** and collaborate with L teams and tchrs to interpret and use assessment data to inform instruction.
  - 3.1 Lead faculty in selection and use of assessment tools
    - 3.1.1 Develop comprehensive assessment program.
    - 3.1.2 Set schedules for administering assessments
    - 3.1.3 Aid in design/impl of formative assessments about teaching strategies
    - 3.1.4 Help teachers standardize scoring of writing and other measures of literacy
    - 3.1.5 Know current research and trends in assessment methodologies.
  - 3.2 Conduct regular meetings with content area teachers to examine student work and monitor progress.
    - 3.2.1 Introduce CA tchrs to ways to observe students' literacy skills and ELL lang dev
    - 3.2.2 Host periodic meetings with CA tchrs to examine student work and evaluate their strategies
    - 3.2.3 Help teachers analyze trends on content areas achievement tests
    - 3.2.4 Help teachers use assessment analysis results to determine which strategies will help students improve literacy skills.
- 4. LC's are accomplished MS and HS teachers who are **skilled in developing and implementing instructional strategies to improve academic literacy in ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies**.
  - 4.1 Familiar with the ELA, math, science, and SS content areas and know how reading and writing processes intersect within each of the four disciplines.
    - 4.1.1 Know/understand professional standards and how they relate to state/local stand
    - 4.1.2 Relate adolescent dev and cultural backgrounds to study of content
    - 4.1.3 Know the specific demands of reading texts/materials in the content areas
    - 4.1.4 (ELA only) Help tchrs select multicultural texts that connect student interests/backgrounds to state and local standards.
  - 4.2 Demonstrate multiple comprehension strategies to assist content area teachers in developing active and competent readers in each of the four content areas.
    - 4.2.1 Assist CA tchrs in understanding the text structures used in their disciplines

[NOTE: These sub-elements begin to differ substantially at this point by content area; see actual standards document.]

**APPENDIX C: SURVEY INSTRUMENTS**  
**ADOLESCENT LITERACY COACHING PROJECT (ALCP)**

COLLABORATIVE CENTER FOR LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

ALCP School survey

Spring 2007

School Code\_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Please answer each question to the best of your ability. When you have completed the survey, place it in the large envelope that is provided for this purpose. **DO NOT FOLD.** When all surveys are returned, the envelope will be sealed and dropped in the mail.

**Use of survey results:** This survey is being administered as part of the Adolescent Literacy Coaching Project, which is administered by the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development at the University of Kentucky. Results of this survey will be combined with results from other schools to compare the literacy environment of schools that are served by literacy coaches with schools that do not have literacy coaches. Survey results will **NOT** be used to evaluate the work of individual staff or schools, nor will individual school results be shared with school or district administrators. No schools will be identified by name in reporting the results of the survey. A school code is listed above so that the researchers can search for patterns across *types* of schools, not to reveal information about individual schools.

**Your participation** in the research is not mandatory. There are no risks associated with participating. You will receive no personal benefits from participating, but your participation will contribute to the research base on literacy coaching.

## STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

**1. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the students you teach?**

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
a. Most of my students are interested in learning.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
b. Poor reading and writing skills are a significant barrier to learning in my class for at least half of my students.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
c. It is my responsibility to help improve students' reading and writing skills.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
d. This school has the capacity and resources to bring nearly all students up to grade-level in reading.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>

## SCHOOL LITERACY ENVIRONMENT

**2. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements about the school's work on literacy:**

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
a. There is a literacy team or committee at my school.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
b. My school has conducted a school-wide literacy needs assessment.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
c. My school has developed a literacy plan, or has included such a plan in the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP).	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
d. The literacy plan is regularly monitored and evaluated.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
e. Teachers in this school routinely share professional knowledge and instructional strategies.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
f. My school offers a class or program for below-grade level readers who are not in special education programs.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
g. My school is implementing a school-wide reform and/or reading program (such as Success for All, America's Choice, etc.)	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
If yes, list program_____				

## LITERACY SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS

3. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements for the 2006-07 school year:

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
a. I have received professional development on improving student reading skills.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
b. I have received professional development on strategies to improve students' ability to read and understand text <u>in my content area</u> .	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
c. I have received professional development or information on cross-cultural communication patterns in speaking and writing and their relationship with literacy skills in English.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
d. I have received assistance in developing writing assignments and strategies for use in my content area.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
e. I have received professional development on strategies to help students evaluate Internet sources.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
f. I have received professional development to help me understand the specific reading demands of textbooks and other materials in my content area.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
g. I have been provided with differentiated or alternative reading material to help improve my students' understanding of my content area.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>

**For any items above with which you agreed or strongly agreed, who provided you with the professional development, information, or assistance? (for instance, district office, principal, curriculum coordinator, department chair, literacy coach, etc.)**

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**4. How frequently do you do the following?**

	Never	A few times a year	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Almost daily
a. Attend teacher meetings on the topic of literacy.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
b. Request help with literacy strategies or issues.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
c. Receive help in selecting instructional materials to support literacy instruction in my classroom.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
d. Receive help developing instructional strategies to improve students' abilities to read and understand texts <u>in my content area</u> .	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
e. Use a variety of strategies to improve students' ability to read and understand text <u>in my content area</u> .	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
f. Attend professional development on literacy strategies.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
g. Am observed and given feedback on literacy instruction in my classroom.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
h. Observe a demonstration lesson on literacy strategies.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
i. Am provided with evidence-based research on effective literacy strategies.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
j. Receive help developing and administering classroom literacy assessments.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
k. Assess literacy needs of individual students.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
l. Analyze student work in the area of literacy.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
m. Receive help analyzing test data in my content area.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
n. Receive help using analysis of test data to determine which strategies will improve student achievement.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>

**For any items above for which you requested or received help, from whom did you request or receive this help? (for instance, district office, principal, curriculum coordinator, department chair, literacy coach, etc.)**

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## WORK OF THE LITERACY COACH

5. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements about the work of the literacy coach.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
a. The literacy coach has helped me improve my skills in working with students on literacy.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
b. The literacy coach skillfully manages time and resources.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
c. The literacy coach works with staff in a way that inspires trust, communicates respect, and is nonjudgmental in nature.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
d. The literacy coach respects issues of confidentiality.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
e. The literacy coach responds promptly when I request assistance.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
f. The literacy coach demonstrates and communicates positive expectations for student learning.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
g. The literacy coach works to keep administrators informed, involved, and supportive of teachers' literacy efforts.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
h. The literacy coach has a repertoire of reading strategies to share with and model for content area teachers.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
i. The literacy coach understands the specific reading and writing demands and processes <u>in my content area</u> .	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
j. The literacy coach was instrumental in establishing a literacy team or committee at this school.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
k. The literacy coach was instrumental in conducting a school-wide literacy needs assessment.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
l. The literacy coach was instrumental in developing the school's literacy plan.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
m. The literacy coach is instrumental in ensuring that the literacy plan is monitored and evaluated.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
n. The literacy coach facilitates the sharing of professional knowledge and instructional strategies	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>

### CLASSROOM TEACHING

**6. What grade levels do you currently teach? (Check all that apply.)**

PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12											
	<input type="checkbox"/>											

**7. What is your main teaching assignment at this school, that is, the field in which you teach the most classes? If your teaching assignment is divided equally between two fields, record both fields.**

01	Multiple Subjects (elementary or other self-contained classroom)		
02	Reading	08	Sciences
03	English	09	Social science
04	Mathematics	10	Special education
05	Foreign Language	11	English as second language
06	Physical education	12	Arts
07	Foreign Language		Other, please specify _____

### BACKGROUND

**6. How many years have you been a teacher in an elementary or secondary school?** \_\_\_\_\_ years

**9. How many years have you taught in this school?** \_\_\_\_\_ years

**Please write any additional comments you have about literacy coaching at your school (use back of page if necessary)**

**THANK YOU FOR THE TIME AND THOUGHT YOU CONTRIBUTED TO THIS SURVEY!**

# ADOLESCENT LITERACY COACHING PROJECT (ALCP)

COLLABORATIVE CENTER FOR LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

School survey  
[Comparison School]

Spring 2007

School Code \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Please answer each question to the best of your ability. When you have completed the survey, place it in the large envelope that is provided for this purpose. **DO NOT FOLD.** When all surveys are returned, the envelope will be sealed and dropped in the mail.

**Use of survey results:** This survey is being administered as part of the Adolescent Literacy Coaching Project, which is administered by the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development at the University of Kentucky. Results of this survey will be combined with results from other schools to compare the literacy environment of schools that are served by literacy coaches with schools that do not have literacy coaches. Survey results will **NOT** be used to evaluate the work of individual staff or schools, nor will individual school results be shared with school or district administrators. No schools will be identified by name in reporting the results of the survey. A school code is listed above so that the researchers can search for patterns across *types* of schools, not to reveal information about individual schools.

**Your participation** in the research is not mandatory. There are no risks associated with participating. You will receive no personal benefits from participating, but your participation will contribute to the research base on literacy coaching.

## STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

### 1. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the students you teach?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
a. Most of my students are interested in learning.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
b. Poor reading and writing skills are a significant barrier to learning in my class for at least half of my students.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
c. It is my responsibility to help improve students' reading and writing skills.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
d. This school has the capacity and resources to bring nearly all students up to grade-level in reading.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>

## SCHOOL LITERACY ENVIRONMENT

### 2. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements about the school's work on literacy:

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
a. There is a literacy team or committee at my school.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
b. My school has conducted a school-wide literacy needs assessment.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
c. My school has developed a literacy plan, or has included such a plan in the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP).	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
d. The literacy plan is regularly monitored and evaluated.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
e. Teachers in this school routinely share professional knowledge and instructional strategies.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
f. My school offers a class or program for below-grade level readers who are not in special education programs.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
g. My school is implementing a school-wide reform and/or reading program (such as Success for All, America's Choice, etc.)	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
If yes, list program _____				

## LITERACY SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS

4. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements for the 2006-07 school year:

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
a. I have received professional development on improving student reading skills.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
b. I have received professional development on strategies to improve students' ability to read and understand text <u>in my content area</u> .	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
c. I have received professional development or information on cross-cultural communication patterns in speaking and writing and their relationship with literacy skills in English.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
d. I have received assistance in developing writing assignments and strategies for use in my content area.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
e. I have received professional development on strategies to help students evaluate Internet sources.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
f. I have received professional development to help me understand the specific reading demands of textbooks and other materials in my content area.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>
g. I have been provided with differentiated or alternative reading material to help improve my students' understanding of my content area.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>

**For any items above with which you agreed or strongly agreed, who provided you with the professional development, information, or assistance? (for instance, district office, principal, curriculum coordinator, department chair, literacy coach, etc.)**

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**4. How frequently do you do the following?**

	Never	A few times a year	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Almost daily
a. Attend teacher meetings on the topic of literacy.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
b. Request help with literacy strategies or issues.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
c. Receive help in selecting instructional materials to support literacy instruction in my classroom.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
d. Receive help developing instructional strategies to improve students' abilities to read and understand texts <u>in my content area</u> .	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
e. Use a variety of strategies to improve students' ability to read and understand text <u>in my content area</u> .	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
f. Attend professional development on literacy strategies.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
g. Am observed and given feedback on literacy instruction in my classroom.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
h. Observe a demonstration lesson on literacy strategies.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
i. Am provided with evidence-based research on effective literacy strategies.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
j. Receive help developing and administering classroom literacy assessments.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
k. Assess literacy needs of individual students.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
l. Analyze student work in the area of literacy.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
m. Receive help analyzing test data in my content area.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>
n. Receive help using analysis of test data to determine which strategies will improve student achievement.	1 <input type="radio"/>	2 <input type="radio"/>	3 <input type="radio"/>	4 <input type="radio"/>	5 <input type="radio"/>

**For any items above for which you requested or received help, from whom did you request or receive this help? (for instance, district office, principal, curriculum coordinator, department chair, literacy coach, etc.)**

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**CLASSROOM TEACHING**

**5. What grade levels do you currently teach? (Check all that apply.)**

PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12											
	<input type="checkbox"/>											

**6. What is your main teaching assignment at this school, that is, the field in which you teach the most classes? If your teaching assignment is divided equally between two fields, record both fields.**

01○	Multiple Subjects (elementary or other self-contained classroom)
02○	Reading
03○	English
04○	Mathematics
05○	Foreign Language
06○	Physical education
07○	Foreign Language
08○	Sciences
09○	Social science
10○	Special education
11○	English as second language
12○	Arts
13○	Other, please specify _____

**BACKGROUND**

**7. How many years have you been a teacher in an elementary or secondary school?** \_\_\_\_\_ years

**8. How many years have you taught in this school?** \_\_\_\_\_ years

**Please write any additional comments you have about the literacy environment and support in your school (use back of page if necessary):**

**THANK YOU FOR THE TIME AND THOUGHT YOU CONTRIBUTED TO THIS SURVEY!**