

**Literacy Coaching in Chicago Public Schools:
A Gap in the Theory of Change**

Student X
Final Project
November 7, 2007

Jacy Ippolito 10/30/08 3:11 PM
Comment: Pretty good title – immediately gives the reader the context (Chicago Public Schools) and a sense of the argument (arguing that there is something lacking in how CPS is theorizing coaching/instructional change).

H810H: Introduction to Literacy Coaching:
Understanding and Implementing Coaching Across Contexts

Jacy Ippolito, Instructor

Literacy coaching has become increasingly utilized as a mechanism for school reform and for raising students' literacy achievement (Cassidy, 2007; Deussen, T., Coskie, T., Robinson, L., & Autio, E., 2007). In Chicago Public Schools (CPS), the nation's fourth-largest school district, variations of literacy coaching have been in place for more than five years, and district officials are in the midst of a multi-year process to ensure that all of its literacy coaching professionals are fully qualified (E. England, personal communication, October 23, 2007, Appendix 4). CPS enrolls a high percentage of students who need literacy interventions; more than one-third of its students failed to meet expectations on the 2007 Illinois Student Achievement Test (Illinois Standards Achievement Test over time report, 2007). The district relies on literacy coaches to address this need: literacy coaches train and support classroom teachers to provide interventions within their classroom instruction, a theory of change increasingly common among school districts with many high-need students (Dole, 2004).

However, this theory of change is not fully enacted in CPS, as literacy coaches rarely get to do the side-by-side coaching work that is so essential to literacy coaching (IRA, 2004).

Because this interactive coaching work has proven necessary for teachers to internalize new instructional strategies (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999, as cited in Dole, 2004), many

Chicago teachers and students are dramatically underserved as side-by-side coaching does not always occur.

Some CPS teachers are not receiving the coaching they need to become more effective (E. England, personal communication, October 23, 2007), and students are increasingly at-risk; their teachers do not receive the support they need to provide the interventions that students require. This paper will further explore the gap in CPS' theory of change and will posit reasons that side-by-side coaching does not always occur in CPS.

Jacy Ippolito 10/30/08 12:16 PM

Comment: This is a pretty good introductory paragraph – it does at least three things:

- 1) Gives the reader a quick sense of how coaching has grown, and become an important educational topic worthy of our attention.
- 2) It gives the reader a bit of background information about the Chicago Public Schools (integral to understanding the paper)
- 3) Finally, it relates the context to coaching, discussing how coaches have been employed widely in CPS. This is necessary because it motivates the “problem” to be discussed in the next paragraph.

Jacy Ippolito 10/30/08 12:23 PM

Comment: This is a nice “transition sentence” that quickly helps the reader understand the “problem” at hand. You can also see how we are starting to get at this student's original motivating question, which was “Why might coaching efforts in CPS not be as effective as we would expect?” This thesis paragraph gives us a glimpse of the answer – that side-by-side coaching isn't encouraged or supported, and as a result, coaching isn't as effective in CPS.

The two sentences highlighted here are what I believe to be this student's “thesis” or overarching argument.

Jacy Ippolito 10/30/08 3:12 PM

Comment: Notice that this student has incorporated a bit of the fieldwork data (a quick interview with one or two CPS coaches) immediately, up front in the paper. Not a bad idea. Some students wait until the very end of the paper to introduce the fieldwork data, but then it feels rushed, and it doesn't support the argument quite as well....

Perspectives from the Literature

Because literacy coaching is enacted differently by each individual and in each context, researchers have developed multiple frameworks for understanding the role (Casey, 2006; Toll, 2007). Shaw and colleagues (2005) recognize that, due to increasing demands on the school, reading specialists who formerly worked with individual students are now responsible for impacting the whole school (see also Cassidy, 2007). However, the International Reading Association emphasizes that, while the role of a literacy coach is manifested differently across settings, side-by-side coaching work distinguishes it (IRA, 2004). This paper relies on a definition that encompasses both perspectives: a literacy coach is responsible for making a school-wide impact through numerous professional development mechanisms, the dominant of which is side-by-side coaching.

Dole (2004) explains that, because reading specialists alone cannot serve all the high-need students in schools with low-performing populations, their role in the school's reform has shifted. They have become literacy coaches responsible for enabling teachers to deliver the high-quality first teaching and interventions that struggling students need. Dole emphasizes the necessity of side-by-side coaching to significantly impact teachers' effectiveness (Joyce & Showers, 1995, Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999, as cited in Dole, 2004). Along with other forms of professional development, the experiential, collaborative coaching work that occurs between teacher and literacy coach helps the teacher effectively provide interventions, because students no longer receive them from a reading specialist. Dole's conception is particularly relevant to CPS' literacy coaching model: across the district, there is both significant student need and an absence of reading specialists. Instead, classroom teachers are responsible for high-

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Comment: Notice in this next section how the student uses various sources to both explain side-by-side coaching, why it is important, and why it needs to be occurring as part of coaching work. The student also reviews some of the major roles of literacy coaches – which is then important because of later claims about what roles CPS wants coaches to play.

This all “furthers the main argument” that side-by-side coaching needs to be happening in CPS to improve coaching efforts.

quality teaching and frequent assessment of their students, and literacy coaches are relied upon to advance this work.

Deussen et al. (2007) also present a framework for literacy coaching that provides insight into CPS' program. Deussen and colleagues studied literacy coaches within the Reading First programs of five states. Because Reading First is a federal program, its literacy coaches are responsible for adhering to myriad state and federal regulations. They are also directed not to work with individual students but to instead focus their efforts on teachers. CPS' literacy coaches face similar constraints, because some schools are part of Reading First and because all schools must align with district priorities, which do not include individual student interventions. Deussen et al. found that, although all of the literacy coaches surveyed were doing similar work, they conceived of their roles differently. Literacy coaches were data-oriented, student-oriented, managerial, teacher-oriented—for groups, or teacher-oriented—for individuals (Appendix 1). The way literacy coaches understood their roles also impacted how they spent their time: although each state expected literacy coaches to be directly working with teachers for 60 to 80 percent of their time, coaches reported only spending an average of 28 percent of their time with teachers. This proportion varied with the type of coach, though this expectations gap was consistent across the sample and has been observed elsewhere (Bea & Zigmond, 2006, Knight, 2006, Schwartz & McCarthy, 2003, as cited in Deussen et al., 2007). Though the gap between the time CPS administrators expect coaches to spend with teachers and the time literacy coaches actually do spend on this work has not been quantified, there is a disconnect between what literacy coaches are expected to do and what they actually do (E. England, personal communication, October 23, 2007). Roller's (2006) survey arrived at similar findings: less than one-quarter of literacy coaches reported spending five or more hours weekly observing lessons

Jacy Ippolito 10/30/08 2:51 PM

Comment: Notice how this student uses literature to support the overall argument, and begins to relate it to data from the real-world, interweaving them together, as opposed to having large sections where the student *just* describes research studies. Remember that your lit. review needs to further your argument, it needs to support that argument. It's not just a disconnected review of a handful of studies.

or teaching demonstration lessons, activities central to the coaching that defines the role (IRA, 2004).

Current Practices in Chicago

Within CPS, the Office of Literacy sets district literacy priorities. The Office of Literacy is streamlining the number of literacy curricula used in the district and is spearheading the transition a more formal definition of the literacy coaching role. Previously, professionals serving in this capacity were called Lead Literacy Teachers; in order to qualify for this position, one need only be enrolled in a graduate reading course (E. England, personal communication, October 23, 2007). In 2007, with pressure from the state, the Office of Literacy released some underqualified Lead Literacy Teachers and rehired qualified candidates as Literacy Coaches. Qualifications for this Literacy Coaching position include a preferred Reading Specialist Certificate or a minimum Reading Teacher Endorsement (2007 Position advertisement for literacy coach, 2007). The Office of Literacy also seeks candidates who have knowledge of presentation and modeling techniques, assessment tools, scientifically-based reading research and instruction, and special student populations.

Job Description

The Office of Literacy has codified the job responsibilities of its Literacy Coaches; these span the range of Deussen et al's (2007) categorizations. Based on written expectations, the district wants its Literacy Coaches to be primarily oriented towards managerial- and teacher-group-oriented coaching, though CPS Literacy Coaches are expected to function within every conceptualization (2007 Position advertisement for literacy coach, 2007; Appendix 2). Managerial requirements include maintaining a literacy portfolio, planning curriculum, and

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Comment: In this section, the student goes deeper into the CPS context in order to strengthen the argument and make it clear to the reader how the previous literature relates to CPS.

supporting the implementation of a new core reading series at schools. Literacy Coaches are responsible for working with teacher groups while modeling lessons and leading presentations, grade-level meetings, and study groups, though they also expected to hold one-on-one coaching conversations and provide feedback to individual teachers. Literacy Coaches' data-related responsibilities include analyzing student work and implementing assessment tools to evaluate instruction. Coaches have a student orientation when ensuring differentiated instruction and observing students, though this conceptualization is not emphasized. The Office of Literacy's job description has adhered to the International Reading Association's high qualification standards (IRA, 2004), and it has established expectations that Literacy Coaches will both support whole-school professional development and work individually to coach teachers. On paper, the district's literacy coaching plan supports high-need students, because Literacy Coaches are expected to help teachers deliver effective classroom instruction and intervention to their students. In practice, low-performing CPS students are not served when classroom teachers do not receive side-by-side coaching support.

Expectations in Action

Elizabeth England, Area 17 Lead Literacy Teacher, provided insight on the day-to-day work of Literacy Coaches and Lead Literacy Teachers in the 29 CPS schools that her office supports. Seventeen of these schools (Group A) are now part of the Office of Literacy's core reading program; they have Literacy Coaches who are formally supported by the Office of Literacy. The remaining 12 schools (Group B) have Lead Literacy Teachers, as they are not yet part of the Office of Literacy's initiative (Appendix 3). Because the Group A Literacy Coaches are funded by the Office of Literacy, England's Area team was initially discouraged from supporting them; however, because the Group A Literacy Coaches were requesting assistance

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Comment: Now we get more information about the person that this student interviewed.

from England's office, the Office of Literacy granted permission for the Area office to support both groups of coaches (E. England, personal communication, October 23, 2007). All of England's 29 schools serve students in kindergarten through eighth grade; the discussion of literacy coaching is confined to this age group.

England works with literacy coaches at all 29 Area 17 schools and is familiar with much of the work they do. In her descriptions of their daily responsibilities, several themes dominate: literacy coaches work with data, plan for and conduct meetings and trainings, and support principals (E. England, personal communication, October 23, 2007). When conveying literacy coaches' activities, England first addressed their work with data. According to her, literacy coaches analyze state, district, and standardized assessment results to discover schoolwide and classroom trends. They then develop action plans for teachers based on students' demonstrated strengths and weaknesses. Secondly, England referred to the grade-level meetings and large-group professional development sessions that literacy coaches conduct. It is possible that coaching work occurs within some of these small-group meetings, but England did not address the meetings' content. Finally, England addressed the support literacy coaches provide to their principals. Literacy coaches have been asked to complete reports that are the principal's responsibility, and they sometimes assist throughout the school, including lunchroom supervision and substitute teaching. England explained that principals sometimes consider literacy coaches to be an extra pair of hands whenever a spontaneous need arises, which can make it difficult for literacy coaches to focus on their job responsibilities. England did state that the literacy coaches funded by the Office of Literacy (Group A) may be less subject to this phenomenon, but she still sees these coaches being redirected by their principals.

England's knowledge of literacy coaches' work is partially aligned with the Office of Literacy's job description: the literacy coaches with whom England works spend significant time planning and conducting grade-level meetings and trainings, which are key components of the role (2007 Position advertisement for literacy coach, 2007). However, England's emphasis on her coaches' data-related work deviates from the Office of Literacy's expectations: only two of the almost 20 requirements of Literacy Coaches are data-related, but England sees data as essential to her coaches' daily activities. This disconnect occurs perhaps because of the pressure school leadership teams feel from No Child Left Behind's emphasis on performance data.

Many of the coaching responsibilities that England describes support teachers' work with their highest-need students. However, the key lever for change that Dole (2004) and others identify is absent: according to England, side-by-side coaching is not occurring among the literacy coaches in her area. She explained that literacy coaches more often tell people what to do, rather than modeling for or coaching them, and literacy coaches' time is consumed with other responsibilities. Because this key component of literacy coaching is absent, high-need students remain at risk, because their teachers are not effectively supported with side-by-side coaching.

Jacy Ippolito 10/30/08 3:14 PM

Comment: Here is where we get back to the overall argument, after a small bit of the paper that described what "is" happening in CPS ... now we get what "isn't" happening, and the next section deals with the student's understanding of "why."

Barriers to Coaching

There are many potential explanations for the dearth of side-by-side coaching work in England's 29 schools. England describes some explicitly, while others are evident only in concert with other data. Regardless of the cause, the lack of side-by-side coaching in Area 17, and potentially throughout CPS, means that teachers are not receiving necessary support to reach their high-need students.

Constraints on Time

Literacy coaches juggle the conflicting demands of their job responsibilities and their principals' expectations. Perhaps because principals do not have a comprehensive understanding of the literacy coach's role, they are more likely to extend the coach beyond the role's definition, thus diminishing the time literacy coaches can use to coach teachers. This phenomenon is not unique to CPS; Deussen et al. (2007) discuss the ways literacy coaches' time is spent outside their role. Alternately, CPS Literacy Coaches may be infrequently side-by-side coaching because the Office of Literacy's expectations overwhelm them. England explains that Group A coaches are responsible for their school's implementation of writer's workshop and a new basal reading program, in addition to their data- and meeting-based work (E. England, personal communication, October 23, 2007). For these coaches, program implementation may leave little time to support teachers in coaching situations, even though their job description explicitly calls for this work.

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Comment: Here we get several major factors that this student identifies as barriers to side-by-side coaching.... Given the literature and the fieldwork data.

Constraints on Support and Qualification

Side-by-side coaching also may infrequently occur because of limits imposed by support and qualification issues. England explains that Group A coaches received four weeks of summer training from the Office of Literacy, only one-fourth of which was spent on literacy coaching (E. England, personal communication, October 23, 2007). These coaches also attend a meeting at the Office of Literacy every Friday, eliminating 20 percent of their already-constrained work time. In order to promote side-by-side coaching, England's Area team distributed *Literacy Coaching: the Essentials* (Casey, 2006) to its literacy coaches. However, this support was likely ineffective as a lever for changing literacy coaches' practices: in the same way that teachers need

Jacy Ippolito 10/30/08 3:15 PM

Comment: I love these sub-headings. Headers and sub-headings really help guide a reader through a paper.

collaborative support to enact changes in their practice (Dole, 2004), literacy coaches cannot internalize side-by-side coaching solely from a book. The literacy coaches themselves need to be coached, so they can transfer the process to their teachers.

Regardless of the quality or magnitude of support they are receiving, literacy coaches may avoid coaching because they do not feel knowledgeable enough to undertake it (Deussen et al., 2007). Even if they were previously Lead Literacy Teachers, the new Literacy Coaches (Group A) are operating under different expectations, and some may avoid direct work with teachers because they do not yet feel comfortable with the coaching process. Finally, side-by-side coaching may not be occurring because of a paucity of individuals qualified for the position. CPS' job description reflects the high expectations for literacy coaches presented by the International Reading Association, and a critical mass of qualified candidates may not yet be ready. England explains that when the Office of Literacy examined the credentials of some Lead Literacy Teachers, in hopes of making them Literacy Coaches, very few were qualified (E. England, personal communication, October 23, 2007).

Structural Constraints

The final set of constraints on coaching in Area 17, and perhaps in all of CPS, is external to the coaches themselves. England's perception, based on the feedback from Group A Literacy Coaches, is that the centralization of Literacy Coaches within the Office of Literacy was hastily planned and executed. The International Reading Association recommends waiting to implement literacy coaching interventions until qualified candidates are available (IRA, 2004); the same principle can apply to the structures that must exist before an effective literacy coaching plan can begin. Additionally, if the role is not clarified for all stakeholders, including

coaches, teachers, and principals, misunderstandings among key players may result in failure to enact side-by-side coaching.

Finally, structural changes that occur on a regular basis may prevent literacy coaches from getting to the heart of their work. As roles continue to be renamed and redefined, and more Lead Literacy Teachers transition into being Literacy Coaches, uncertainty about future job stability may disincite literacy coaches from investing time in the relationship-building that forms the heart of side-by-side coaching. According to England, the Office of Literacy plans to reassign the Group A Literacy Coaches to new schools next year, on the premise they are already trained and can now serve another school (E. England, personal communication, October 23, 2007). However, if these coaches perceive their assignment at a school as temporary, they may be less likely to invest time in the side-by-side coaching that will enable classroom teachers to deliver the literacy interventions that students need.

Conclusion

CPS' theory of change is that, because it has so many high-need students, literacy coaches can enable teachers to provide interventions to their lowest-performing students. However, in at least 29 of CPS' schools, literacy coaching is not occurring in ways indicated by the Office of Literacy and research on effective practices. High-need students are most at risk when their teachers do not receive coaching support. Because they do not have a reading specialist on which to rely, these students' teachers must be equipped to address their needs. Additionally, the absence of coaching may lead to overreferrals for special education: Response to Intervention processes will prove ineffective if teachers are not equipped to provide these interventions, and students may unnecessarily be labeled as disabled. Teachers and literacy

Jacy Ippolito 10/30/08 3:09 PM

Comment: Here everything is quickly reviewed and brought together...

I would have appreciated a few more broad implications here for future research, practice, or policy ... but the student did a good job above of clearly articulating how all of this plays out in CPS.

My other small complaint with this last section is that it introduces a handful of "new ideas," which might distract the reader. I don't suggest that folks end with a number of new ideas. Instead, it is best to end with a brief summary and suggestions for future research, policy, or practice....

coaches also face frustration when their work together is ineffective. Furthermore, CPS is currently investing resources in a plan that is not enacted according to its design, and the district's students face a severe lack of extra support. Any school district with a proportion of high-need students beyond what reading specialists can support has the potential to face similar challenges and should work to ensure that literacy coaches can effectively support classroom teachers. Further research is needed to examine ways in which large urban districts can protect the coaching role and leverage it to support high-need students.

References

Jacy Ippolito 10/30/08 3:15 PM

Comment: References are on a separate page and in APA format --- great!

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Deussen, T., Coskie, T., Robinson, L., & Autio, E. (2007). "Coach" can mean many things: five categories of literacy coaches in Reading First (Issues & Answers Report, REL 2007–No. 005). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2007005.pdf

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APPENDIX 1: Five categories of literacy coaching work

Type of coach	Specifications
Data-oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused on data and assessment tasks • Includes administration of assessments and data management • Average of 18 percent of time spent coaching teachers
Student-oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disproportionate, relative to other categories, amount of time working with students • Consistent focus on activities of students rather than teachers • Average of 16 percent of time spent coaching teachers
Managerial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant time spent on paperwork and meetings • Consider work via organizational responsibilities • Average of 25 percent of time spent coaching teachers
Teacher-oriented—group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work primarily with teachers in a group setting • Coaching may occur in grade-level meetings • Average of 41 percent of time spent coaching teachers
Teacher-oriented—individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coached individual teachers • Average of 52 percent of time spent coaching teachers

Deussen, T., Coskie, T., Robinson, L., & Autio, E. (2007). "Coach" can mean many things: five categories of literacy coaches in Reading First (Issues & Answers Report, REL 2007–No. 005). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2007005.pdf

Jacy Ippolito 10/30/08 3:10 PM

Comment: It was good of this student to include fieldwork-related documents in appendices, again to provide context for the reader.



Chicago Public Schools

2007 Position Advertisement for Literacy Coach

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Education and Experience

- Possess a Reading Teacher Endorsement (minimum) or a Type 10 Reading Specialist Certificate (preferred).
- Have a minimum of three years of prior K-8 teaching experience with excellent or superior ratings.
- Have prior teaching experience and/or endorsement/certificate to work with English Language Learners (ELL) and/or special needs students (preferred).
- Have an in depth knowledge of:
 - o The reading and writing process;
 - o Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR) and Scientifically Based Reading Instruction (SBRI);
 - o A variety of assessment tools and practices to plan and evaluate effective reading instruction and adult learning principles;
 - o Presentation and group leader skills; and
 - o The ability to model, observe, and provide feedback to classroom teachers to improve instruction.

Responsibilities

The Chicago Public Schools' Coaching Model will define the work of the Literacy Coach (LC). Responsibilities include:

- Modeling and demonstrating lessons;
- Student observation;
- Analyzing student work;
- Curriculum planning;
- In- depth strategy and lesson study;
- Creating and maintaining a literacy portfolio;
- One-on-one coaching conversations;
- Developing and providing materials for/with colleagues;
- Leading or participating in study groups;
- Ensuring differentiated instruction;
- Organizing and leading grade-level meetings;
- Analyzing instructional videotapes of self and teachers; and
- Supporting teachers in their own professional growth.

Other Responsibilities of the LC include but are not limited to:

- Supporting citywide literacy initiatives;
- Providing professional development to classroom teachers in Chicago Public Schools; and
- Supporting school partnerships and activities with families and community members that enhance literacy development.

*This is a 44 week position and the start date is July 30th *

***For more information, please call the Office of Literacy at (773) 553-3550.**
***Please send resumes and copies of credentials to:**
 Office of Literacy
 ATTN: Jodi Dodds Kinner, Acting Director of Elementary Literacy
 125 S. Clark St. (9th Floor)
 Chicago, IL 60603

APPENDIX 3: Literacy professionals supported by Chicago Public Schools' Area 17

	Job title	Specifications
Group A	Literacy Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position funded by Office of Literacy • Support formally given by Office of Literacy • Stricter qualifications: Reading Specialist certificate or Reading Endorsement • New position for 2007-2008 school year • Job expectations include whole-school professional development and individual teacher coaching
Group B	Lead Literacy Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position primarily funded by local school • Support formally given by Area office • Less strict qualifications: Must be enrolled in a reading course • Continued position from previous school years • Job expectations include whole-school professional development and individual teacher coaching

E. England, personal communication, October 23, 2007.

APPENDIX 4: Phone interview with Elizabeth England, October 23, 2007
[Note: except where indicated with quotation marks, recorded responses are paraphrased.]

Commonly used abbreviations:

- LLT: Lead Literacy Teacher
- LC: Literacy Coach
- P: Principal
- T: Teacher
- S: Student
- O of L: Office of Literacy, Chicago Public Schools
- PD: Professional Development
- AIO: Area Instructional Officer (regional superintendent)
- RF: Reading First
- RS: Reading Specialist

- **What is your specific job title and key job responsibilities?**
 - Area Lead Literacy Teacher/LCs
 - Now there's no more LLTs
 - Now they're LCs
 - Offer in-school support, like upon principal or teacher request
 - Provide PD for P or T request or based on school need or data
 - Identified by AIO and area team
 - Based off scores and observations
 - Sometimes Ps/Ts ask for something specific
 - 29 schools
 - 34 schools, 5 are AMPS [Autonomous Management Performance Schools]—choose if they're in or out—no communication
 - 17 of them are now core reading schools
 - Office of Lit at first said to leave those schools alone
 - But they're used to coming to the area first—our hands were tied
 - Jodi [Dodds Kinner, Acting Director of the Office of Literacy] said the area can invite them if they want to
- Core reading program—Office of Literacy
 - Not the RF schools (4 in her area)
 - 17 of the Area's schools—if they signed up in time, they could be in the core reading program—Harcourt basal
 - 150 schools across the city
 - Guaranteed a paid LC position
 - Still had to buy all the materials
 - Ts get all sorts of PD—kind of for free
 - Most people jumped right away
 - 150 LCs will go to a new school that picks up the program
 - Kind of like RF, K-5, Harcourt reading series

- Brand new for this year
- Big contract with Harcourt—to be in the partnership—maybe for a research standpoint—we should see growth in scores—kind of like a test group
- Central office is responsible for everything
- Rather than having all of the LLTs
- We specifically pick and train 150, we should see growth—trying to work smarter
- Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Design (O of IAD)—also behind the LC initiative
- Before to be a LLT, you could just be enrolled in a reading course
 - O of IAD—looked at the credentials—there’s no improvement—the state pulled their chain and said these people aren’t even qualified
 - Had to have a way to get rid of (phase out?) these unqualified people
 - To get hired, they had to look at all your credentials
 - Did it to weed out unqualified people
 - Had a hard time filling 150 positions
 - Unbelievable given the number of LLTs –64 in Area 17 alone
 - Huge number not qualified
- **How would you define literacy coaching, particularly in opposition (or relation) to the roles of a reading specialist or Lead Literacy Teacher [a CPS-specific role]?**
 - **Basically, what are the titles of the professionals doing this work?**
 - **How are Reading Specialists, LCs, and LLTs similar or different?**
 - LLTs—enrolled in a reading course—now they have to have endorsement minimum
 - Didn’t fire people, just displaced them if they weren’t qualified
 - Some Ps redefine as curriculum coordinators to keep them on the faculty
 - LCs—brand new for this year 150 schools
 - LL—literacy leader—person in a school whose building doesn’t have the funds for a LLT or LC
 - Classroom T who gets pulled out to go to training and bring it back to the building
 - Full-time class responsibilities
 - Not that many of those
 - May not get paid any more
 - 3 in Area 17 alone
 - LIT—literacy intervention teacher
 - Extra person in a probationary school
 - RF person, LLT, LIT—one school, as an example
 - No one in the city works with directly with Ss—they’re not supposed to but they can—it’s up to them
 - No pull out reading—in Area 17
 - They’re supposed to train, and do PD, and model
 - Rationale: suburbs, you don’t have as high of a population of academic warning students
 - Manageable for RS to meet with certain students

- No way one person could reach the needs of all the struggling students—best way is to train the T how to do it in their own classroom, and to go in and model
 - LC is supposed to coteach, model, and plan with that teacher
 - If you go in and help them, wean off it, they're a better teacher
 - Better meet Ss' needs than by pulling students out every day
 - Type 10—special certificate [from the State of Illinois]—could be in a whole bunch of things
 - But this is the reading specialist certificate
 - S pullout doesn't exist in CPS
 - She can call her self a RS because she has the certificate
 - Before LLTs, they were called RSs, but then they changed the title because people weren't certified
 - People were adamant about getting the name Coach into their title—they didn't like the LLT title—they were Ts, but not in the classroom
 - Changes every year—titles, positions, responsibilities
 - Area reading coaches (salary of \$90,000), then Area LLT—she stayed in the ALLT role because she loves her team
 - Paid more—Area gave her a lot more hours
- **How do you see literacy coaching in CPS as being similar or different to previous teacher support models implemented by the district (again, reading specialist or Lead Literacy Teacher)?**
 - **How many coaches would you estimate are at work in the district?**
 - **What are key job responsibilities/expectations of CPS's literacy coaches?**
 - Analyzing data—LLTs or LCs—look at primary data—DIBELS data, numbers in each tier
 - Same for Learning First [CPS district benchmark assessment], each subtest on the standardized test—which standards are they having a difficulty with
 - School as a whole, broken down by each grade level—what's going on in the classroom, with the teacher
 - Identify weaknesses and strengths—come up with ideas/activities/plan to work with Ts to increase scores in the areas of need
 - Identifying the actions is the hard part
 - Next part is then getting the Ts to actually do what's communicated in PD
 - The only person that can enforce it is the principal
 - Depressing—“how many times do we have to tell you to have classroom libraries? I can go in there and sit down there with them—I had to just do it for them”
 - Really up to the principal—but they're not enforcing—not writing Ts up
 - Makes the job really hard
 - There has to be a respect and a working relationship between the administration and the coach

- For example: a lot of principals will give their LC/LLT lots of extra stuff to do—ISAT action plan, grade level analysis (reports that the P is supposed to do)—that takes away from LC being able to actually do their job
 - As the LC, you have to do what you're supposed to do and you have to do what your P wants you to do
 - Administration will call Area to come do a PD rather than person in the own building—shows that the LLT isn't knowledgeable—
 - Because the area has to come out and do the PD
 - Ps need to trust that the LC knows what they're doing
 - P can undercut the authority of the LC if they go outside to get services
 - Example: Disagreement on specific attributes of what needs to be in the ISAT—P brings in their own people to support their position
 - Staff picked up on that, stopped doing Extended Response [constructed response on state achievement exam], period
- **What do literacy coaches actually *do* on a day-to-day basis?**
 - **Are they spending more time with Ts, with Ss, or with both equally?**
 - **What percentage of time is spent doing x, y, or z?**
 - Little to no time working with S
 - Supposed to spend the bulk of their day meeting with Ts in grade level meetings (another form of PD)
 - Varies from school-to-school
 - Morning duty, lunchroom duty
 - Bulk of time is supposed to be working side-by-side with Ts
 - Other bulk of their day would be planning PD
 - Actual coaching is not occurring—not at all
 - That's why they're passing out the Casey book
 - O of L sent 150 people to coaching workshops
 - People weren't really coaching—weren't modeling
 - They were just telling people what to do
 - Bought Casey books for Area 17
 - Switch is to move towards coaching—not been happening
 - You think people know, but they really don't—you can't just tell them—teach them like they're 2 year olds
 - How do you do that in a respectful, building a relationship type way?
 - They tune you out
 - Build the relationship first—"I'm an extra body"
 - Her AIO sends her out—help them with this
 - Pulled for walkthroughs after spending more time at one school
 - Schedule gets so busy—go there whenever she can
 - Staff development days with all the other schools

- 150 LCs—core reading schools—have been pretty strict about saying we’re paying for them, you can’t have them doing all this other stuff
 - Maybe not doing it as much as they were before
 - Ps still make them substitute, do other random tasks
 - Free person in the building—first person they think of when they need something
- **What alignment (or lack thereof) do you see between expectations and actual day-to-day work?**
- **In what contexts or settings do CPS’s literacy coaches work? How are these contexts similar or different to previous literacy-support contexts?**
- **What has been the response of teachers, principals, and families to the introduction of literacy coaches?**
- **How much money does CPS spend on coaching? From where does the money come?**
- **In what direction do you see CPS taking the literacy coaching model? What kinds of district-level support (or lack thereof) does literacy coaching have?**
 - 600 elementary schools
 - After the 150, then next year those LCs will go to another school—position only guaranteed in the school for one year
 - Lots of people weren’t interested because of the need for relationship building
 - Next year, new people, train them all over
 - Thinking: train them once, don’t have to train them again
 - People are complaining about it now—don’t like it, don’t want to be there
 - Wasn’t well thought out
 - Makes sense as a whole
 - Everything’s not planned—LCs are flying by the seat of their pants
 - O of L not supporting them well
 - Getting lots of misinformation
 - Turnover is a huge issue
 - 4 weeks of summer training
 - 1 week of Harcourt—went over basal
 - 1 week of coaching
 - 1 week on Lucy Calkins writing
 - 1 week on IMPACT [district-wide online data system]
 - Every Friday they have a meeting with the Office of Literacy—all day
 - O of L—has a coordinator—who comes around and checks on the LC
 - Maybe both punitive and supportive
 - Whenever you have someone coming behind to check on you—distrust
 - Shows people that they’re not trusted
 - Their ideal was smart—did it so quickly that it’s kind of unorganized
 - Tried to cut money and work efficiently in too short an amount of time

- Core reading program is your focus, and Lucy Calkins
 - Not getting how it all fits
- Things they're doing are things we've already been doing
- O of L acts like they're know-it-alls
 - But they have the same degrees we have
 - We've already been trying to do these strategies
 - But do they do it, not really—if you're preaching to the choir
 - Rests more on administration
 - Lots of poor Ts, lots of good Ts
 - Didn't realize that until actually observing
- **In Boston, the director of literacy coaching said that her literacy coaches are the R & D arm of the district. Do you see any similar mindset in Chicago?**
- **What CPS-specific resources (websites, people, etc.) can you recommend that related to literacy coaching?**