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A Framework for Defining Literacy Leadership

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ABSTRACT

Literature on educational leadership from the past 40 years clearly reveals an emphasis on the principal as instructional leader. Subsequently, instructional leadership has been operationalized through professional leadership standards. In an era characterized by increasing accountability, federal legislation and resultant mandates have accentuated instructional leadership roles for principals, which focused increased scrutiny on literacy. However, despite a decade of intense inquiry into literacy practices, scant research has been conducted identifying effective *literacy leadership* knowledge and skill as a subset of instructional leadership. Traversing the fields of literacy research and educational leadership, this study establishes a framework for defining literacy leadership.

The principal as instructional leader is an essential component within the United States (US) educational arena. While the concept of supervision of instruction can be traced back to the onset of the US public school, the concept of instructional leadership has evolved with the role of principal. Literature on educational leadership from the past 40 years clearly reveals an emphasis on the principal as instructional leader (Criscuolo, 1974; 1984; Donnmoyer & Wagstaff, 1990; Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004; Murphy, 1988). By the 1970's, the role of the elementary principal was seen as one that included additional expertise across content areas to adequately supervise teaching staff and positively impact student achievement. Literature on administration from the 1970's and 1980's emphasized the instructional role of the principal and the impact of this role on school effectiveness and student achievement. Traversing the fields of educational leadership and reading research, this study sought to identify the knowledge and skill sets necessary for defining and establishing a framework for what we propose as literacy leadership. No such framework currently exists in the educational literature. To become the literacy leaders of their sites, elementary principals need specific literacy knowledge, addressing the skills needed to assume the role of literacy leader. Literacy leaders then, use this understanding to lead literacy professionals, including the teachers, instructional coaches, and para-professionals they supervise.

Instructional Leadership Defined

In order to understand the premise of this study we begin by offering a brief discussion of instructional leadership. Culled from the educational leadership literature, prevailing views of the principal's role and function can be situated within these models and offer two distinct perspectives of leadership, instructional and transformational leadership.

Instructional Leadership

Initial conceptualization of instructional leadership, wherein the principal is defined as a patriarchal-matriarchal figure, has its beginnings in the effective schools movement of the 1980s. In the conventional instructional leadership paradigm, a hierarchical configuration exits with the principal operating as the basis of educational knowledge and expertise in a school (Donnmoyer & Wagstaff, 1990; Marks & Printy, 2003; Murphy, 1988). This view of instructional leadership places the principal as the originator and fountain of educational wisdom.

Shared instructional leadership (Blase & Blase, 1999; Marks & Printy, 2003) reconceptualizes conventional instructional leadership wherein the principal assumes more of a facilitator or enabler role, while still maintaining expertise in instructional practices. In this variation of instructional leadership, teachers and principal operate as more of a learning community (Murphy & Lick, 2001) and collaborate with the common goal of assisting students. Yet, the focus of leadership remains on the core of teaching and learning in the classroom. This re-visioning of leadership coincides with Glickman's (1989) view of the principal as the leader among instructional leaders.

Transformational Leadership

Borrowed from non-educational entities, settings, and organizations, transformational leadership is associated with the restructuring schools movement of the 1990s (Leithwood, 1994; 1995; Leithwood, Louis,

Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004; Marks & Printy, 2003). At its core, transformational leadership suggests leaders should seek to coalesce members of the organization around a compelling vision, generally by involving them in the school decision-making process (Firestone, 1996; Leithwood, 1994; 1995). Transformational leadership lacks an explicit focus on teaching and learning. "Transformational leadership builds organizational capacity whereas instructional leadership builds individual and collective competence" (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 377).

Integrated Leadership

Marks and Printy (2003) suggest merging shared instructional and transformational leadership models labeling the combination as integrated leadership. In this adaptation, there is a strong emphasis on building organizational capacity based on a collective vision wherein teacher leadership is nurtured, encouraged, and promoted, as well as an organizational focus on teaching and learning in the individual classroom. This might include additional collaborative instructional leadership roles such as coaches. Considering the prevalence of coaching models that include literacy coaches, reading coaches, and in some instances, writing coaches, this model calls upon the expertise of teaching faculty to transform and optimize school performance.

The Case for Literacy Leadership

Within the model of integrated leadership, we posit a framework for literacy leadership. In this model, the principal assumes a strong instructional role, particularly a literacy leadership position, while working collaboratively with faculty. This principal as literacy leader, while important at all levels, is imperative at the elementary level (Allen, 2006; Booth & Rowsell, 2007; McKenna & Walpole, 2008; Neumann, 2009). The framework presented herein focuses specifically on the elementary principal, outlining the foundational knowledge and necessary expertise elementary principals need to sufficiently assume this literacy leadership position within their campus. Given the importance of literacy, specifically learning to read in students' academic achievement (Zimmerman, Padak, & Rasinski, 2011), such a framework is both warranted and needed.

Defining Literacy Leadership

Reading instruction is generally conceded to be the most important part of the elementary school curriculum (Criscuolo, 1974, 1984; McCormick, 1979). "Learning to read is perhaps a young child's greatest school accomplishment . . . reading is the foundation for success in all other school subjects (Zimmerman, Padak, & Rasinski, 2011). From *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), through to the federal NCLB Act (2002), there has been an increased emphasis on literacy. NCLB (2002) particularly, has led to an increased level of supervision and control by the federal government over US public schools in relationship to literacy instruction and assessment (Cummins, 2006). This increased political emphasis on literacy, coupled with the research associated with the importance of early reading skills at the elementary level, has heightened the pressure placed on principals to effectively guide and support literacy, especially reading instruction. There is justification for focusing on the principal as a means to improve student outcomes. A growing body of evidence suggests that strong principal leadership is associated with schools that have successful literacy programs, programs that demonstrate focused attention on setting a literacy agenda, supporting teachers, accessing resources, and building organizational and individual capacity for further growth (Booth & Rowsell, 2007).

Yet a major concern with providing consistent, high-quality literacy programs is that principals do not necessarily possess an understanding of the essential elements of effective literacy instruction. Many elementary principals are considered generalists in curriculum areas and lack in-depth knowledge in the area of reading instruction that is needed to lead literacy in their schools. "Many principals have stated that they do not always know what constitutes a good reading program" (McCormick, 1979, p. 131). Although this quotation is over 30 years old, the prevailing perspective of many administrators is that they do not understand literacy nor how to lead literacy initiatives. For instance, Tooms (2003) chronicled the experiences of an elementary principal who participated in a Phoenix school's Collaborative Literacy Invention Project. This principal's involvement was spurred by her school's reading specialist, who claimed that, "by training the principal, the school would gain a curriculum leader who could understand literacy instruction (Tooms, 2003, p. 82). Comparably, in an interview in *Reading Today*, Dr. Elizabeth Massar, an Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction in Manheim, Pennsylvania, was asked about literacy challenges facing today's educational leaders. She states, "one of our biggest challenges is a lack of knowledge and/or confusion about best practice. In addition, there is an over-reliance on past practices that conflict with current research." (Marinak, 2011, 9). This lack of principal understanding of how to provide consistent, quality literacy instruction for all children has also been confirmed by Reeves (2008). From survey results, including over 130 schools in three school systems in various locations – West Coast, Midwest, and East Coast, Reeves verified a significant gap between a principal's understandings of consistent delivery of literacy instruction and a teacher's actual practices. Discussions among teachers and principals reveal methods deemed essential for effective reading instruction vary widely. "If school leaders really believe that literacy is a priority, then they have a personal responsibility to understand literacy instruction, define it for their colleagues, and observe it daily" (Reeves, 2008, p.91). Both the increased focus on literacy within the last decade coupled with the complexity of literacy learning and teaching, are compelling reasons to study the phenomena of elementary principals' literacy knowledge.

Knowledge Base of Literacy Leadership

Principal understanding of the complexity of literacy processes involves many pools of knowledge such as content knowledge (Booth & Rowsell, 2007; Cummins, 2006; Halliday, 1973; Kucer, 2001; Stein & Nelson, 2003) and knowledge of best practice spanning developmental age ranges and content areas (Cunningham & Allington, 2007; Prince & Conaway, 1985; Rasinski, 2003; Stein & Nelson, 2003). Providing school structures to support literacy (Reeves, 2008), for example provisioning for literacy and access to print (literature), is also essential knowledge for elementary principals. Knowledge of instructional strategies used by master educators and coaches is also vital knowledge for elementary principals to possess. For instance, elementary principals need to know the importance of establishing routines and grouping students effectively and flexibly (Cantrell, 1999; McKenna & Walpole, 2008). While understanding of this knowledge is vital, elementary principals need to also acquire the skills required to supervise, lead, and evaluate literacy teaching, coaching, and learning (Booth & Rowsell, 2002; Reeves, 2008). Principals at the elementary level need additional background about literacy in order to mediate the difference between and among programs and approaches. For example, they should know the research basis for the Reading Recovery© program as well as the diagnostic accuracy (Ryan, 2004) and the psychology-based theory behind the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (DIBELS) (Good & Kaminski, 2002).

Methods

Employing an interpretivist theoretical perspective, this study highlights a variety of socially-constructed views, opinions, and perspectives of both principals and literacy scholars regarding the phenomenon of literacy leadership. This examination has a two-fold purpose: 1) explore the perceptions of individuals from the fields of literacy and educational administration scholarship, and 2) develop a framework for defining literacy leadership. This research widens the circle of literacy and educational administration research and practice, encompassing the elementary principal, a major player in literacy improvement efforts and initiatives.

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Demographics and Participants

Over the course of three academic semesters, fall 2009, spring 2010, and fall 2010, we asked individuals who attended both major educational leadership and prominent literacy conferences to provide input into what specific knowledge and skill sets elementary principals needed to possess regarding literacy content, literacy pedagogy, and the supervision and management of literacy teaching and learning. We collected voluntary responses as to what constituted literacy leadership at these national and regional conferences from principals, district level administrators, and literacy scholars who elected to attend presentations highlighting literacy leadership research. Conference attendees participating in sessions on the stated topic of literacy leadership represented a total of 140 individuals from across the US and Canada. Of the 140 total participants, 52 individual conference-goers self-identified as educational leaders, which included building principals, district-level personnel, and collegiate-level scholars within the field. Eighty-eight participants self-identified as being representatives from the field of literacy, including K-12 classroom teachers, district-level personnel, and collegiate-level scholars and teachers. Table 1 presents participants by conference and location from both fields of educational leadership and literacy who attended sessions.

Data Sources

Qualitative studies such as this social constructivist investigation provide a naturalistic, descriptive approach to conducting research (Wilcox, 1982), research that is intentionally designed to change situations for the better (Bransford, Brown & Cockling, 2000; Spindler, 1982). The primary data source for this study was participants' responses. At each of the five initial conferences we explained that we sought to establish a literacy leadership framework and asked for voluntary participation. These voluntarily participants were asked to provide written responses to two prompts: 1) What knowledge is needed for understanding literacy practices (content and pedagogy)? and, 2) What supervising and management expertise is needed for literacy leadership? Prompts were listed on a two column format (See Appendix A for the Prompt Sheet given to participants). Participants were given approximately fifteen minutes to record responses individually. Then, attendees were asked to form small groups and share responses, discussing the aspects they felt important for elementary literacy leadership. Participants could modify individual responses in these small groups. Small group clusters were then asked to report out to the whole group as participants were encouraged to comment or ask clarifying questions about verbal responses. Volunteers were also encouraged to add/delete and /or modify responses they initially recorded after small and whole group discussion as they deemed appropriate. We then collected responses from anyone who was willing to share, comprising our pool of 140 participants.

By December of 2010, responses from the first five conferences were coded, merged, and collapsed into categories. These initial categories, with the codes that corresponded to each category, were distributed to those who

Table 1
Participants by Conference, Date, Location, Self-identification

Date/conference	Location	Educational Administration	Literacy
Fall 2009			
Southern Regional Conference on Educational Administration	Atlanta, GA	10	0
International Reading Association Southeast Regional	New Orleans, LA	18	32
Spring 2010			
National Literacy Coaching	Corpus Christi, TX	07	33
International Reading Association	Chicago, IL	09	11
Fall 2010			
Southern Regional Conference on Educational Administration	Savannah, GA	05	0
Literacy Research Association (LRA) (formerly the National Reading Conference)	Ft. Worth, TX	03	12

attended a literacy session at the 60th Annual Conference of the Literacy Research Association (LRA) (formerly the National Reading Conference). The LRA is perceived as both a community of scholars as well as the premier association for literacy research and attracts individual interested in promoting and disseminating ethical, rigorous, diverse, and socially responsible literacy research within the US and beyond in an effort to inform practice and policy (LRS, 2011). We believed that LRA participants were uniquely positioned to assist our efforts in establishing a literacy leadership framework, thus, we asked for volunteers from the session to form small groups and provide feedback to the themes and corresponding categories. Specifically, volunteer participants were asked to respond, in writing, to the categorization of codes by regrouping, adding, or deleting codes within each response category.

Data Analysis

Data analysis encompasses making sense out of collected data; it is the process of systematically searching and arranging accumulated data to increase personal understanding, in order to present what you discover to others (Bogdan & Bicklen, 1998). Raw data, which was the initial voluntary written responses from the first five conferences, were individually coded by author 1, highlighting words and phrases that provide insights into perceived knowledge and skills necessary for literacy leadership at the elementary level. Initial responses were analyzed using open coding, an inductive content analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and Creswell's constant comparative method (1998) which involved a continuous cycle of conception and categorization. Some categories were fairly simple to establish. For example, if someone wrote phonics, that specific code became a category. Other responses were less straightforward, and through our own lens of experience, we interpreted responses and developed categories. The following delineates how one category was developed. *Poverty* (initially coded 6 times), *children's' or kids' backgrounds* (initially coded 5 times), *understanding community* (initially coded once), *community or knowing community* (initially coded 7 times), *home language/dialect* (initially coded 8 times), and *family* (initially coded twice) formed the category personal-sociocultural aspects (occurring with a frequency of 29).

Once categories were established Author 1 clustered the categories into themes. The following is an example of establishing themes. As noted in Table 2, the code of *personal-sociocultural aspects* was merged with the code of *oral language development* (47 instances), *print awareness* (38 instances), *linguistic knowledge* (23 instances), *phonemic awareness* (62 instances), *phonics* (78 instances), decoding (67 instances), *fluency* (79 instances), *vocabulary* (86 instances), *cognition; complex thinking* (60 instances), *comprehension* (123 instances), *narrative & expository literature* (28 instances), *composition (spelling & writing)* (77 instances), *functions of language* (21 instances) to form the theme of *Content Knowledge* (total of 818 instances).

Once Author 1 clustered categories into themes, Author 3 reviewed them, further refining themes. The five themes that resulted from this analysis were – *Content Knowledge, Knowledge of Best Practices, School Structures that Support Literacy, Literacy Environment, Monitoring and Evaluation.* At the final data collection conference in 2010, the LRA participants were asked to respond to both these initial themes and the categories that supported the themes in terms of clarity, coherence, and to comment on

what might be missing. Several categories were added by LRA participants. As examples, based on feedback and discussion, we added clarifiers of (schedules/structure & use of blocks, workshops) to the category, Organizing classrooms for optimal learning; we added (spelling and writing) to the category, Composition, and we added (narrative/expository) to the category, Comprehension. Participants also suggested several language modifications to themes. For example, where we originally had *Knowledge of Best Practices*, participants suggested we add *spanning developmental age ranges and content areas.* We initially had *Literacy Environment* and participants suggested we add *& management systems.* Author 1 reviewed all of the new data from the LRA participants, and incorporated all suggestions into themes. Authors 2 and 3 then reviewed all data and further refined and modified language for clarity. As outlined by Moustakas (1994), the final framework was reviewed by the three authors to determine if further categories could be collapsed; however, only minor modifications in language resulted from this final analysis. This language modification is reflected in Table 2.

Bias

Asking participants at each conference to provide responses after engaging in a presentation that highlighted aspects of literacy leadership can be viewed as a potential bias. As participants at each of the seven initial conferences either reviewed findings from a three year study on building literacy knowledge within the elementary ranks in an urban school district in the South or examined findings from a study that surveyed the theoretical

Table 2
Themes, Codes, and Code Frequency

Theme	Categories	Category Frequency
Content knowledge (818 instances)	Oral language development	47
	Print awareness	38
	Linguisitic knowledge	23
	Phonemic awareness	62
	Phonics	78
	Decoding	67
	Fluency	79
	Vocabulary	86
	Cognition; complex thinking	60
	Comprehension (narrative/expository)	123
	Narrative & expository literature	28
	Composition (spelling & writing)	77
	Functions of language	21
	Personal-sociocultural aspects	29
Knowledge of best practices spanning developmental age ranges and content areas (385 instances)	Instruction based on assessment	77
	Daily reading & writing practice	88
	Age & developmentally appropriate reading material	33
	Reading aloud	42
	Reading & writing co-development	37
	Flexible groupings	65
	Reading & writing processes	43
Provide school structures to support literacy (163 instances)	Access to print/literature	76
	Provision for literacy instruction & learning	48
	Organizing classrooms for optimal learning (schedules/structure & use of blocks, workshops)	39
Literacy environment & management systems (241 instances)	Assessing literacy formally & informally	31
	Flexible skill grouping	68
	Teacher/child interactions	21
	Establishing routines	57
	Teaching at instructional level	13
	Mix of whole, small group teaching	51
Developing a Literacy Mission and Monitoring & evaluation of literacy instruction (378 instances)	Establishing relationships	61
	Support teachers & coaches	97
	Evaluate teachers & coaches	103
	Professional development	111
	Classroom environment	64

orientations of elementary principals regarding reading practices from the Midwest, the presentation and conclusions of the presenters could bias the written responses obtained from the participants. In addition, since this was a convenience sample (Collins, Onwuegbuzie, & Jiao, 2007) of attendees to national conferences and a subset of volunteers within these conferences, there is a natural selection bias present in these findings. Additionally, our lenses of experience might be a potential bias. As former K-12 literacy teachers, school principals, school district administrators now working in literacy and educational leadership positions in post-secondary institutions, our history influences our analysis.

Discussion and Results

Final themes emerged from data analysis of responses to what knowledge and skills were essential for elementary principals to assume the role of literacy leader. These themes were: *1) Content Knowledge, 2) Knowledge of Best Practices Spanning Developmental Age Ranges and Content Areas, 3) Provide School Structures to Support Literacy, 4) Literacy Environment and Management Systems,* and *5) Developing a Literacy Mission and Monitoring and Evaluation of Literacy Instruction.* These themes reflect the complexity of elementary literacy leadership. Literacy, especially reading but also writing, speaking, and listening, involves multifaceted thought processes; the instructional strategies needed to address the intricacy of literacy learning are likewise complex. Thus, the knowledge and skills needed to supervise literacy were also complex, intricate and multifaceted.

These themes reflect the complexity of elementary literacy leadership.

Content Knowledge

This theme undergirds the literacy leadership framework, and it is foundational to both literacy and literacy leadership. This theme underscores the complexities of literacy content knowledge (Booth & Rowsell, 2007; Cummins, 2006; Halliday, 1973; Kucer, 2001; Stein & Nelson, 2003), thus the volume of responses within this theme as noted in Table 2. Within the theme of *Content Knowledge*, categories included knowledge of the importance of early literacy skills, such as oral language development and print awareness. This theme also included knowledge of composition and text structures, as well as understanding the essential nature of cognition, complex thinking, and comprehension. In addition, this theme also encompassed knowledge of the functions of language and the importance of knowing personal and social aspects of language development.

The second theme, *Knowledge of Best Practices Spanning Developmental Age Ranges and Content Areas,* differs from content knowledge but is also seminal to both literacy and literacy leadership (Cunningham & Allington, 2007; Prince & Conaway, 1985; Rasinski, 2003; Stein & Nelson, 2003). This category encompassed a principal's knowledge of instructional strategies based on assessment and the knowledge of the interrelatedness of reading and writing co-development. Examples of instructional strategies that spring from assessment and can assist with further literacy development included flexible grouping, daily opportunities for children to read and write and mainstays of best practices in literacy, such as reading aloud, age and developmentally appropriate reading materials and knowledge of both reading and writing processes.

The third theme, *Provide School Structures to Support Literacy,* comprised the principal's awareness of how structures might support literacy (Reeves, 2008). Essential school structures included how a principal provides classroom and school-wide access to print (literature) perhaps through funding that promote classroom libraries (Krashen, 1997; 2004) and other access opportunities. School structures also incorporates provisioning for literacy through materials such as how and why to stock literacy centers and centers for very early learners and knowledge of organizing classrooms for optimal literacy learning. The two previous themes of *Content Knowledge* and *Knowledge of Best Practices Spanning Developmental Age Ranges and Content Areas,* are fundamental building blocks of knowledge for elementary principals such that they understand both why and how to *Provide School Structures to Support Literacy,* this third theme.

The fourth theme, *Literacy Environment and Management Systems* involved knowledge about formal and informal literacy assessment, an additional critical element of literacy leadership (Cantrell, 1999; McKenna & Walpole, 2008). This theme also established the principal's knowledge of the classroom environments conducive to literacy learning as essential elements to literacy leadership. *Literacy Environment and Management Systems* begins with formal and informal assessments that result in flexible grouping, then includes adherence to how teachers routinely interact with children involving language, classroom routines, knowing the importance of a mix of whole and small group instruction, and the significance of teaching children at their instruction levels vs. grade level placement. Given the age and developmental ranges in elementary from Pre-k through 5th or 6th grade, knowing the information obtained from both types of measures – formal and informal –is extremely important for elementary principals. Correspondingly, knowledge of flexible skill grouping is also an important instructional construct as children benefit from skill grouping for specific instructional purposes yet likewise, should also benefit from the flexibility of potential instructional groups as they acquire increasing skill in any literacy area. Although flexible grouping might encompass interest groups, flexible skill grouping is important in understanding the literacy skill variance that occurs at a single grade, and the need to be mindful that groups that are rigid and inflexible can be counterproductive to literacy development. As well, this theme also encompassed knowledge regarding the importance of child/teacher language interactions, especially for very young children. Additionally, the fourth theme involved elementary principals knowing the value of literacy instructional

practice that incorporate a mix of whole, small group, and individual instruction within a classroom, as well as the significance of establishing literacy routines. Finally, this theme comprised understanding the instructional implications of teaching children at their instructional level. Principals' knowledge and expertise in understanding literacy environments and management systems emerged as paramount.

The fifth and final theme, *Developing a Literacy Mission and Monitoring and Evaluation of Literacy Instruction* combined consisted of the requisite knowledge and skills needed to develop a shared mission that values literacy development, as well as knowledge regarding how to effectively monitor and evaluate literacy instruction (Allen, 2008; Booth & Rowsell, 2002; Criscuolo, 1984; 1974; Marks & Printy,2003; McCormick, 1979; Reeves, 2008). This theme embraced the skill set of relationship building as essential to elementary principals' integrated instructional leadership capacity. Relationships are paramount to leading on any campus. Within an integrated leadership paradigm, effective literacy leadership supports the collaborative development and promotion of an organizational mission that values literacy development and individual development for staff and students. Thus, knowing how to establish relationships with faculty and staff emerged as substantive. Finally, this theme included acquiring both knowledge and skill regarding supporting teachers and coaches, appropriate evaluation of teachers and coaches' literacy skill, as well as expertise in facilitating professional development that further promotes skill with literacy teaching. Providing needed resources for impactful literacy teaching and coaching is a literacy leadership skill dependent upon the four previous themes in terms of knowledge. Understanding literacy content, knowing best practice, and understanding school structures, environments, and management systems, allows an elementary principal to collaboratively craft a literacy mission as well as monitor and evaluate literacy instruction. This involves providing both summative and formative feedback with an aim of increasing instructional and coaching skill.

Conclusion

Literacy leadership is an important issue. Little research has been reported regarding literacy leadership and organizations considered stalwarts of literacy practice and research have failed to promote this important concept. We found no mention of literacy leadership in the International Reading Association's (IRA) Special Interest Groups (SIG), and when we examined IRA's position statements, only an implied mention in the revised resolution On Reading Specialists, Coaches and Other Reading Leaders was noted. The final statement of the resolution asserts, "Literacy leaders of schoolwide reading programs must maintain a current knowledge base of reading research and practice" (IRA, 2006). This is perhaps a beginning, but no established pathway to attain literacy leadership exists with this premier literacy organization. Further, our examination of the Literacy Research Association's (LRA) study groups indicated literacy leadership was again absent from the list. Literacy leadership is neither a part of IRA's or LRA's national conference format or part of either organization's structure.

This lack of focus on literacy leadership became clear to us when we submitted a conference proposal on this topic. Although we could find related strands within IRA's broad conference themes, for LRA submissions, we had no recourse but to check the "other' category for our proposal submissions about literacy leadership. Thus, literacy leadership is absent from both literacy professional organization's agenda. In additional, a review of the professional leadership standards for elementary principals (National Association of Elementary School Principals; 2002) reveals a lack of any specific mention of literacy. Similarly, when we submitted conference proposals to the Southeast Regional Conference on Educational Administration (SRCEA), we again checked the "other" box and wrote in Literacy Leadership. Despite the absence of literacy leadership as a strand for conference proposals or a focus of special interest groups, we were successful in having our proposals that delineated literacy leadership accepted, an indication that the issue of literacy leadership warrants attention.

In our review of literature we found a paucity of reported research on literacy leadership. We found two instances where literacy leadership was presented as issues pieces as opposed to research reports, one explored a reading coach's advocacy for principal literacy involvement and principal knowledge (Tooms, 2003), the other outlined an assistant superintendent's (Marinak, 2011) advocacy for literacy leadership knowledge (Marinak, 2011). Two sources, coming from the area of educational leadership, were located; one (Matsumura, Sartoris, DiPrima Bickel & Garnier (2009) examined the elementary principal's role in establishing a literacy coaching program, another (Irvin, Meltzer & Dukes, 2007) focused on implementation of adolescent literacy initiatives. Three additional sources of information hailed from the literacy field and specifically focused on principals; one concentrated on leading, supporting, and assessing literacy initiatives (Booth & Rowsell, 2007), one centered on practical avenues for adolescent literacy challenges (Irvin, 2009), and the third piece, authored by [blinded/authors 1 and 3, 2010] presented two intertwined research studies focused on elementary principals' literacy leadership.

We also advocate for the adoption a stronger stance in the development of principals from organizations that support both literacy development and leadership organizations. This includes the promotion and dissemination of frameworks, such as the one presented in this study, to guide the learning of future and practicing principals. Advancing such frameworks in pre-service programs for school administrators and the systematic implementation of the skills noted in the framework in professional development activities for in-service principals increase the likelihood of coherent and consistent, high-quality literacy programing in schools. We are proposing that IRA consider the establishment of a SIG entitled Literacy Leadership with the express purpose of providing a forum for educators, administrators, researchers, policy makers,

and the public to present perspectives and engage those interacted in the foundational knowledge, expertise, and skill sets necessary to assume literacy leadership positions. Given the importance of literacy and recognizing the complexity of language learning, instructional leadership including literacy leadership at the school, district, state, national, and international levels requires literacy knowledge, knowledge of best practice and instructional strategies, as well as skills required to supervise, lead, and evaluate literacy teaching, coaching, and learning.

In a time when public education, especially literacy and specifically reading, incurs increased public scrutiny, the framework developed through this research study is past due. Traversing the fields of educational leadership and literacy, this study intersects a model of school leadership with essential literacy knowledge, expertise, understanding, and skill sets needed by elementary principals to better guide the learning of students through the development of teachers and literacy staff. Although, the framework has yet to be field tested, it provides a space to begin the conversation about literacy leadership and provides a spring board for future research. ■

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Appendix A. Response Prompt Sheet

Literacy Practice (content and pedagogy)	Supervising & Management Expertise