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PERCEPTIONS OF THE SPECIALIZED LITERACY PROFESSIONAL:

A PERFORMANCE PROFILE

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all specialized literacy professionals, including reading/literacy specialists/interventionists, literacy coaches, and literacy coordinators/supervisors. Your work supporting literacy and learning with both students and teachers is an inspiration. I would like to specifically recognize those who serve in a dual role, one that is difficult and complex, but rewarding. I would not be where I am today without the support of literacy professionals from both Hopewell City Public Schools and Hanover County Public Schools. You know who you are, and I thank you!

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ABSTRACT

PERCEPTIONS OF THE SPECIALIZED LITERACY PROFESSIONAL: A PERFORMANCE PROFILE

By Julie Smith Dauksys

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.**

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2022

Advisor: Dr. Valerie Robnolt

Associate Professor, Reading Program Coordinator

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The purpose of this study was to develop a performance profile of specialized literacy professionals. The International Literacy Association provided suggestions on how to prepare these professionals through the publication of *The Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals* (ILA, 2018); however, there is little awareness of these standards in the field, nor of the proposed definitions of the roles and responsibilities of literacy professionals (Bean et al., 2017).

The findings of this explanatory sequential mixed methods design provided insight into the daily work of the specialized literacy professional. This data is significant because the findings support the overarching goal of supporting a culture of literacy in schools. Results from supporting literature and participant responses demonstrated that the role of literacy professionals is perceived differently by teachers and administrators. Perceptions included reflection on the complexity of responsibilities that vary from role to role, particularly with those who serve in a dual role. Participants also perceive themselves as having a strong sense of autonomy within their role. Recommendations suggest the International Literacy Association

promote a greater awareness of *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) and reconsider their role designations to include a description of one who serves a dual role. Finally, specialized literacy professionals should be supported as advocates for their role.

Keywords: specialized literacy professional, SLP, reading/literacy specialist, reading/literacy coach, leadership

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Literacy professionals at the elementary level serve in a role that is complex and varied, and often misunderstood by administrators and classroom teachers (Bean et al., 2017). Most often referred to as reading/literacy teachers or coaches, these professionals work with students and teachers to improve literacy practices, therefore influencing student achievement (Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2010; 2011). A reading/literacy specialist is different from a classroom teacher of reading in that the specialist focuses on intervention and remediation practices in an effort to support dependent readers (Beers, 2003). A literacy coach is different from other instructional coach positions because the focus is on the development of school-wide literacy instructional practices, so the coach works with teachers in an effort to improve the implementation of these literacy practices. Sometimes, literacy professionals serve in both roles simultaneously.

To support these complex literacy roles, the International Literacy Association (ILA) has worked to enhance literacy instruction through research and professional development. In 2015, a committee was charged with the task of conducting a research review and survey of literacy educators. Following the completion of the study, the committee made three recommendations to the ILA: name the overarching role 'specialized literacy professional' (SLP), revise current standards and use them to guide SLP preparation programs and evaluate current SLP practices, and encourage nimbleness (flexibility) within the role (Bean et al, 2017).

I have served as an elementary literacy professional for 25 years, serving as both a specialist and coach, sometimes simultaneously. While grateful for the opportunities to work with some administrators and teachers who understood the role and responsibilities, often there were members of both groups who did not, making the role more complex and difficult for everyone. Moreover, while I have had opportunities for collaboration and leadership, other

specialists and coaches in neighboring schools and divisions have not had those same opportunities.

Problem

While the roles and responsibilities of the SLP have been defined by the ILA, many current SLPs, administrators, and classroom teachers are not aware of the research surrounding the recommendations or the matrix of standards that were developed (Bean et al., 2015; Bean & Kern, 2017). SLPs are not often included in school or division-based decisions regarding literacy development for students or teachers (Allington, 2006; Bean et al., 2017; ILA 2004). The role is critical to student achievement (Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2010; 2011) and job-embedded teacher learning (Biancarosa, Bryk, & Dexter, 2010), but administrative and staff perceptions of the roles and responsibilities are still ambiguous (Gibbons, 2008). Without clarity, a school community would have difficulties creating a culture of literacy that encourages decision-making and leadership opportunities for SLPs (Jacobson, 2018).

Purpose of Study

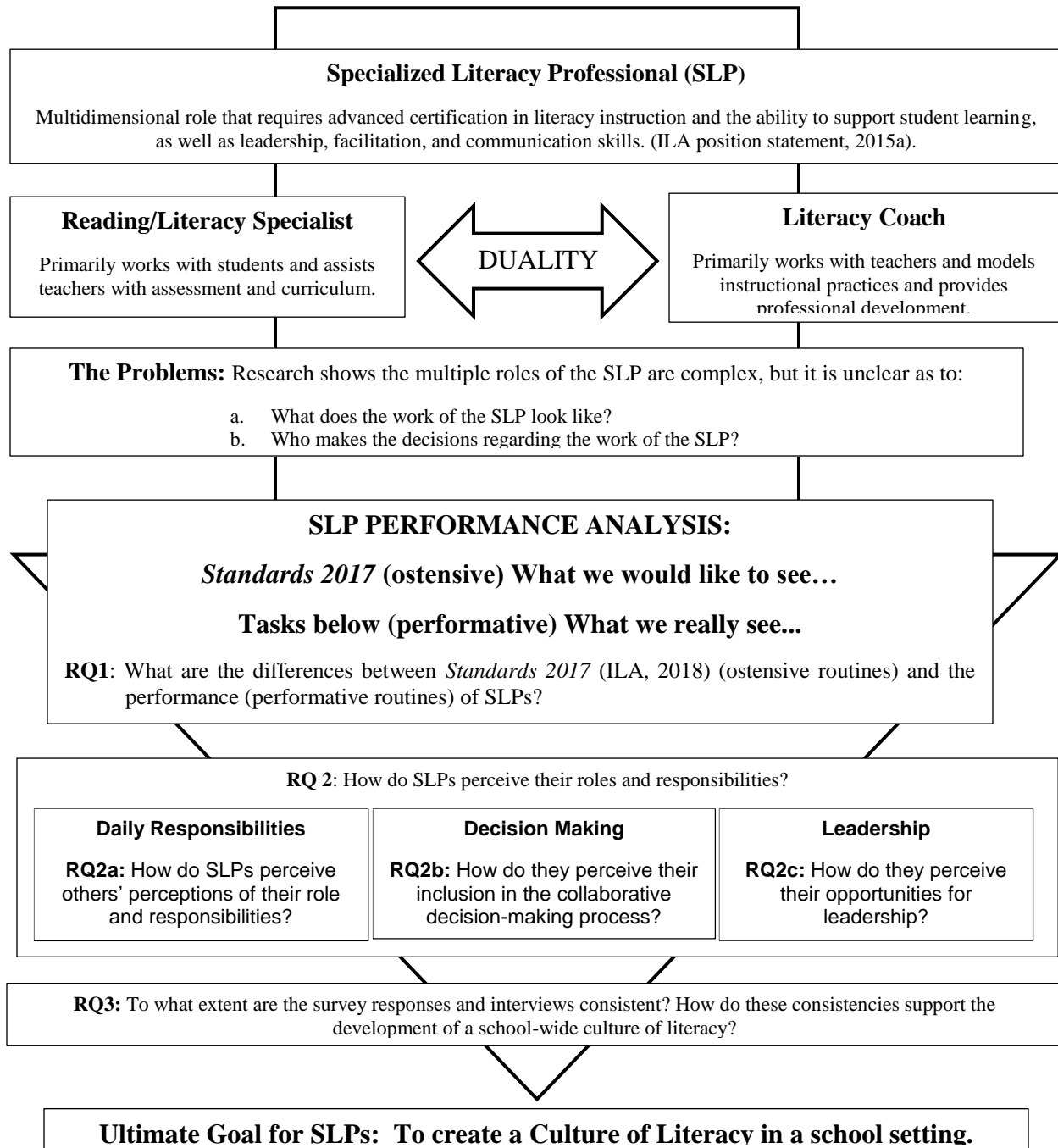
The purpose of this study was to develop a performance profile of the SLPs' roles and responsibilities in their day-to-day work at the elementary level. This profile was developed based on the standards recommended by the ILA, as well as the conversations with SLPs about the work they do. Understanding and advocating for literacy professional work is critical to creating a culture of literacy in schools (Jacobson, 2017). Administrators and teachers in elementary schools all have a role to play in the development of the school culture, but it is the SLP who has advanced education in literacy instruction, assessment, and professional learning, and can guide other professionals to create a distinct literacy culture. This study was significant

because it provided insight into the roles and responsibilities of the SLP and assisted in advocating for opportunities for decision-making and leadership through collaboration with all school stakeholders, helping to make an effective literacy culture a reality.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework explains the concepts studied and the relationships among them (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017). It is the constructed system of assumptions, expectations, and beliefs that inform research (Maxwell, 2013). In developing a conceptual framework for this study, I considered the many facets that combine to create the roles and responsibilities of the SLP as defined by *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) and from my own experiences as an SLP. I created a visual that includes the general definitions for the role of the SLP (Figure 1). The underlying arrow points to the ultimate goal of all elementary school literacy programs - to create a culture of literacy. Along the arrow are the research questions that facilitate the expectations and beliefs I have as a reading/literacy specialist. This conceptual framework helped me visualize the connections between the roles and responsibilities of specialized literacy professionals and the literacy outcomes they should be part of developing with elementary level learners and teachers. It also shows the flow between problems encountered with those roles and responsibilities, and each of the research questions posed. This superstructure (Ravitch & Riggan, 2018) highlights the connections between my positionality as an SLP and the duality of the role I serve. As a practitioner in this field of research, the conceptual framework also reflects my life experiences and concerns I have regarding the work of SLPs.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework

Theoretical Frameworks

Sociocultural Theory

The inclusion of SLPs as leaders and the subsequent value they add depends on the awareness of the impact they bring to the development of literacy culture within a school, as well as the conversations that surround that culture (Gilmore, 2017; Jacobson, 2017; Szachowicz, 2018). Sociocultural theories support the inclusion of the SLP as part of the literacy leadership as well as being critical to the development of the literacy culture. Vygotsky (1962) researched theories centered on cognitive development that were based on the idea that social interaction was necessary for learning. Working mostly with children, Vygotsky observed learning was a social act between adults and children by working with the child's zone of proximal development, the developmental range of the child, and with the child to construct meaning (1978). This constructivist epistemology is two-fold: it requires conversation between the adult and child, as well as the adult serving in the role as "the more knowledgeable other" (p.86), a role that allows the adult to scaffold extended knowledge in a way that matches the child's zone of proximal development. It also requires conversation between children and their peers, as children learn from others and with others. This theoretical underpinning still informs educational practice, particularly within literacy practices. Through cultural norms, habits of discourse, and ways others interact in a given setting, learning takes place through the idea of "socializing intelligence," a term coined by Lauren Resnick (2000) as part of the knowledge-based constructivism she and her research colleagues determined as important for literacy coach work (p.4). These principles of learning include organizing for effort (responsive teaching), accountable talk (everyone involved in discussions, taking responsibility for their contributions), socializing intelligences (problem-solving and reasoning habits of mind), academic rigor

(pedagogy that cultivates deep thinking), and self-management of learning (Resnick & Hall, 2000).

While the majority of Vygotsky's work in sociocultural theory involves the adult-child or child-child dyads (Wertsch, 1993), Resnick's work uses the same ideas to develop literacy cultures where the SLP can be a part of social learning within a small group of learners, lead the group of learners through discourse about the learning, or even collaborate to develop norms necessary for the culture to thrive (West & Cameron, 2013). In this instance, the learners are other educators, including administrators, in the school setting. These sociocultural principles are transferred to this environment so that the culture of literacy is co-constructed. Like Vygotsky's situated cognition theory, educators work collaboratively to create new understandings and partnerships through a co-constructed approach (Hara, 2009; McLeod, 2020).

The theories of Vygotsky and Resnick are critical to the theoretical underpinnings of this study. Learning is constructed socially, whether it be adult and child, as in the role of the reading/literacy specialist, or adult and adult, as in the role of the literacy coach. The fundamental work of each role is supported by the interactions: instruction, conversations, and learning.

Social Learning Theory

Albert Bandura developed social learning theory, in which observation and modeling play a large role in learning (McLeod, 2016). This behavioral theory states that learners observe and learn from others who model, specifically children learning from adults and that while this learning can be mediated, it can sometimes but not always be acted upon. In other words, children can learn, but may need motivation to replicate the learning (McLeod, 2016). Similarly,

adult learning theory focuses on the relationships between learners and those modeling the learning, which are useful to understanding how learning is fostered in these relationships, or even in learning communities (Wenger, 1998).

Lave and Wenger (1991) challenge long-standing notions of learning processes with adult learners. They argued that learning does not rest with the individual, but is a social process that is situated with historical and cultural contexts (Farnsworth, Kleanthous, & Wenger-Trayner, 2016), similar to the theories of social learning written about by Bandura. Through relational experiences, adult learners can participate in the development of their own learning, much like apprentices of long ago (Hara, p. 7). Wenger and Lave reflected on the systematic group behaviors exhibited when learning takes place and developed a framework that has been used widely and cited more frequently than any other social learning theory process (Smith, Hayes, & Shea, 2017). These frameworks, called communities of practice (CoP) are groups of people who share a passion for something they do and want to learn to do it better, who share concerns for the work, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in these areas by interacting on an ongoing basis (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). Through the work of these communities, participants learn through experience and practice to develop their own identity and role as part of the community (Wenger, 1998). The theoretical concepts of adult learning through communities is important to this study because it calls for the relationships necessary for SLPs, administrators, and teachers to work toward developing a school-wide culture of literacy by working and learning together.

Theory of Practice

Most studies of communities of practice focused on the community aspect of learning - the socially situated component that is critical to discourse around learning, but not necessarily on the concept of practice (Talja, 2010). Previous to developing communities of practice with Wenger, Lave's empirical studies centered on situated cognition and learning with an eye on practice as a hands-on, in the moment learning experience (1988). Lave relied on previous scholars' work, such as Pierre Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977) and Anthony Giddens (1979) early writings to influence her emerging theory. Over time, Lave developed a definition of practice theory, which states that there is an "interconnectedness between the setting or culture and the real-time performances of those daily, generative practices that entail the ways of acting and doing things" (Lave, p.14). Like learning, practice cannot happen in a vacuum. It is through practice in a community and the connections made between the performances, resources, and needs of participants that support practice theory in action (Talja, 2010). This theory is of particular importance to the work of SLPs in schools. The performance and practice of the SLP is heavily reliant on the school community at large, and those administrators, teachers and students within to help determine the real-time, day-to-day work of the SLP.

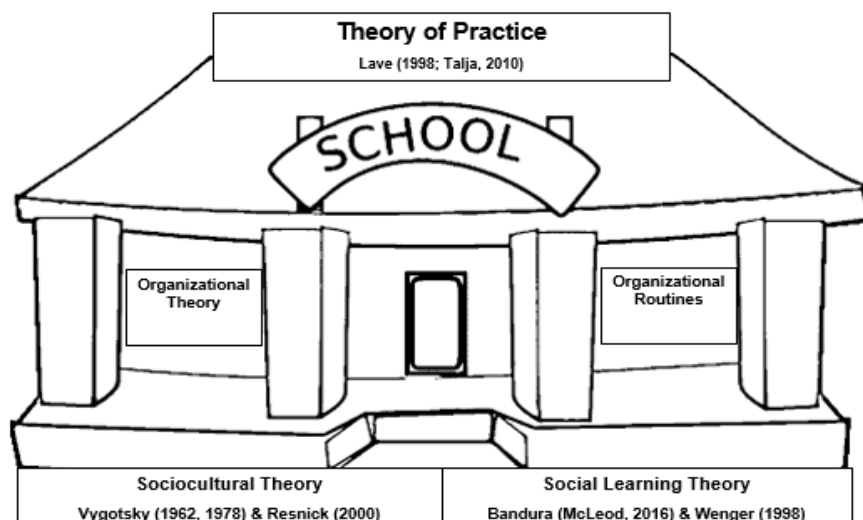
Organizational Theory and Routines

Organizational theory is most often associated with the business and managerial world. In the late 1980's, as schools shifted paradigms and organizational structures to function bureaucratically, researchers have applied organizational theory to educational leadership and school improvement in the educational setting. Based on the early ideas of Max Weber developed during the Industrial Revolution, modern researchers define organizational theory as

“the study of the structure, function, and performance of an organization and those individuals and groups within it” (Feldman & Pentland, 2003). The ways in which this work is accomplished is often through the use of organizational routines, defined by Feldman and Pentland as “a set of possible patterns on which members of the organization act upon” (p. 613). In education, organizational routines can be an important source of flexibility and change (Feldman & Pentland, 2003). The ostensive aspect of a routine (the ideal) embodies the structure, while the performative aspect (the actual practice) embodies the actions that bring the routine to life. SLPs working in schools experience these organizational routines daily. Through a deeper understanding, SLPs, along with administrators and teachers, could use organizational routines to support continuous literacy learning and change, in an effort to build a culture of literacy in schools (Gilmore, 2017; Jacobson, 2017; Szachowicz, 2018).

Utilizing Theories

The four theories presented (sociocultural theory, social learning theory, practice theory, and organizational theory and routines) provided the underpinnings necessary to support this study of the roles and responsibilities of SLPs (Figure 2). Sociocultural and social learning theory work together to support the main work of the SLP: the learning that takes place between the reading/literacy specialist and students and the literacy coach and teachers. It also lays the groundwork for practice theory, in which adults learn, implement, reflect, and change practices as necessary. Practice theory is critical to this study because of the emphasis on the day-to-day performances of SLPs. Organizational theory and routines will help the researcher to further define this performance by allowing the researcher to consider what the role should look like as compared to what the role really entails.

Figure 2*Theoretical Framework***Overview of the Literature**

The literature review began with a paradigmatic analysis of research in which common themes were identified across a selected core of topical research related to the role of literacy professionals (Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998). This process for review was selected because it allows for a deep comparison of each of the roles and examination of the patterns within the texts. Through the analysis of this collection of research, three specific roles emerged.

In seven articles, the focus was on the reading/literacy specialist, one who works more with students in intervention while assisting teachers with curriculum and assessment (Bean et al., 2015). A common theme was the complexity of the role and the variability of the role based on stakeholder perceptions (Lancia, 2014; Quatroche, Bean, & Hamilton, 2001).

In eleven articles, the focus was on the reading/literacy coach, one who works more with teachers in professional development and support of literacy practices (Walpole, McKenna, & Morrill, 2011). A common theme highlighted collaboration between the coach, administrators, and teachers as a way to support student growth (Biancarosa, Bryk, & Dexter, 2010). Coursework required to become a reading/literacy coach was also of note; several studies focused on the necessary preparation for the role (McGrath & Bardsley, 2018; Parsons, 2018; Knight, 2009).

In six articles, the focus framed both the reading/literacy specialist and reading/literacy coach, showing how the roles often overlap. This overlap highlights the importance of building a culture of literacy school-wide (Bean & Kern, 2017; Hattie & Waak, 2018). Multiple articles called for new standards to reflect a more accurate definition of the roles and responsibilities (Allington, 2006; Bean et al., 2002; Jorgenson, 2016). Again, collaboration, specifically through a structured framework, was supported (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002; Galloway & Lesaux, 2014; Eaker, DuFour & DuFour, 2002).

The collection of articles included publications by the International Literacy Association (ILA). These were further analyzed, as they provided more in-depth information regarding the roles and responsibilities of literacy professionals. Over time, the ILA conducted several surveys in which literacy professionals across the United States were asked questions about the daily work they do with administration, teachers, and students. In the most recent survey, three main roles emerged, and recommendations were made to formally define those roles, set standards for preparation programs and those already practicing, and support the flexibility of literacy professionals (Bean et al., 2015; ILA, 2015a; 2015b; 2017).

Research Questions

For this study, I will examine how the *Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals* (Standards 2017; ILA, 2018) influence the work done by literacy professionals in the field. Specifically, I will enhance the understanding of the roles and practices of literacy professionals. The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What are the differences between the *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) (ostensive routines) and the performance (performative routines) of SLPs?

RQ2: How do SLPs perceive their role and responsibilities?

- a. How do they perceive others' perceptions of their role and responsibilities?
- b. How do they perceive their inclusion in the collaborative decision-making process?
- c. How do they perceive their opportunities for leadership?

RQ3: To what extent are survey responses and interviews consistent? How do these consistencies support the development of a school-wide culture of literacy?

Overview of the Methodology

Mixed-methods research incorporates both quantitative and qualitative research, in an effort to converge findings (McMillan, 2021) and gain different perspectives of the phenomena being studied (Greene, 2007). Creating a mixed-methods research design allows for expansion of the range of the phenomena, instead of simply drawing conclusions from one approach or the other (Maxwell, p.102). To develop a performance profile of literacy professionals, a three-part survey was created. In section one, statements focused on the roles and responsibilities of SLPs,

based on the *ILA Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) that were a major component of the dissertation literature review. This section was developed in the style of a performance analysis, a process of evaluation through which you look at current performance for the purpose of identifying a current state of practice as compared with where you would like to be (ClearPoint Strategy, 2020). The day-to-day practices of SLPs were the performative aspects, while *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) were the ostensive ideals for SLP roles and responsibilities (Pentland & Feldman, 2005). Section two included short answer questions about decision-making, perceptions, collaboration, and leadership. In section three, general demographic data was collected and included questions about current position, location, and educational background. The survey provided descriptive statistics and information specific to the differences between the ostensive and performative nature of the standards. Participants were also asked to indicate their willingness to participate in a focus group discussion (which later became individual interviews) to further discuss *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018), performance survey results, and responses to short answer questions. I conducted a pilot study to determine the efficacy of the survey and focus group protocol with a group of SLPs from a school division with similar demographics to those in the study and was able to make both the survey and focus group protocol more efficient.

Limitations of Study

This study has potential limitations because of my role as an SLP. Bias and reactivity could both play a role in the evidence collected during this research study. Concerning bias, it may be possible to misinterpret a survey response or misinterpret transcriptions of individual interviews. Maxwell states, “it is impossible to eliminate the researcher’s own beliefs and thoughts” (p.124), so careful interpretation is critical. Because of anonymity, I was unable to member check responses to the survey, but encouraged interview participants to review the

transcripts for member checking. It is the voices of the participants in the study that I want to highlight and support, not my own personal perceptions of the participants' experiences.

While it is impossible to eliminate my reactions completely (Maxwell, 2013), my own positionality as an SLP could potentially be a limitation. I did not make comments reflecting my own personal experiences regarding the roles and responsibilities of the SLP until after the participants' experiences were shared and analysis provided.

There are methodological concerns as well. A performance analysis helps to determine differences between the ostensive and performative aspects of the roles and responsibilities of an SLP, but it may not provide actionable steps the SLP can use immediately. The differences identified may not be generalizable to the SLP population as a whole. This may also apply to the interviews that were conducted, as the sample size may not provide a good representation of the larger population of SLPs. Finally, it is up to the researcher to develop a survey and discussion protocol that is attentive to phrasing that will not skew results.

Definition of Terms

Culture of Literacy: A literacy culture means children, and even family members are engaged in literacy experiences not just during the school day, but also after school and in the community in a variety of ways (Jacobson, 2017).

Duality: The quality or state of having two different opposite parts or roles, in this instance serving in both the reading/literacy specialist and literacy coach role simultaneously (Merriam-Webster.com dictionary, 2021).

International Literacy Association (ILA): An international organization that has worked to enhance literacy instruction through research and professional development (ILA, 2020).

Previously, it was named the International Reading Association (IRA), but shifted to *literacy* in 2015 to reflect a broader focus of the organization to include writing, speaking, and other literacies.

Literacy Coach (LC): One of the possible roles under the specialized literacy professional umbrella, this teacher works primarily with teachers to model instructional practices and provide professional development (ILA, 2018)

Organizational Routines: A set of possible patterns on which members of the organization act. Ostensive routines are ideals established as goals, while performative routines are day-to-day actions (Feldman, 2000).

Paradigmatic Analysis: Analysis of data focused on identifying common themes across a selected core of topical research (Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998). In this research, the paradigms are the roles identified by specialized literacy professionals.

Performance Analysis: Often used in business, a performance analysis looks at differences between where we would like to be and where we are (ClearPoint Strategy, 2020)

Reading/Literacy Specialist (RS/LS): One of the possible roles under the specialized literacy professional umbrella, this teacher works primarily with students in intervention and assists teachers with assessment and curriculum planning (ILA, 2017)

Specialized Literacy Professional (SLP): Term developed by the ILA to provide an overarching title for the roles of reading/literacy specialist, literacy coach, and coordinator/supervisor of literacy (ILA, 2017).

Standards for the Preparation of Specialized Literacy Professionals (ILA, 2018): The seven recommended standards intended to guide the preparation and current work of specialized literacy professionals. They include the following: Standard 1 (S1) Foundational Knowledge; S2 Curriculum and Instruction; S3 Assessment and Evaluation; S4 Diversity and Equity; S5 Learners and Literacy Environment; S6 Professional Learning and Leadership; S7 Practicum/Clinical Experiences.

Chapter 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

While literacy instruction has been a priority in education and policy since public schooling began in America, the role of the literacy professional has changed from one of remediation (Dolch, 1940) to one of interventionist, resource teacher, and coach (Bean et al., 2015), sometimes simultaneously. The complexities of the role of the literacy professional have developed into a position that varies from division to division and even school to school, based on the needs of the students and teachers (Bean et al., 2015; Bunker, 2017). Administrators and classroom teachers struggle to understand the role, as well as the variety of practices it entails (Quatroche, Bean & Hamilton, 2001; Bean et al., 2017). This creates an identity crisis that leaves the literacy professional unsure of the performance of their role in the school community.

There is evidence that the position is critical to enhancing student achievement (Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2010, 2011) and ongoing teacher learning that is job-embedded (Biancarosa, Bryk, & Dexter, 2010; Knight, 2009). However, literacy professionals are often not included in division or school-based decisions regarding literacy development for students or teachers (Allington, 2006; Bean et al., 2015; ILA 2004). This top-down organization is counter-intuitive to the responsive nature of the role of the literacy professional. Again, the identity of the literacy professional within the collaborative context of the school community is compromised. This literature review explores the topical research that informs the roles and performance of the literacy professional at the elementary school level. It highlights historical and political influences, as well as the definition of roles and standards as suggested by the International

Literacy Association (ILA), an organization that has worked to enhance literacy instruction through research and professional development. Finally, this literature review provides grounding in continuous improvement of the literacy professional role through a set of standards that serve as a guide for preparation programs and practitioners.

Historical and Political Influences

Since the early 1930's the roles and responsibilities of literacy professionals have developed far beyond the initial iteration of the role. The first recorded request for a remedial teacher to work with struggling readers was in 1940, when Edward William Dolch, the developer of the Dolch sight word list, wrote an article that called for reading expertise at the building level. Dolch (1940) described this role as "a teacher who was willing to read about reading instruction and assessment, diagnosis and determine reading problems, spend time in a clinical process to learn about reading problems, develop a collection of methods to use to support readers and share these methods with colleagues" (p. 209). In 1965, the idea of reading remediation was included in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Through this act, federal funds were made available to support students from low-income families through Title 1, Part A (ESEA, 1965), thus creating Title I reading programs in schools. The Title I programs included teachers, administrators, and other support staff who identified students in need of educational help and instructed them using research-based strategies (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2011).

In the 1980's, two reports influence the practices of literacy professionals. In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education published the report *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. This report called for all educational stakeholders to reform

schools by adopting rigorous and measurable standards for instruction that would improve overall literacy. Next, the National Institute of Education in 1985 published the report *Becoming a Nation of Readers*. The complexities of reading instruction and the complex components of literacy learning, including phonics, comprehension, fluency, and writing were outlined. The suggestions in both of these critical, national reports support the work of the literacy professional with students and teachers.

The National Reading Panel convened to compile research on reading instruction and literacy acquisition in 2000. The report, *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read*, has become the cornerstone of federal literacy policy for the past two decades. Specific components of literacy deemed necessary are suggested for both classroom teachers and teachers providing intervention. The suggestions made led the federal government to reimagine reading instruction in the 21st century.

In 2001 Congress amended ESEA (1965) to revise, reauthorize, and consolidate various educational programs, including Title I programs in schools. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) included a component called *Reading First* (U.S. Department of Education, 2002), that required all students be able to read on or above level by third grade and called for professional development to be provided for teachers at those levels by reading specialists and/or literacy coaches to help them develop best-practices in instruction.

In the early 2000's educators of students with special needs wanted a better framework for identification of students with learning and behavior difficulties. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) encouraged the use of a framework called *Response to Intervention* or RtI (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2010). This RtI framework

called for tiers of intervention, in an effort to better identify both regular and special education students' needs. Reading teachers were asked to be part of this model, working with students in Tier II and III interventions. This framework is still used by many schools today and is widely recognized as beneficial to student achievement (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). In 2015, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a revision of ESEA and NCLB, held the tenets of Title I reading intervention and literacy coach work in a variety of models (including RtI), but also worked to advance equity for all students, especially those disadvantaged and with high-needs (ESSA, 2015). It is through these newest policies in education where we find the literacy professional serving in a variety of roles with varying responsibilities.

Paradigmatic Analysis of Literature

The following literature review was conducted using a paradigmatic analysis. Paradigmatic analysis is focused on identifying common themes across a selected core of topical research (Wideen, Mayer-Smith, & Moon, 1998). I included research published since 2000, the year that reflects the National Reading Panel's cornerstone publication. It collected four types of information: author/date, participants/methods, paradigms (roles) and study focus, and results. Included in this literature review are peer-reviewed journal articles, dissertations published through Pro-Quest, meta-analyses, and select book chapters. Databases searched included Pro-Quest, JSTOR, Academic Search Complete and Teacher Reference Center (both through EBSCO publishing), and Gale Cengage. Search terms included were: reading teacher, reading specialist, reading interventionist, reading remediation, reading resource, reading coach, literacy specialist, literacy coach, and instructional coach. Within the literature reviewed the following research methods were noted: quantitative analysis of student achievement data and teacher

surveys, qualitative (survey short response, interviews, case studies, comparison studies, literature reviews, reflections, phenomenological study using I-poems), meta-analysis, mixed-methods, and a longitudinal study using reading achievement data. Starting with 45 articles and 6 books that fit the search terms, the collection was narrowed to 23 articles and one chapter. Those eliminated focused on specific curriculum (like writing instruction or fluency), division-level literacy roles, or secondary education. The analysis highlighted paradigms which were the specific roles: seven focused on the roles of the reading/literacy specialist, eleven focused on the roles of reading/literacy coaches, and six focused on both roles. The paradigmatic analysis of literacy roles is noted in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Paradigmatic Analysis of Roles

Author	Participants & Methods	Paradigms (roles) & Study Focus	Results
Biancarosa, Bryk, & Dexter (2010)	4-year longitudinal study using DIBELS scores and coaching conversations	LC Study the effects of the Literacy Collaborative, a school-wide reform model that relies on coaching methods	Findings show substantial positive effects on student learning based on the LC coaching model
Dugan (2010)	Survey of 487 literacy coaches, principals, and classroom teachers	LC The effectiveness of the literacy coach	Findings showed importance of advanced education for coaches, but also a low perception of coaches by classroom teachers
Elish-Piper & L'Allier (2010)	Descriptive statistics including coaching logs and student achievement results	LC The effectiveness of coaching K-1 on student achievement	Multiple roles of coaches (student/teacher/paperwork oriented) Coaches who spent the majority of time with teachers saw greatest impact in student achievement

TABLE 1
(continued)

Author	Participants & Methods	Paradigms (roles) & Study Focus	Results
Elish-Piper & L'Allier (2011)	Used structured literacy coaching logs and scores from DIBELS	LC Investigates the relation b/t student reading and LC	Students whose teachers had coaching made statistically significant gains in reading
Jorgenson (2016)	Dissertation: Mixed methods/exploratory sequential design in 19 interviews then observations, then participated in a Likert-scale survey	LC Explore the role of coach in a professional learning community	Professional learning is collaborative, the PLC. This role is a bridge, a support, a coach, and partnership principles are evident (Knight)
Knight (2009)	Review of 5 years of studies completed at the University of Kansas Coaching Center	LC What is the key to coaching success?	Continuous, job-embedded learning
McGrath & Bardsley (2018)	Literature review focused on coaching; 15 pre/post reflections of the program for coach preparation	LC Fieldwork experience that provides context for leadership through the lens of a coach.	Based on results, recommends that all graduate programs include content related specifically to leadership development.
Mraz, Algozzine, & Watson (2008)	Qualitative interviews with coded data collections	LC Perceptions of those who work with literacy coaches	Role of the coach is up to interpretation, dependent on who is asked.
Parsons (2018)	Exploratory case study design through interviews of 7 participants of a coaching cohort	LC Development of coaching role through university coursework	Perceptions of self-identity based on strategies and techniques learned.

TABLE 1
(continued)

Author	Participants & Methods	Paradigms (roles) & Study Focus	Results
Toll (2018)	Qualitative reflection based on 12 years of work in the field	LC Perceptions of those working with literacy coaches	*Admin understanding of coaching role *training for coaches *time allocated
Walpole, McKenna, & Morrill (2011)	6-year longitudinal study of coaches' w/Read First (GA)	LC Demands of coaching	*knowledge building *capacity of coaches *professional dev needs
Lancia (2014)	Dissertation: Phenomenological study using qualitative interviews, Voice Centered Directional Method, I-Poems of 4 literacy specialists	LS Exploring the identities of literacy specialists	Suggested continual learning, expanded concepts of leadership, (leading between the lines)
Bean et al.(2015)	Survey of 2,500+ reading professionals Likert scaled	LS/LC/DS	Questions about job title, tasks, time, instruction, support, assessment, culture, previous learning
Bean (2002)	Chapter: Case Study	LS-LC Shift in roles from specialist to coach	Building a culture of collaboration for literacy relies on multiple roles and definitions of literacy professionals
Hattie & Waack (2018)	Meta-analysis updated and refers to 252 specific influences of student achievement	N/A Details factors related to student achievement, rank ordered by effect size, with a suggested 0.4 as a qualifier for being a strong reliance	The roles of intervention or coach are not specifically mentioned in the list; however, the following directly relate to the roles: *RtI: 1.29 effect size *Intervention w/students w/learning needs 0.77 effect size *Professional Development: 0.41 effect size

TABLE 1
(continued)

Author	Participants & Methods	Paradigms (roles) & Study Focus	Results
Allington (2006)	Op-Ed reviewing the credentials required for RS/RT/RC.	RS/RT/RC Calls for new standards for preparation programs	Critical of IRA and USDOE to mandate literacy leadership for every school
Bunker (2017)	Qualitative interviews of 22 elementary reading specialists	RS Explore the narrative of work and influences	Highlights the complexities of the work life of reading specialists
Galloway & Lesaux (2014)	Literature review-extension of Quatroche, Bean, and Hamilton (2001)	RS The role of the reading specialist reported in literature since 2000	*Multiple roles *Differing perceptions by stakeholders *Impact of school context *Call for diversification of training for the changing role
Ginsburg (2012)	Qualitative case study of 12 educational professionals to determine perceptions of the changing roles of reading specialists Interviews	RS How and why the roles changed since 1963	Expectations noted: *Help classroom teachers with struggling and affluent students *Help administration with data *Liaison to school board regarding funding
Hall (2009)	Descriptive survey of 32 teachers in independent private schools about the role	RS Varying roles and responsibilities	Recommendations such as: hiring requirements, experience, and clear expectations of roles by administration

TABLE 1
(continued)

Author	Participants & Methods	Paradigms (roles) & Study Focus	Results
Lipp (2017)	Dissertation: Survey of 26 reading specialists (Likert and open; from Bean 2003)	RS What is the role of the Ohio reading specialist? Do reading specialists primarily work with struggling readers? What professional development is provided to classroom teachers?	Reading specialists in Ohio spend most of their time instructing and assessing struggling readers in pull out programs that include general reading instruction and intensive Reading Recovery instruction.
Quatroche, Bean, Hamilton (2001)	Literature review: 18 articles of empirical evidence Four surveys	RS Complexity of roles Do reading specialists make a difference?	Findings paucity in the literature surrounding effectiveness and definition of roles
Routman (2012)	Qualitative reflective review of 40 years as an educator and the role of literacy	RS/LC Setting the stage for school-wide effective teaching	PLCs should have literacy focus, literacy team should participate, coaching will move teachers
Bean & Kern (2017)	Comparison study of the 2010 and 2017 Standards for Literacy Professionals (ILA)	SLP Highlights the major changes in the standards	*reading to literacy *SLP terminology *highlights expectations and standards

The Reading/Literacy Specialist

The most common theme surrounding the reading/literacy specialist literature was role complexity, varying from school to school within a division (Bean et al., 2015; Bean & Kern,

2017). Bunker (2017) through interviews of 22 reading/literacy specialists explored the complex narrative of work and the influences on their own development as reading professionals.

Quatroche, Bean, and Hamilton (2001) also looked at the complexity surrounding the role, with a focus on effectiveness. Through Lancia's work exploring the identities of reading/literacy specialists (2014), he determined that often reading specialists are lost staff - not administration nor classroom teacher. Galloway and Lesaux (2014) sought stakeholder perceptions of the reading/literacy specialist role, and discovered that each had a different perception of what exactly are reading/literacy specialist responsibilities. This leads to a role that is misunderstood, or not understood at all.

Quatroche, Bean, and Hamilton (2001) and Galloway and Lesaux (2017) published research that were larger literature reviews based on empirical evidence for the roles of reading/literacy specialists spanning from 1950 to 2017. Findings from these reviews called for a more specific definition of the role, diversification and continuation of training for the role, and the lack of literature surrounding the effectiveness of reading/literacy specialists.

The Reading/Literacy Coach

The most common theme was that of professional development (Jorgenson, 2016; Knight, 2009; Walpole, McKenna, & Morrill, 2011). There was a focus on the learning by all school staff that takes place in an environment that is collaborative, and provides for continuous, job-embedded staff development. Professional learning is critical to the development of the coach and staff (Knight, 2009, p. 17).

Toll (2018) showed how the perceptions the role of a reading/literacy coach was most often defined by the building administration, as teachers were often assigned to work with

coaches to learn new methods or improve instruction. In Mraz, Algozzine, and Watson (2008), coaches reported that the role of the coach is up to interpretation, dependent on who was asked about the role and responsibilities. In Dugan (2010), coaches reflected advanced education in working with adult learners, but discovered that perceptions of the coach role were lower by classroom teachers. Self-perception was only evident in one summary, where interviewees stated that their identities were based on strategies and techniques learned, more so than the school professional development focus (Parsons, 2018).

Unlike reading/literacy specialists, reading/literacy coach effectiveness was reported widely (Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2010). In a four-year longitudinal study, substantial positive effects in reading development were noted for students whose teachers met regularly with the reading/literacy coach (Biancarosa, Bryk, & Dexter, 2010). In a survey conducted by Dugan (2010), results showed the importance placed on the advanced education of reading/literacy coaches and their work in adult learning. The participants also shared a perceived impact on student learning based on the reading/literacy coach's advanced knowledge. Through the use of *Partnership Principles*, Knight (2009) shared how trust between instructional coaches and classroom teachers make an impact on student achievement because of reciprocity, as opposed to a top-down approach.

Another theme specific to reading/literacy coach was the coursework required to become a coach. Two studies, both published in 2018, found that university coursework was key in developing coaches through a context of leadership. Learning about leadership made coaches stronger supports for schools. McGrath and Bardsley (2018) as well as Parsons (2018) commented on the effectiveness of university programming in coach development, though both

studies focused on programs that were specific to coaching and leadership development. Knight (2009), through the University of Kansas Coaching Center, has worked to develop coach literature that focuses on continuous learning, not just through a certification program.

All Roles Together

The meta-meta-analysis work of Hattie and Waak (2018), which includes over 1,000 articles about educational practices, contributes to our understanding of the reading/literacy specialist and reading/literacy coach roles. While the distinct roles of specialist or coach are not designated in the list of effect sizes, three topics are included that are indirect indicators of the specialist and/or coach effect. Response to Intervention (RtI), a tiered system of supports for students with varying needs, showed an effect size of 1.29. This strong effect would definitely include the specialist or coach in working with students and teachers within the RtI framework (March, 2010). Basic intervention showed an effect size of 0.77, still strong and inclusive of the specialist's intervention. Professional development for teachers showed an effect size of 0.41, still above the 0.4 qualifier for strength, and would include the coach (Knight, 2009).

In 2006, Allington called for clarity concerning the roles and responsibilities for literacy professionals by suggesting that standards be developed that would guide the work. The IRA/ILA worked over the next several years to create the initial standards (2000; 2010) as well as a position statement regarding the role of the reading/literacy specialist (2004). As time passed, and the literacy coach role became an integral part of the work, ILA determined it was time to reevaluate the definition and standards. Suggestions were made to include a practicum component for reading/literacy specialists and reading/literacy coaches during their preliminary training. Bean et al.'s 2015 research generated the term specialized literacy professional (SLP), a

three-part role in which the teacher or supervisor has advanced certification in literacy instruction, the ability to support student learning, and one or more of the primary roles and responsibilities (ILA position statement, 2015a). It also suggested standards that preparation programs and divisions could use as an evaluative tool.

A final theme generated was that of collaboration. Bean et al. (2002) stated “building a culture of collaboration for literacy relies on multiple roles and definitions of literacy professionals” (p.8). Jorgenson (2016) agrees, stating, “Professional learning is collaborative, like a bridge that supports learning” (p.77). Even Hattie and Waak (2018) share that collective impact, with an effect size of 1.57, is a strong argument for collaboration in the school. This reinforces the theoretical underpinnings of sociocultural and social learning theories that support this study (Wertsch, 1993; Resnick, 2000; Wenger, 1998).

One consistent framework mentioned to support the idea of collaboration was communities of practice (CoP). A CoP is a group of people (administration, literacy professionals, and classroom teachers), who share a passion for something they do and want to learn to it better, who share concerns for the work, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in these areas by interacting on an ongoing basis (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). School improvement teams (Dagen, Moorewood, & Glance 2020), Response to Intervention teams (Galloway & Lesaux, 2014), or Professional Learning Communities (Eaker, DuFour & DuFour, 2002) all use the CoP model of adult learning to facilitate job-embedded learning at the school level. Again, this supports the underpinnings of practice theory (Lave, 1998).

This paradigmatic analysis serves as an anchor for the understandings of the role and responsibilities of the literacy professional over time. This method allowed a deeper look at common themes of the roles and responsibilities within a core of topical research about literacy professionals. This research is important to this study because it illustrates the ever-evolving complexities of the role of the literacy professional and the responsibilities it entails. One topic still unclear is the inclusion of literacy professionals in the decision-making process. There was little evidence regarding their role, the work they do, and school or division-based decisions regarding literacy development for students or teachers (Allington, 2006; Bean et al., 2015; ILA, 2004). There was also little evidence of the impact the inclusion of literacy professionals in a collaborative group or community of practice, or how the development of this role impacts the literacy culture of a school (Jacobson, 2017). While perceptions of literacy professionals are explored from the perspective of administration, specifically principals, there were no results that show self-perceptions of their role and the work they do. What do they feel most prepared to accomplish? Do they feel successful in their work with students and teachers? How do they perceive what they do each day? How do they wish to grow?

The Specialized Literacy Professional

The currently accepted role of the literacy professional is based largely on the work of Rita Bean and colleagues. This work also establishes the standards used to evaluate both literacy preparation programs and literacy professionals themselves. Bean states, “The complexity and multiplicity of responsibilities calls for a more clearly defined statement of the expectations and qualifications for each of the roles” (ILA, 2015b, p.6). To develop an ontological concept of the literacy professional role, Bean, along with fourteen literacy colleagues, served on an ILA

committee that conducted a national study where a survey was administered to over 2,500 reading/literacy specialists, reading teacher/interventionists, instructional/literacy coaches, and supervisors. The survey was based on a pilot and survey that had been administered previously (IRA, 2000; 2004; 2010) with the addition of specific closed questions that asked participants to rank items using a Likert scale of percentages. The questions included rankings about job title, tasks, time, instruction, supporting teachers, assessment, school climate/professional development, and previous learning for the role. Five open questions solicited the most positive aspects of the role, three challenges with the role, what preparation they wish they had prior to serving in the role, and what dispositions were needed to be successful. In both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the survey, three overarching questions were answered regarding SLPs and the standards that evaluate their programs and work:

What are the current roles and responsibilities of a literacy professional?

Overall, 46% of participants said they worked directly with students, while 28% said they had coaching responsibilities. 23% stated they had multiple roles and responsibilities, and only 3% stated they worked in a supervisory role. Concerning tasks, all groups reported supporting teachers in some way. This question led researchers to streamline the titles to that of reading/literacy specialist, literacy coach, and literacy coordinator/supervisor, which all fall under the overarching title of SLP.

In what ways do literacy professionals engage in leadership activities?

In this section of the survey, 89% of participants stated they spend a great deal of time working to support teachers. Formal support through supervising or coaching, as well as informal support by planning or sharing data for intervention were ways in which all SLPs

supported teachers. Literacy coaches and literacy coordinators/supervisors on professional development through workshops or professional learning communities spent more time.

The importance of developing school culture and collaboration was also determined through a series of questions about professional learning communities. 33% indicated that there was a common vision in their school and that 44% had noted high expectations for students. 60% stated that the focus of their mission and vision statements were on student learning, and 40% indicated that there were shared values of opportunities for collaboration.

What preparation have literacy professionals received and what do they need to be successful in their roles?

There were 75% of participants who indicated that they held a master's degree, with 55% of those denoted as reading education. 53% were certified reading specialists. 90% of participants belonged to at least one professional organization. One of the open-ended questions asked participants specifically about what preparation might have helped them be more successful. 56% gave answers to this question, and overwhelmingly all stated that there was a great need for experiences in the area of leadership, and working collaboratively with adult learners was at the top of the list of requests.

By reflecting on the survey results, the ILA committee learned about the current roles and responsibilities of literacy professionals, opportunities for leadership engagement and collaboration, and preparation programs and the need for continued learning to find success in their roles. The culmination of the survey data showed that new role definitions (reading/literacy specialist, reading/literacy coach, coordinator/supervisor of literacy) would be suggested, along

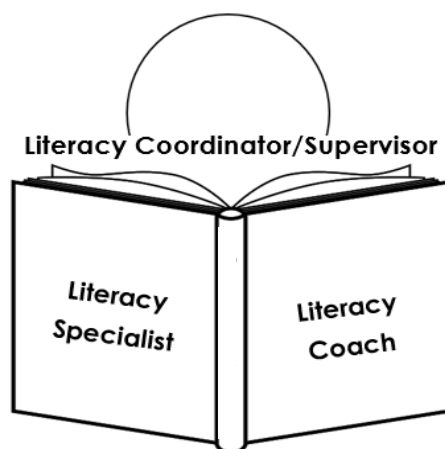
with more leadership opportunities and continued adult learning. Overall, three recommendations would be made to the ILA regarding the results of the survey.

ILA Committee Recommendations

The committee led by Rita Bean and colleagues proposed three recommendations to the ILA based on their research and reflection (Bean et al., 2017). The first recommendation focused on their determination of three clear roles that emerged from the survey results: reading/literacy specialist (who works mostly with students), literacy coach (who works mostly with teachers), or literacy coordinator/supervisor (who works with administrators and all teachers to support literacy programs). These roles are part of the larger, overarching term *specialized literacy professional* (SLP) as previously defined (Figure 3). There was indication that the roles may overlap, but that all who held a role were considered literacy leaders (p. 32).

Figure 3

The Roles of the Specialized Literacy Professional



The second recommendation was further development of ILA standards for literacy professionals, with a matrix that allows for the evaluation of both SLP preparation programs and role execution within the schools (Bean et al., 2017, p.115). The committee proposed the

following seven standards to guide SLP preparation and work: Foundational Knowledge, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment and Evaluation, Diversity and Equity, Learners and Literacy Environment, Professional Learning and Leadership, and Practicum and Clinical Experiences.

A final recommendation made by the committee stated that regardless of role, all SLPs must be nimble - develop the “ability to move quickly, but thoughtfully, in making decisions about changes to meet internal and external challenges” (Bean et al., 2017. p.18). This adaptability would allow SLPs to work with school leadership to build a collaborative culture of literacy.

Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals, 2017

The goal of the *Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals (Standards 2017; ILA, 2018)* is to ensure that every future teacher and specialized literacy professional has access to the best knowledge that experts and practitioners can provide. It provides a vision of what an ideal university or school program can or should be. *Standards 2017 (ILA, 2018)* set the expectations of the SLP and provide a framework for worldwide advocacy of literacy. While guidelines are set forth for SLPs, classroom teachers, and principals/teacher educators/literacy partners, this literature review focuses on those standards for SLPs only. Table 2 summarizes the *Standards 2017 (ILA, 2018)* overarching standards and what SLPs can or should do to meet the standard. In addition to the standards summarized above, *Standards 2017 (ILA, 2018)* supports SLPs by providing specific research and assumptions for the responsibilities of each role under the SLP umbrella, as well as a matrix that outlines the standard title, standard statement, components of the standards, and examples of evidence (p. 6).

Table 2*Summary of Standards 2017 (ILA, 2018) Overarching Standards*

Standard Title	Overarching Standard
Standard 1: Foundational Knowledge	SLPs demonstrate knowledge of theory, history, and evidenced-based foundations of literacy and language.
Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction	SLPs use this foundational knowledge to implement and critique curricula and design, implement, and evaluate evidence-based literacy instruction to meet the needs of all learners (students and adults).
Standard 3: Assessment and Evaluation	SLPs know appropriate assessment tools to screen, diagnose, and measure student achievement and use data to inform instruction and evaluate interventions.
Standard 4: Diversity and Equity	SLPs know research relative to diversity and equity to create literacy programs that are inclusive and affirming.
Standard 5: Learners and the Literacy Environment	SLPs meet the developmental needs of all learners and collaborate with colleagues to use a variety of print and digital materials to engage and motivate learners.
Standard 6: Professional Learning and Leadership	SLPs know the importance of, participate in and lead ongoing professional development.
Standard 7: Practicum/Clinical Experiences	SLPs have the opportunity to apply knowledge in multiple supervised practicum/clinical experiences.

The statements included in the overarching standards state the actions that SLPs should be involved with daily. SLPs demonstrate, use, implement, critique, evaluate, screen, diagnose, measure, create, collaborate, engage, motivate, lead, and apply in their work. All standards were

written to support the preparation of literacy professionals as they complete their preservice college requirements, but only standards one through six engage the in-service professional's work as a SLP. *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) are a vital resource for SLPs, and making colleges, universities, and schools aware of these standards is critical to the implementation and execution of the standards.

Standards 2017 (ILA, 2018) as Organizational Routines

Organizational routines are abundant in education and create standard ways of teaching and learning that influence how the organization as a whole performs (Conley & Enomoto, 2005). Feldman (2000) defines a routine as “a set of possible patterns on which members of the organization act upon” (p. 613). The flow between the ideas, actions, and outcomes generates a relationship that can enact change within the organization.

Standards 2017 (ILA, 2018) are the recommended routines set forth by the ILA for SLPs. They are the set of possible ideas and actions that can or should generate an outcome like change by enacting the specific role, through either remediating, intervening, coaching, supervising, or coordinating. Research into organizational studies has identified two aspects of organizational routines - the ostensive aspect, or the ideal of the routine, and the performative aspect, or the routine as practiced (Feldman & Pentland, 2003).

The organizational routines of SLPs as described in the standards in Table 2 are ostensive in nature, meaning they are the ideal, or what *should* be happening in the role of SLPs as based on the empirical research conducted by ILA. The standards may also be performative in nature, meaning they show what *really* happens in the role and responsibilities of a SLP, based on the empirical research conducted by ILA. The intersectionality of the ostensive and performative

standards is limited because there is no research to support the benefits of using *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018). Each aspect individually can be mistaken for what is actually happening within the role and responsibilities of SLPs (Feldman & Pentland, 2003). It is this intersection - the relationship between the two aspects of the standards - that is critical to determine in order to develop a current and accurate profile of a SLP.

The research describing organizational routines is intended to add to this literature review by creating a source of continuous improvement as SLPs work towards the recommended standards. The ostensive and performative nature of the standards will provide a bridge to the methodology for this study. Focusing on *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) as organizational routines allows for patterns of SLP performance to emerge.

Conclusion

The results of this literature review suggest that there is a need for a better working definition of the roles and responsibilities of the literacy professional. Through a complex review of available empirical literature in the paradigmatic analysis, there was agreement on the importance and necessity of the roles of specialist and coach. Some placed importance on one role over the other, or suggested that the roles sometimes overlap, but no study discussed the possibility of a literacy professional serving in a dual capacity (both specialist and coach) and how this would impact the work in both areas, as well as the identity of the literacy professional. There was discussion across studies about the perceptions of the specialist and coach, by teachers and administrators, as well as self-perceptions held by the literacy professionals. Both positive and negative perceptions were reported for various reasons. There was also agreement about the topic of collaboration - specialists and coaches working with teachers and administrators - and

how a community of practice can support a school working together to develop a culture of literacy, but no specific examples of this in action. Bean et al. (2015) noted that literacy professionals engage in the decision-making process daily regarding student and teacher supports, but it is unclear in the literature who makes decisions regarding the responsibilities of the SLP role.

Through the review of the seminal research of the ILA committee led by Bean, the recommendations made to formally define the roles and responsibilities (standards) have given clarity to the call of researchers before who longed for a better understanding of the literacy professional in action. *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) are available through the ILA website. You can purchase the booklet as a bound text, or you can access the standards for free on the ILA website. Unless you are an active member of ILA you may not know they exist. If *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) are going to be the ostensive recommendation, there should be better access to the research. Furthermore, there is no research that further evaluates the impact of *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) since they were released four years ago. While important and critical to the work of SLPs, there is no evidence that SLPs themselves are working toward these recommended standards. This dissertation seeks to understand these differences, using a mixed methods approach to examine the ostensive and performative qualities of the standards using a performance analysis survey to compare what should happen concerning the role and responsibilities of the SLP with what is really happening. While *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) were written with the preparation of literacy professionals in mind, this study focuses on those literacy professionals who have experience in the role of reading/literacy specialist or literacy coach at the elementary level.

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Mixed methods research in the field of literacy is a relatively new methodology, even though it has been a social science methodology for quite some time (Calfee & Sperling, 2010). Mixed-methods research incorporates both quantitative and qualitative research, in an effort to converge findings (McMillan, 2021) and gain different perspectives of the phenomena being studied (Green, 2007). Using a mixed methods approach allows for confirmation of understanding of each of the research questions. By incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods, I was able to observe and interpret findings from multiple angles and perspectives, allowing for a broader profile of SLPs.

Using a quantitative approach supported the purpose of this study and the research questions presented. The quantitative tradition of research studies phenomena objectively to find a single truth or reality (McMillan, 2010) and to determine differences between distinct variables (Maxwell, 2013). This study used these strengths to conduct a performance analysis survey of SLPs.

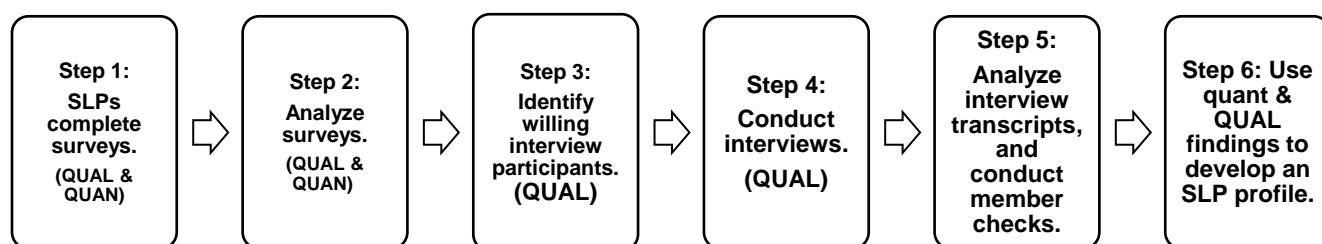
A qualitative approach also supported the purpose of this study and the other research questions presented. The qualitative tradition of research studies multiple realities and is based on social interaction and narratives (McMillan, 2010). Qualitative research is flexible and inductive (Maxwell, 2013) so that researchers can be reflexive as they process findings. This study used these strengths in two ways. First, the short answer portion of the survey provided participants with an initial opportunity to share their perceptions about the roles and

responsibilities of their practice. Second, participants were invited to participate in focus groups (which became individual interviews) to further share perspectives of their roles and responsibilities. This allowed me to look for consistencies within the survey data analysis, interview transcript analysis, and researcher memos.

I used an explanatory sequential mixed method design to conduct this study in an effort to further describe perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of SLPs (Figure 4). This research design was appropriate because it allowed me to develop a more descriptive profile of SLPs based on their perceptions of *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) and conversations regarding the day-to-day work they do in elementary schools. The design allowed for the convergence of findings from all parts of the research process (McMillan, 2021).

Figure 4

Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design



Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine how *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) influence the work being done by SLP and what decision-making, collaboration, and leadership opportunities are afforded to SLPs. The ILA has conducted many studies regarding the multiplicity of roles

and responsibilities of SLPs. They proposed *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) as a way to prepare future literacy professionals, as well as a guide for current literacy professionals. This study complements the research in this area. Specifically, I enhanced the understanding of the roles and practices of literacy professionals. The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: What are the differences between the *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) (ostensive routines) and the performance (performative routines) of SLPs?

RQ2: How do SLPs perceive their role and responsibilities?

- d. How do they perceive others' perceptions of their role and responsibilities?
- e. How do they perceive their inclusion in the collaborative decision-making process?
- f. How do they perceive their opportunities for leadership?

RQ3: To what extent are survey responses and interviews consistent? How do these consistencies support the development of a school-wide culture of literacy?

Participant Selection

Because of the study design, participants were selected in two ways. A convenience sample is a nonrandom sample of the target population that meets some practical criteria, such as job title, location, accessibility, or willingness to participate (Maxwell, 2013). For this study, initial contact was made through the appropriate offices of three metropolitan Virginia public school divisions. After obtaining Internal Review Board (IRB) approval, permission was granted to conduct the study by two of the school divisions (Division I and Division II). The third school division never responded to the study request.

Division I allowed me to create mailing list by culling the information provided on school websites, and the survey was sent to 47 possible participants. Recipients chose whether to participate. Division II requested to send the survey in an email directly through their Department of Assessment, Research, and Evaluation. Both email notifications were approved as part of the IRB process and included participant consent (Appendix A) as well as a link to the survey. Information was shared with the department regarding who should receive the email, and it was sent to 37 possible participants. Thus, 84 SLPs received the survey via email. Twenty-four participants responded, for a 29% response rate.

The final question of the survey asked participants if they would be willing to further discuss the roles and responsibilities of SLPs in a focus group discussion format. A focus group enables participants to interact and expand on shared experiences (Patton, 2002). A focus group protocol was developed based on the responses from each part of the survey. This purposive convenience sample of participants would allow for the identification of multiple focus groups in order for SLPs to share more about their perceptions of survey items and discuss their perceptions of decision-making and leadership opportunities. Unfortunately, only one participant indicated interest in participating in a focus group discussion. After consulting with my advisor and methodologist, it was determined that focus group discussions would not be appropriate with one person. I submitted an addendum to IRB to change the focus group discussions to individual interviews using a similar protocol document. After approval, I moved forward with the interview process. When I reached out to the participant who had volunteered, I received no response. After two more attempts with no response, I abandoned this possibility. With no interview participants, I decided to try snowball sampling. Snowball sampling allowed me to connect with SLPs in Divisions I and II who referred further participants who had participated in

the survey (Creswell, 2002). Altogether, I had five individual volunteers for interviews. I sent an email to all five volunteers and they acknowledged they had completed the survey, which was important because I wanted participants to be able to talk about the statements created using *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) and short answer questions from the survey. The interviews included two reading specialists who serve in a dual role (reading specialist and literacy coach), two literacy coaches and one reading specialist.

Procedure and Instrumentation

Direct data collection was used to obtain narrative-based information from SLPs about their roles and responsibilities (McMillan, 2021). The focus was to identify similarities and differences with SLPs perceptions regarding the recommendations outlined in *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) and the day-to-day roles and responsibilities of SLP work. In order to develop an accurate profile, three types of data were collected: survey responses, interview transcripts, and researcher memos.

Survey Responses

A performance analysis survey is most often used in the business world as a process of evaluation through which current performances are reviewed and compared to what organizations would like to see in worker performance (ClearPoint Strategy, 2020). This type of survey analysis allows for a systematic and systemic approach to identify gaps and barriers in workplace settings and leads to recommendation of intervention or support for improvement (Hoffman et al., 2020). Analysis results can assist with alignment of organization objectives and desired outcomes. Once identified, organizations can work to improve worker performance.

A performance analysis survey (Appendix B) was developed in an effort to obtain SLPs perspectives of *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018). This provided a systematic and systemic approach to identify similarities and differences between the suggested standards and the daily work of SLPs. The survey was comprised of three sections: performance analysis, short answer questions, and general demographics (Appendix B). RedCap was used to administer the survey. The first question asked participants to identify their role on an interval scale of 0 to 100, with 0 being mostly a reading/literacy specialist, 50 being reading literacy specialist/literacy coach (dual role), and 100 being a literacy coach. Participants indicated their role using an arrow to drag to the number that best represented their role. Almost all participants used the 25, 50, 75, or 100 marks on the scale, which made it easy to identify their specific roles.

Performance Analysis

The performance analysis section of the survey contained questions that focused on the ostensive and performative aspects of SLPs. The ostensive questions were developed based on the matrix components of *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018). The survey included Standards one through six (standard seven was not included because it pertains to practicum/field experiences). They were written as an ideal statement, including the phrase “The standard says...”. Performative questions were also developed based on matrix components, and included the phrase “In reality...”. Initially, I planned to ask each participant to rate both the ostensive statement and the performative statement to determine differences between what the standard expectations are as compared to the tasks SLPs perform on a daily basis. This was adapted based on feedback from pilot study participants and Division II requests to shorten the survey. Figure 5 shows a sample of the statement types.

Figure 5

Performance Analysis Survey Sample Statement

Standard 5: Professional Learning and Leadership

The standard says: I should provide professional learning to develop the literacy knowledge of teachers.

In reality: I provide professional learning to develop the literacy knowledge of teachers.

Thirty-five questions total were divided into standard groups. Each question included a Likert scale response to allow SLPs to identify their perceptions using the following terms: consistently 95-100%, quite frequently 84-94%, sometimes 50-83%, not usually 16-49%, rarely, if ever 0-15%. These terms and percentages were based on Kaufman's performance needs analysis research (2018) and developed with Dr. Adria Hoffman during a previous performance gap analysis study presented at the 2020 VASCD Conference (Hoffman et al., 2020). Methodological implications in the variation of ranges may have led participants to choose sometimes more frequently since it has the widest range, but this was not noticed in the survey results. Each question was analyzed to determine similarities and differences between the ostensive standard statement of "I should..." and the performative statement "In reality...". These personal perceptions are one part of the final analysis and helped to develop clarifying and extension questions for the interview protocol.

Short Answer Questions

The second part of the survey included five short answer questions. These questions asked SLPs to briefly describe their day-to-day work in their role, perceptions about making decisions regarding the role, perceptions regarding leadership opportunities, how a culture of literacy is developed in the school, and an open opportunity to share any other information.

These questions allowed participants the opportunity to share more specific information regarding their roles and responsibilities as an SLP.

Demographic Questions

The third part of the survey had five general demographic questions, including years in the role, age, race, ethnicity, and gender. Information was asked in order to better understand the background characteristics of the SLPs participating. This additional information added to the rich narrative profile and the interview protocol.

Focus Group Discussions become Individual Interviews

SLPs had the opportunity to volunteer to participate in a focus group discussion. Unfortunately, only one participant indicated interest in participating in the focus group discussion. After committee conversations and IRB approval, the focus group was shifted to individual interviews, using the same protocol questions in an effort to clarify and extend the initial information gathered (Appendix C). This is important for triangulation of the survey data with the interview results and my own notes and observations. Snowball sampling was implemented to obtain participants (Creswell, 2002). Five interviews were conducted via Zoom and recorded, which provided transcripts of the conversations. The transcripts were checked with the recordings for accuracy by the researcher, and shared with participants afterwards for accuracy of intent. All participants in interviews approved the transcripts. To protect anonymity, interview participants were assigned random pseudonyms in an effort to personalize their perceptions and were recorded as follows: Dana, who serves in a dual role (DR); Deb, who serves as a literacy coach (LC); Kaitlyn, who serves in a dual role (DR); Holly, who serves as a literacy coach (LC); and Jeanine, who serves as a reading specialist (RS).

Researcher Memos

Throughout the entire survey and interview analysis, I wrote memos. Maxwell (2013) states that “writing memos allows for reflective thinking to be caught on paper” (p. 21). Researchers need to write about their research and compile these writings in a systematic way. I wrote memos during each part of the process: during preparation for the IRB process and gaining access to the school divisions’ SLP staff, after survey data was collected and immediately following each interview. While my preference is to hand-write memos in a paper journal, for this research I kept a digital journal. These memos allowed me to analyze the content of each part of my research and offer a space for reflection. This allowed for tacking back and forth between the thoughts and ideas of the SLPs and my own thoughts and experiences as an SLP.

Pilot Study

A pilot study is a small-scale research project conducted to initially test whether the study is feasible (Maxwell, 2013). Since I developed my own performance analysis survey, I piloted the survey with a group of six volunteer SLPs from the same demographic region. I invited the same group to participate in a small focus group discussion using a sample protocol I developed based on pilot survey results. Conducting a pilot study allowed me to get necessary feedback regarding the survey directions and components, as well as practice the skills for successfully leading a focus group discussion. The pilot study addressed potential issues with the survey questions and protocol for the focus group. It helped me to realize that the initial survey was too long, taking over an hour for participants to complete. Simultaneous to the pilot study I was awaiting approval to conduct the survey in Divisions I and II. Division II requested that I shorten the survey because of length and the time it would take SLPs to complete. Listening to feedback

from both the pilot study participants and Division II, I altered the survey by combining like statements developed from the components of *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018). While still asked in an ostensive and performative manner, it shortened the survey considerably.

Data Collection and Timeline

A timeline was developed for the data collection and analysis of this study (Figure 6). After making survey changes based on pilot study participant feedback, three Richmond-area school divisions were contacted and asked to participate in the study. Two divisions responded by late July. Division I welcomed the study and allowed for exempt status provided the division remained anonymous and no students or parents participated. Division II had a much different process. After completing a lengthy application process, Division II requested the survey be altered to shorten the length of time SLPs would spend completing the survey. The research coordinator contacted me directly and asked me to combine standard statements, so that participants would be indicating their performance perceptions only, instead of responding to both the standard and the performance. This was consistent with feedback from the pilot study as well. After consulting with the methodologist on this study, we agreed that this would not change the desired results of the study going forward. The changes were made and the application was resubmitted to Division II. The revised survey was administered in both divisions.

Next, the IRB application was filed and approval was received in October. Both school divisions granted final approval, and surveys were administered during the month of November. Collected results were analyzed using an Excel spreadsheet to develop frequency distribution results for the statements as well as responses to the short answer questions. It was then that I realized that there was only one response for focus groups. After consulting with my advisor and

methodologist, it was determined that we submit an addendum to IRB to conduct individual interviews instead of focus groups, using a similar protocol adjusted for individual conversations. Once the amendment was approved in January, I moved forward to set up interviews. As previously stated in the participant section, the original volunteer did not respond; however, because of connections in both divisions, I was able to conduct two interviews with SLPs in Division I, and three interviews with SLPs in Division II during January. Each interview was conducted using Zoom, transcribed, and member checked for accuracy and intent. These transcriptions were also included in the Excel spreadsheet for analysis.

In February, I spent time triangulating the data compiled from surveys and individual interviews. This was an enormous task and I spent time in several Zoom conversations with the methodologist of this study to determine the best way to write about the data analyzed. In March and April, I wrote and revised the study results.

Figure 6

Study, Data Collection, and Analysis Timeline

Summer 2021	September-October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February-March 2022	End of April 2022
Pilot Study	IRB approval; school division acceptance	Survey collection	Analyze survey results; IRB amendment	Individual Interviews	Analyze interview data; Triangulate overall results	Present findings
	Ongoing: Memoing process					

Data Analysis

Grounded theory design requires researchers to look at all sources of data in order to look for themes and categories that emerge (Patton, 2002). In this direct data collection, I used multiple analyses to look for themes and categories. The survey was analyzed by downloading results from RedCap into an Excel spreadsheet, and conducting a frequency distribution analysis of the responses. Using performance analysis as a guide, I used the same response qualifiers, focusing on responses of “Consistently 95-100%” as a way to rank order responses to statements based on *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018), with those most closely aligned to the statement at the top. Once these items were rank ordered I divided the results in the chart into three sections based on alignment – top, middle, and lower alignment, to further show where each standard statement was in relation to the ostensive ideal.

To analyze the short answer questions on the survey, as well as the transcripts from the interviews, I used both deductive and inductive analysis to closely read data and develop codes based on SLP responses. Deductive analysis stemmed from the categories set forth in *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) as well as the conceptual framework. Inductive analysis stemmed from recurring statements from participants in the short answer responses and interview transcripts. They were developed based on frequency of topics shared by participants. Categories were developed based on codes with similar themes (McMillan, 2021; Maxwell, 2013). These themes were triangulated with survey responses and my own memos to create a rich narrative profile of SLPs.

Validity

By using a mixed methods approach, I counterbalanced flaws that might be inherent in a single method (Maxwell, 2013). Using an explanatory sequential design allowed for monitoring the connections between the two phases of the research - the performative survey and interviews (Zumbrunn & McMillan, 2021). It also allows for sequential validity - the interview protocol was developed using the responses of the performative survey. The triangulation of the survey results, interview transcripts, and my researcher memos assisted in developing the credibility of the study. This compilation of rich data reduces assumptions about the roles and responsibilities of SLPs.

The performative survey was pilot tested in an effort to establish reliability with the survey and avoid instrumentation threats to validity. This was important because it allowed me to see if the questions and statements on the survey made sense to the participants, or if questions could lead to biased answers. I was able to make changes based on pilot survey responses. The survey itself was not intended to be transferred or replicated beyond this study. The interview protocol was developed based on the original focus group discussion protocol, as well as short answer responses on the survey. This allowed for the development of a credible and dependable tool.

The Hawthorne effect is one threat to the external validity of this study, in that participants may alter their responses because they know they are being studied (McMillan, 2007). This could have happened during the both the survey completion and the interviews. I assured participants that the purpose of the study is to reflect on performance, not pass judgement on performance, in the introduction of the survey and interview protocol. This

allowed me to develop a rapport with the participants so they felt comfortable completing the survey and talking during the interview.

This research is not intended for generalization to a general population of SLPs, but rather to describe the profile of the SLPs in this metropolitan area. In an effort to manage sensitivity, only SLPs with designation as reading/literacy specialist or literacy coach were approached to complete this survey. Other reading professionals were not included at this time.

The total number of SLPs solicited from both school divisions was 84. Of those participants, 24 responded to the survey. This allowed for a 29% response rate to the survey. Since the average response rate benchmark for a cold email survey is 30% (Saleh & Bista, 2017), I determined I had received a good response to the survey. Only one participant elected to participate in focus group. Due to this, the focus groups were changed to interviews with an amendment to the IRB process. Over the course of the study, interview participants grew from one to five. Switching to individual interviews gave me the opportunity to speak one-on-one with participants who were invested in the project. Member checks were used with interview transcripts to allow participants the opportunity to provide feedback and clarification of researcher understandings. I would like to have had a larger response rate to both the survey and the request for focus groups/interviews; however, I know from my own experience as an SLP in a metropolitan public school division that the fall of 2021 was particularly hard for all educators due to prolonged fatigue from Covid-19 and the protocols and procedures required.

All performance analysis survey questions and interview protocol questions were carefully crafted to avoid inclusion of researcher bias. When crafting the statements on the survey, I focused on the *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) specifically, using the same word choice as

it is written in the standards. My subjectivity did not play a part in the standard statements; however, the open-ended questions where I asked about decision-making and leadership were derived from the literature review, but also my own work and influences as an SLP. While it is impossible to eliminate my own reactions completely (Maxwell, 2013), I attempted to refrain from making comments regarding my own personal experiences regarding the roles and responsibilities of SLPs, particularly during interviews. There was the potential for interview participants to react to questions in a certain way by telling me what they thought I wanted to hear. I tried to avoid this confirmation bias by looking closely and thoughtfully at all data collected. I also avoided probing with leading questions by having those probes predetermined, or consistent with the question I was asking from the protocol. In an effort to grow as a researcher, I enlisted the assistance of an expert reviewer to review the survey results, interview transcripts and the codes and notes that described them.

Chapter 4: RESULTS

The purpose for conducting this mixed-methods study was to develop a performance profile of SLPs' roles and responsibilities in their day-to-day work at the elementary level. By combining both quantitative and qualitative methods in an explanatory sequential design, I was able to triangulate multiple types of shared information from multiple-choice survey responses, short answer questions, demographic questions, interviews, and my own memoing process. This research describes how SLPs align their daily roles and responsibilities to *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) as well as their perceptions of their involvement in decision-making and leadership opportunities. The data were collected over a four-month period from October 2021 to February 2022. This section is organized to provide direct answers to the research questions presented in this study.

The data collection tools used in this research generated responses that provided a rich and extensive body of data. A survey was conducted to provide participants the opportunity to react to the ostensive standards of SLPs by responding to the performative daily tasks. This allowed me to see how the day-to-day roles and responsibilities aligned to *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) which provided a deeper understanding as to who serves in the roles designated by the SLP definition, as well as some specific information about their individual experiences within their role. Five participants who completed the survey agreed to participate in interviews. These interviews were critical because they allowed me to listen to each participants' voice and story. Finally, I recorded my own thoughts and reflections of this process in a collection of memos. By triangulating the information gained from the survey, the interviews, and the memos, I was able

conduct reflective analysis that allowed me to not only hear the signal from my research, but also support that signal with the voices from real-life experiences of SLPs.

Description of Participants

There were twenty-four participants (n=24) who completed the survey for a 29% response rate out of 84 possible participants. Of those participants, thirteen answered all questions (54%), six answered all multiple-choice questions and no short answer questions (25%), and five answered at least 75% of the multiple-choice questions and no short answer questions (20%). All participants indicated that they are active SLPs at the elementary level this school year. Participants identified themselves by the following roles: seven stated they were reading specialists, three stated they were literacy coaches, and eleven stated that they held both roles in one position. Three participants did not respond to the identification of roles; however, one participant did share in the short answer response section that she held the role of reading teacher, a differentiated role that is only for intervention support, and does not complete any of the assessment or diagnostic work of the reading specialist. It was confirmed that both divisions have this designated role of reading teacher and these teachers typically receive the same pay as a reading specialist or literacy coach. I included this participant's response because I thought it valuable to the study as a whole as the committee who proposed *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) did not include this role under the SLP umbrella. Five (21%) of the SLPs who completed the survey agreed to participate in one-on-one interviews.

Thirteen participants completed the demographic section of the survey. Concerning length of service in the role, six participants (46%) shared that they have held their current role

for 0-5 years, four (31%) have held their role for 6-10 years, and three (23%) have held their role for 11-20 years. No participants have served in the role for more than twenty years.

SLPs reported that six (25%) were between the ages of 41-50, five (21%) between the ages of 31-40, and one each (.04%) between the ages of 51-60 and 61-70. One participant (.04%) reported Hispanic/Latino/Spanish heritage. This participant also reported in the short answer section that she was from another country, but did not specify which country. All participants indicated that they are White/Caucasian and female (100%), including the one participant who reported Hispanic/Latino/Spanish heritage.

Performance Analysis

The purpose of the performance analysis survey was to obtain SLPs perceptions of *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) in order to compare the ostensive nature of the statements with the actual performance of SLPs to answer Research Question 1. This provided a systematic approach to identify similarities and differences between the suggested standards and the daily work of SLPs.

Multiple Choice Survey Results

Participants chose a response to each statement that most aligned with their day-to-day work as an SLP. The results were analyzed to determine frequency of performance for each standard statement.

Frequency of “Consistently”

Participants could choose between five Likert-style responses to the multiple-choice questions on the survey: Consistently (95-100%), Quite Frequently (84-94%), Sometimes (50-

83%), Not Usually (15-49%), and Rarely, If Ever (0-15%). In an effort to look at the ostensive nature of the standards, I focused specifically on the responses for “Consistently” because those responses would be most closely aligned to the standard statements presented in the survey. Then I rank ordered the results from most to least aligned. Table 3 includes the survey statements developed from the matrix components for each standard, the percent of alignment to “consistently,” and the standard titles.

In an effort to systematically analyze the frequency data presented, I reflected on the rank-ordered data in three ways: top alignment, where frequency of “consistently” was 70% or above; middle alignment, where frequency of “consistently” was between 50-69.9%; and lower alignment, where frequency of “consistently” was 49.9% or below. I chose to divide the data in this way because I did not want to create confusion with the Likert-style survey response percentages and the frequency of “consistently” percentages presented in Table 3. I did use the percentages 70 and 50 as points for division based on previous educational survey work conducted (Hoffman et al., 2020) and the mean of frequency of “consistently” determined (66.7). This created three distinct areas for discussion. In addition, I used the short answer and interview responses to support the frequency of “consistently” and to develop a descriptive narrative of the SLPs to answer Research Question 3.

TABLE 3*Performance Analysis: Frequency of “Consistently”*

Rank	Survey Statements from Matrix Components	Alignment	Standard Title
1	SLPs demonstrate foundational knowledge of literacy for learning to read (concepts of word and print, phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension).	100	Foundational Knowledge
2	SLPs foster a positive literacy culture within school.	93.8	Learners & the Literacy Environment
4	SLPs use curriculum and instructional methods to meet the literacy needs of all learners.	83.4	Curriculum & Instruction
5	SLPs engage in systematic, reflective literacy practices.	82.4	Professional Learning & Leadership
6	SLPs advocate for literacy and language instructional decisions based on assessments and students' needs.	82.3	Assessment & Evaluation
7	SLPs design, implement, and evaluate direct, explicit literacy instruction for students who need intense support.	81.3	Learners & the Literacy Environment
8	SLPs demonstrate foundational knowledge of writing development, writing processes (revising, audience, etc.) and writing skills (spelling, sentence construction, word processing, etc.).	78.9	Foundational Knowledge
9	SLPs collaborate with teachers and administrators to develop school-wide vision and goals for the literacy program.	76.4	Curriculum & Instruction
10	SLPs design, implement, and evaluate literacy small group instruction/intervention.	75.1	Learners & the Literacy Environment
11	SLPs implement culturally responsive pedagogy through equitable and diverse literacy practices and processes.	75.1	Diversity and Equity
12	SLPs enhance the classroom teachers' understanding of literacy intervention.	72.2	Curriculum & Instruction
13	SLPs collaborate with teachers to design, implement, and evaluate literacy curriculum and instructional practices.	70.6	Curriculum & Instruction

TABLE 3

(continued)

Rank	Survey Statements from Matrix Components	Alignment	Standard Title
14	SLPs advocate for a school-wide culture of literacy.	68.8	Learners & the Literacy Environment Professional Learning & Leadership
15	SLPs recognize their own cultural background and the impact it has on their own literacy development.	68.8	Diversity and Equity
16	SLPs recognize the cultural backgrounds of all school stakeholders and the impact they have on literacy development.	68.8	Diversity and Equity
17	SLPs provide professional learning to develop the literacy knowledge of teachers.	66.7	Professional Learning & Leadership
18	SLPs support the development of classroom teachers' instructional decision-making for literacy.	66.7	Curriculum & Instruction
19	SLPs demonstrate knowledge of diverse learners to support teachers' instruction of literacy and language (special education, English Speakers of Other Languages, gifted education).	66.6	Learners & the Literacy Environment
20	SLPs advocate for evidence-based and appropriate literacy practices and policies.	62.6	Professional Learning & Leadership
21	SLPs support teachers as they design, implement, and evaluate literacy small group instruction.	62.5	Learners & the Literacy Environment
22	SLPs model problem-solving skills with regards to instructional decision-making for literacy.	61.1	Professional Learning & Leadership
23	SLPs use literacy coaching tools and processes (modeling, problem solving, observation-feedback cycles, co-teaching, etc.) to support literacy and language learning for teachers.	56.3	Foundational Knowledge & Professional Learning & Leadership

TABLE 3

(continued)

Rank	Survey Statements from Matrix Components	Alignment	Standard Title
24	SLPs support the development of classroom teachers' knowledge of literacy assessments.	55.5	Assessment & Evaluation
25	SLPs collaborate with teachers and administrators to align the literacy vision and goals to district pacing and state Standards of Learning.	52.9	Curriculum & Instruction
26	SLPs collaborate with teachers and administrators to develop a physically and socially literacy-rich environment.	52.9	Learners & the Literacy Environment
27	SLPs advocate for literacy equity on behalf of students, teachers, families, and the community.	50	Diversity and Equity
28	SLPs collaborate with teachers to design, implement, and analyze literacy assessments.	47.1	Assessment & Evaluation
29	SLPs collaborate with administrators to design, implement, and evaluate literacy curriculum, instructional practices, and assessments.	47	Assessment & Evaluation
30	SLPs guide teachers to reflect on their own literacy practices.	47	Foundational Knowledge & Curriculum & Instruction
31	SLPs provide literacy coaching for teachers to improve literacy and language learning for students.	46.7	Curriculum & Instruction
32	SLPs demonstrate understanding and implementation of adult learning methods to support literacy learning for teachers and administrators.	43.8	Professional Learning & Leadership & Foundational Knowledge
33	SLPs model connections for literacy through cross-curricular and content area integration.	38.9	Curriculum & Instruction

TABLE 3

(continued)

Rank	Survey Statements from Matrix Components	Alignment	Standard Title
34	SLPs model the interrelation between literacy and language acquisition.	33.3	Foundational Knowledge
35	SLPs design, implement, and evaluate classroom literacy instruction.	25	Curriculum & Instruction

Top Alignment. In this section, 37.4% of responses were 70% or above. Top alignment included at least one representation of each of the six standards represented in the survey. The following are the highest responses for statements represented.

Standard 1-Foundational Knowledge. Two of the three most aligned statements were Foundational Knowledge components that read:

- *SLPs demonstrate foundational knowledge of literacy for learning to read (concepts of word and print, phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension).* (100%)
- *SLPs demonstrate foundational knowledge of language acquisition (speaking, listening, viewing, and visually representing).* (85%)

All participants agreed that this standard is a major part of their role as an SLP. It defines their own perceptions of their role and responsibilities, which helps to answer Research Question 2.a. The foundational knowledge for serving in an SLP role is primarily gained through degree programs or endorsement and further deepens teacher understanding about the theoretical, historical, and evidence-based foundations of literacy and language (*Standards 2017, 2018, p. 9*).

This was reinforced through short answer responses, where SLPs noted that intervention (small group or one-on-one) with students required a firm foundation and flexibility to shift from one instructional strategy to another, specifically during Tier II or Tier III interventions. SLPs also noted that they use this knowledge to problem solve and support teachers who have struggling students at Tier I by meeting with them to discuss concerns, share new strategies to try in class, meet with parents, or, in some cases, co-develop a referral to a child study committee for further evaluation. SLPs participating in interviews spoke fondly of the graduate school programs they attended and how these programs really helped them to develop as a specialist. It was noted by the interview group that most programs focused on the work of an interventionist, and while literacy coaching was a part of the core curriculum of four of the programs described, it was practiced in only one or two classes, with a greater emphasis being on reading diagnosis and intervention. Three of the SLPs interviewed stated they learned the most about coaching by being a coach and learning on the job. One stated that her coaching experience developed as she participated in a clinical faculty program, where she learned how to complete a coaching cycle with teachers and learned specific coaching moves. Another commented that she learned the most about coaching from a mentor she was assigned when she started her dual role as a reading specialist and literacy coach. She shared that the mentor modeled and supported her own development, and it was in this way that she was able to use her own experiences to become a more active and comfortable coach.

Standard 5-The Literacy Environment. The second statement most aligned to the standards and the most frequently reported in the top 25% of all statements was part of the Learners and Literacy Environment matrix component:

- *SLPs foster a positive literacy culture within school. (93.8%)*

Since this component addresses the environment, I will begin with the second part of the standard first. This standard includes the literacy environment in an effort to develop a positive, literacy-rich climate and culture within the school (*Standards 2017, 2018, p. 10*). It encourages SLPs to provide a safe and caring climate where all students can learn. This aligns strongly with the short answer responses to the question “In what ways do you develop a culture of literacy at your school?” SLPs responded that demonstrating a love of reading is the best first step to getting students excited about reading themselves. SLPs work with teachers to develop school resources that support new strategy or curriculum development, which in turn engages students in more reading. They noted that they work to make reading more than just a subject, where it can stand out as a vital and positive part of each students’ day-to-day learning. Both reading specialists and literacy coaches noted that the best way to develop a culture of literacy in a school is to develop reading programming that gets students excited about reading. This is developed through collaboration with teachers and the librarian. The acknowledgement of this programming was a loud signal shared by most participants for ways to develop literacy culture. The following table highlights activities suggested by SLPs in the short answer responses and interviews.

TABLE 4*Reading Programming to Develop a Culture of Literacy*

Who?	What?
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Month activities (One School, One Book; author study; book tournament; author visits) • “Reading Lunches” where students gather during their lunch to discuss a book or hear book talks • Specialty book clubs around a specific topic or interest • Book trivia, poster, or bookmark contests • Literacy Challenges (Million Page Challenge; Winter Reading Bingo; Summer Reading Genre Passport) • Reading Spirit Days (Read My Shirt day, book character day) • Guest/Mystery Readers
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read aloud to classes • Collaboration with classroom teachers to organize book clubs • Collaboration with other teachers (librarian for summer reading or book fair; art teacher for illustrator study; ITRT for digital book making)
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletter with reading activities for home • Winter/Summer Reading Programs/Challenges • Parent workshops that focus on reading strategies • PTA nights to celebrate school-wide reading programming (like reading or poetry month, or Read Across America week) • Virtual events

Standard 5-The Learner. The other part of Standard 5 focuses on the learner. With an environment in place that will foster reading development for all students, SLPs should focus on the learner - the heart of all teaching. Statements about this part of the standard included:

- *SLPs design, implement, and evaluate direct, explicit literacy instruction for students who need intense support. (81.3%)*

- *SLPs design, implement, and evaluate literacy small group instruction/intervention.*
(75.1%)

SLPs are required to recognize and meet the developmental needs of all learners, including learners who struggle, learners who are learning English as a second language, and gifted learners. This requires an SLP to be responsive and flexible to those needs by using a variety of print and digital materials in an effort to engage and motivate learners (*Standards 2017, 2018, p. 10*). Undergraduate degree programs set the stage through child development coursework prior to SLPs furthering their knowledge through developmental reading and writing study in graduate programs. Many study participants cited learning about Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD; Vygotsky, 1962) as the foundation for knowing learners. SLPs begin reading instruction through observation and assessment and are able to determine what a struggling (striving) reader needs to become a fluent reader. SLPs noted that providing intense support, sometimes daily or one-on-one is necessary to meet a student where they are and move them forward. All reading specialists completing both survey responses and interviews stated that knowing a student's ZPD was critical in determining what type of reading intervention they would provide. Mostly this intervention is in small groups pulled out of the classroom where special attention can be given to the development of phonological awareness, decoding and strategy work, word work, fluency, and comprehension. It was noted by four reading specialists that have literacy coaches in their schools that because of Covid-19 impacting student growth in reading, even the literacy coaches are pulling groups of students to assist in lessening the gaps in reading development. One SLP who serves in both roles noted that she "has to problem solve almost constantly to meet her students' learning needs." This problem solving is often trial and error, and she shared that "no one program, whether it is developed by me or a scripted program

targeting a specific skill set works for every child.” This highlights the SLPs perception of roles and responsibilities and helps to answer Research Question 2 overall.

Standard 2-Curriculum and Instruction. While the components that were the most consistently aligned with the standards were Foundational Knowledge and the Learners and Learning Environment, the most frequent standard included was Curriculum and Instruction. The application of foundational knowledge used to design, implement, and evaluate evidence-based literacy instruction is at the heart of curriculum and instruction development (*Standards 2017, 2018, p. 9*). Statements in the survey about this standard included:

- *SLPs use curriculum and instructional methods to meet the literacy needs of all learners. (83.4%)*
- *SLPs collaborate with teachers and administrators to develop school-wide vision and goals for the literacy program. (76.4%)*
- *SLPs enhance the classroom teachers' understanding of literacy intervention. (72.2%)*
- *SLPs collaborate with teachers to design, implement, and evaluate literacy curriculum and instructional practices. (70.6%)*

While this standard is focused on “what” is taught through curriculum and instructional decision-making, it also includes “who” is affected, including all learners, teachers, and administrators. As stated previously concerning learners and the learning environment, both reading specialists and literacy coaches indicated that they use observations and assessments to determine what students need to improve reading ability. These methods may be adapted by using parts from multiple evidenced-based literacy research or programs available in schools.

Another important word included in the responses was *collaborate*. Most of the responses that indicated collaboration by SLPs were from those who serve in a dual role (both specialist and coach) or by literacy coaches. These SLPs noted in the short answer and interview responses that spending time planning with teachers was critical to school-wide implementation of new programs, ongoing professional learning, or co-planning small group reading and writing instruction. Some collaboration takes place during specific meetings with teachers and administrators, like school improvement team meetings where mission, vision, and goals are determined for the school, often with a reading focus. It was also noted that collaboration is critical as schools move toward professional learning community frameworks, where teachers and administrators gather to look at data and make instructional decisions based on data and results. SLPs having a voice during collaborative work sessions like these demonstrates the importance of the inclusion of SLPs in the decision-making process of curriculum and instruction. It also highlights others perceptions of their role within the school framework. This knowledge provides implications for future research.

Through this curriculum and instruction standard, SLPs support teachers' literacy intervention efforts in the classroom (Tier I). The standard suggests that SLPs often meet with teachers to problem solve when students struggle with reading, or to discuss specific concerns about students' reading progress. Reading specialists reported that they were often asked by administrators how to improve first instruction so that students did not need to receive intervention. Specifically, for reading specialists, it would be complicated to address these questions without first being with teachers to plan and watch the delivery of instruction. Those serving in a dual role may have the opportunities to do this type of support for teachers, but mostly it is the literacy coach who is able to do this work. During an interview, one literacy

coach shared that “being able to complete full coaching cycles with teachers helps them to improve their initial instructional practices, and give them the ability to focus on areas of student need they may not see otherwise.” This view of her role shows the impact she has on the classroom teacher’s own practice.

Middle Alignment. Initially, I was only going to focus on the top and lower alignment areas of the standards, because I knew that showing the opposite ends of how SLPs perceive the standards and their work would tell a story. However, I decided to share some of the findings from those component statements that ended up in the middle of the consistency table because almost a majority of responses (47%) fell in this range.

Standard 6-Professional Learning and Leadership. This standard calls SLPs to not only be life-long learners of literacy practices, but to facilitate those same practices in others through on-going professional learning and leadership (*Standards 2017, 2018, p. 10*). The statements regarding professional learning and leadership are as follows:

- *SLPs advocate for a school-wide culture of literacy. (68.8%)*
- *SLPs provide professional learning to develop the literacy knowledge of teachers. (66.7%)*
- *SLPs advocate for evidence-based and appropriate literacy practices and policies (62.6%)*
- *SLPs model problem-solving skills with regards to instructional decision-making for literacy. (61.1%)*

- *SLPs use literacy coaching tools and processes (modeling, problem solving, observation-feedback cycles, co-teaching, etc.) to support literacy and language learning for teachers. (56.3%)*

SLPs who serve in dual roles or as literacy coaches stated that they are seen as leaders in their schools because they work to support instructional decisions regarding reading and other literacy activities. They are often asked to provide insight about reading topics and lead professional learning to introduce new curriculum or assessments. These SLPs noted that they perceive themselves as an integral part of the school community, that teachers and administrators value their role and work. One SLP in a dual role said, “I have endless leadership opportunities at my school for making decisions, leading PLC work, managing PALS tutors, and data analysis.” The reading specialists did not report as many opportunities for leadership, and one even stated, “I don’t necessarily pursue leadership opportunities because I prefer doing intervention with the students.” This is reflective of SLPs perceptions being different based on their role, and provides some insight for Research Questions 2.b and 2.c.

Another important word seen here within these standards is the use of the word *advocate*. In short, answer questions and interviews alike, all SLPs said that advocacy was something that was not a regular part of their role or responsibility. Advocating for a school-wide culture of literacy or for evidence-based practices and policies seems like a natural part of the role, but it is not for SLPs in Divisions I and II. During interviews, one SLP in a dual role said that “advocating for students is something I do all the time, but not for programs or policies.” A literacy coach added, “I would advocate for evidence-based practices over the science of reading as a stand-alone practice, but where would I say it and who would listen?”

Standard 4-Diversity and Equity. This standard was present in all three alignment areas, but the majority of statements (60%) landed in the middle. Although *Standards 2017* were published in 2018 by ILA, the terms “diversity and equity” have moved to the forefront through racial unrest nationwide, with a slightly different connotation than typically thought of concerning literacy education. As defined by the ILA, SLPs should demonstrate knowledge of the essential concepts of diversity and equity as understanding students’ identities, creating classrooms that are “affirming and inclusive, and advocate for equity at all levels” (*Standards 2017*, 2018, p. 9). Statements in the survey about this standard included:

- *SLPs recognize their own cultural background and the impact it has on their own literacy development. (68.8%)*
- *SLPs recognize the cultural backgrounds of all school stakeholders and the impact they have on literacy development. (68.8%)*
- *SLPs advocate for literacy equity on behalf of students, teachers, families, and the community. (50%)*

Even being in the middle alignment according to the data, the percentages for diversity and equity are still high. SLPs are aware of the impact of culture to learners and learning, including their place in their own culture. One area where this was evident in short answer responses was with regards to selecting text for students or teachers to use in the classroom. Specifically, SLPs stated: “I advocate for more diverse books and understand the importance of all of our students being able to see themselves in text” and “I have made a tremendous effort to include diverse texts and am incorporating them within pacing/lesson plans.” This awareness of “self in text” demonstrates the relevance and sensitivity given to these students by SLPs. In addition, SLPs

noted that by meeting students where they are as literacy learners in all areas of education (regular education, special education, gifted education, and English for Speakers of other Languages) they are able to provide equitable learning opportunities.

Lower Alignment. The statements below 50% of SLPs responses represent all six standards included in *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018). For some it seems unusual that they are not more consistently recognized as part of the role or responsibilities of an SLP, particularly since there are multiple representations in short answer and interview responses. In some cases, however, it makes sense as to why they are not consistently engaged in this work.

Standard 3-Assessment and Evaluation. This standard focuses on the SLPs ability to screen, diagnose, and measure student literacy achievement in an effort to explain assessment results and suggest relevant practices to support that achievement (*Standards 2017*, 2018, p. 9). The statements noted below are not the lowest, but SLPs reported that they focus more on instruction than time engaged in assessment.

- *SLPs collaborate with teachers to design, implement, and analyze literacy assessments.* (47.1%)
- *SLPs collaborate with administrators to design, implement, and evaluate literacy curriculum, instructional practices, and assessments.* (47%)

These statements from the survey both focus on designing and implementing assessments, and collaborating with teachers and administrators to do so. SLPs reflected on their role in assessment analysis in both the short answers and in interviews and the different ways in which they collaborate with teachers and administrators. Evidence of these collaborations is noted in

Table 5, along with the specific roles (RLS – reading/literacy specialist; Dual – both roles; LC – literacy coach).

TABLE 5

Assessment and Evaluation Collaboration by Role

Collaborations with Teachers	Collaborations with Administrators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support teachers in implementing and analyzing reading assessments. (Dual) • Meet with teachers to develop assessments. (Dual) • Look at data on my own or with a reading coach in my building. (RLS) • One day a week I meet with all grade levels to look at data. (LC) • I meet with teachers to look at running record data, particularly MSV notations to determine next steps for students at the guided reading table. (LC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with administration to develop a plan for progress monitoring of student progress. (Dual) • Closely work with administration to implement new assessment procedures and work with teachers to complete assessments. (Dual) • Look at data with administration to target areas of need for students and teachers. (LC) • Use data to determine school goals for school improvement. (LC) • I work with PLC teams, including administration, to analyze data and determine next steps. (LC)

It is important to note the distribution of the roles, for all roles of SLPs are represented in these collaborations with both teachers and administrators. Because it was so frequently mentioned, it is unusual that SLPs did not rank collaboration with a higher consistency. During interviews, I asked a question to clarify why this might not be ranked as high. One response from a literacy coach noted:

I typically work with data at specific times during the year, like during county assessment windows when the testing is more formal. I don't typically work with teachers to analyze

formative assessments like running records. So perhaps it wasn't selected as 'consistently' because it only happens at certain times of the year, not all the time.

An SLP in a dual role shared:

I am often asked about formative assessments by teachers, because they want to know how to support students during the next day. These are informal, so I may have not marked it as 'consistently' because they are not our actual data meetings.

While these interpretations may account for the reasons behind the lower rank of "consistently," SLPs did share that assessment was critical to the overall understanding of student needs and planning for instruction, and that they do engage in the practice of assessment analysis in different ways.

Standard 2-Curriculum and Instruction. Two of the lowest scoring statements from the survey dealt with curriculum and instruction. Even though this standard was included as one of the higher represented consistencies in top alignment, it is also one of the lowest represented in the survey data:

- *SLPs model connections for literacy through cross-curricular and content area integration. (38.9%)*
- *SLPs design, implement, and evaluate classroom literacy instruction. (25%)*

Nowhere in short answer or interview responses did any SLP mention helping teachers integrate literacy in other subjects or provide support for cross-curricular planning. While SLPs know students use literacy when reading and writing in social studies, science, and even math, this was not mentioned as part of the day-to-day work of SLPs. Integration was only discussed through

the lens of the reading/language arts block. Additionally, when asked why they thought the consistency response for designing, implementing, and evaluating classroom literacy instruction was the lowest at 25%, SLPs responded unanimously that they do not evaluate instruction. Administrators handle evaluation. However, one SLP who serves as both reading specialist and literacy coach shared:

My principal would often assign me to teachers who might need help (or were on an improvement plan) which was hard. There was a gray area between supporter and evaluator. I think teachers were confused, I don't think the role was explained well when the coaching role began.

This creates a tension with faculty, as the dual literacy professional may now be seen in an evaluative light, as well as tension for the SLP who is torn between the two roles. As for designing and implementing classroom literacy instruction, two SLPs reflected that it may have been taken literally - that they thought the question meant “in your classroom” instead of collaborating with a teacher in their instructional space.

Summary of Performance Analysis

This survey was developed to gain insight to the day-to-day roles and responsibilities of SLPs as compared to the recommended *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018). This is important to note because while the standards were developed as a guide for preparation of SLPs in various roles, many SLPs are unaware of their existence because they have held the role since before the adoption of the standards. It is also important because many school divisions across the country are now starting to consider using *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) as a way to measure and evaluate the work of SLPs. The survey raised SLPs awareness of the standards and what they suggest. By

using the language from the standards, I was able to gain a frequency of “consistently” concerning roles and responsibilities by SLPs. While SLPs may not know the specifics regarding the standards, they are aware and are prepared to do this work through their foundational knowledge of instruction and of learners as seen in the top alignment responses to the survey.

It is also important to make note of another critical part of the survey - the roles as defined by the participants. Participants identified themselves as reading specialists, literacy coaches, and dual (both reading specialist and literacy coach). One participant identified as a reading teacher. When the performance analysis was dissected further by role, over 50.1% of “consistently” ratings come from those SLPs who hold a dual role. This makes sense, as they are more likely to work with both students and teachers. This is also a strong indication that many schools in these divisions rely on the expertise of one person in the role of SLP as opposed to separate roles. However, as we will see in responses from participants, this is not always a positive decision.

Thematic Analysis

In addition to the systematic analysis of the survey statements and their rank scores of “consistently” as compared to the standards, I conducted a thematic analysis of the short answer and interview responses. Through the process of determining topics and emic categories for both sets of qualitative data, I was able to triangulate and support the survey statements in the performance analysis section. The emic categories also allowed me to develop specific themes about the SLPs responses that would not have surfaced by looking at the multiple-choice survey responses alone.

Theme I: Reception versus Perception

I am well received by teachers, students, and parents. They appreciate what I do as a reading specialist.

(Jeanine, Reading Specialist)

In both the survey short answer responses and the individual interviews, participants were asked, “How do you perceive your role and responsibilities?” and “What other perceptions can you share?” Responses most often started with “I am received well by my faculty...” instead of “Teachers perceive me as....” As stated by Jeanine (RS), “I am well received by teachers, students, and parents. They appreciate what I do as a reading specialist.” During interviews, I had the opportunity to clarify this by probing further.

Teachers spoke of reception as how they were welcomed into the classroom each day. They spoke of feeling a part of the class or team. While this is positive, it does not quite reach the level of interpretation necessary for it to be a perception of self or by others. When asked to clarify, Jeanine (RS) shared:

I have been here so long I might be perceived as a table! No, really, I have been here a while, so it's hard to think of how I may be perceived. Teachers want certain students to work with me, because they have seen students make progress when working with me. I think teachers perceive me as a helper - they know I can help their students.

By having Jeanine (RS) and others restate their role through their own perceptions or the perceptions of others, they were able to take a moment to think deeply about what the role really

means and what it looks like to others. Participants could make interpretations of what their role and responsibilities look like to others.

Dana, an SLP who serves in a dual role (both reading specialist and literacy coach - DR), shared insight about what teachers think about her roles and responsibilities:

I think they perceive me more as an interventionist than a coach, even though I'm supposed to do the role 50/50. And honestly, maybe it's more that they receive me in a positive way (friendly, helpful) but don't necessarily solicit 'coaching.'

This seems to indicate that Dana (DR) is experiencing what many SLPs referred to as 'role confusion.' She was not always in a dual role - she started her work as an SLP as a reading specialist, before the literacy coach role was added on to her responsibilities. By being in the same school with a new role definition, Dana (DR) has experienced role confusion. She shared that even her administration (sometimes) did not fully understand the dual role. Instead of having teachers solicit coaching, Dana's principal asked her to work with teachers who needed "being fixed" concerning instructional planning and delivery. One teacher in particular was in jeopardy of being placed on an improvement plan. Other teachers see this, so their perception of Dana's role as coach becomes negative. Teachers expected her to evaluate and report their work, so they would not solicit her help as a coach. She shared that she had to work extra hard to win back the confidence of teachers in her building, which created a sense of tension for the multiplicity of her role. This further shows how Research Question 2 overall is supported by participant responses.

Holly, an SLP who serves as a recently new literacy coach (LC), focused on her perceptions of being a leader. She reflects on her ability and effectiveness as a coach to provide her those same skills when it comes to being a leader in her school and division.

I think my own perceptions of my role as a leader are continuously developing. While I think I am perceived as a leader in my school and division, I think part of that is the role itself - being a coach. I don't think I've developed total confidence in my leadership abilities, but I do think I'm good at coaching.

She sees the roles of coach and leader as being intertwined and critical to the overall growth of the school itself. By developing positive coaching relationships with teachers, Holly (LC) is better able to address many different types of needs, from modeling to co-teaching to having conversations about students who are struggling, even though she is not providing the intervention. Holly's perceptions of her role of coach and leader are built on trust. This provides more insight to leadership opportunity in Research Question 2.c.

Deb, a long-time literacy coach (LC), believes her perceptions are built on the support she provides teachers and administrators.

I am perceived as a support for all: I provide resources, lead professional development and professional learning communities, work with teachers when asked, model instructional practices, and work with administration on school improvement plans.

As Deb (LC) coaches teachers in new practices, she scaffolds support for teachers just like she would students. She shared that she spent some time in her coach preparation studying adult learning theory, and that she knows that providing professional development in a "one and done" format does not work. New methods have to be practiced over time, and Deb (LC) is willing to put the time into the work so that students will benefit from the support she provides teachers. Deb (LC) knows she is valued and the work she does is valued through her perceptions of her colleagues' perceptions of her work, which supports Research Question 2.a.

Theme II: Role Complexity

In my role, I serve my school as a reading specialist doing intervention, and as a literacy coach doing PD, PLCs, ILTs, etc. It is hard to manage this role because you have daily intervention groups at the same time you are supposed to be working with teachers. It's hard. I would really rather do the intervention part and not be a coach, but it is now part of my role, so I do the best I can.

(Dana, Dual SLP)

When looking at the standards individually for reading/literacy specialists and literacy coaches, there are many overlaps to the definitions of responsibilities within the roles. There are some instances where the standards are more specific to work with students or teachers. Either way, when you put them altogether, it creates a complexity that is hard for even administrators to comprehend. When asked about the typical responsibilities in the life of a dual SLP, the attempt to balance both student and teacher support is evident. In Table 6, the typical responsibilities in the life of a dual SLP are noted. These responsibilities were reported through short answers responses on the survey, as well as through interviews. This really identifies the complexity of the dual role, and also highlights the tension between the reading/literacy specialist and literacy coach roles. This tension is noted within the expectations of teachers and administrators as well.

TABLE 6*Typical Responsibilities in the Life of a Dual SLP*

Work with Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervention with mostly K-5; sometimes a K-2 or 3-5 focus • Support small groups of students • Small groups meet daily for 20-30 minutes • Group numbers are typically 8-10 groups per day • Demonstrate a love of reading (or writing) • Develop literacy events (reading month/night, character day, schedule author visits, workshops for parents, etc.)
Work with Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend planning sessions 1-2 days a week to assist with curriculum/instructional planning • Provide teachers with instructional resources • Problem solve when students struggle in class. • Implement and analyze reading assessments. • Model/co-teaching/coaching cycle • Develop literacy events • Develop and lead professional learning (workshops, on-going initiatives, book study) • Member of School Improvement or PLC teams • Coach new teachers or those who need support
Work with Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strong literacy culture within the school • Develop literacy events • Analyze reading/writing assessment data • Member of School Improvement or PLC teams • Attend division-wide meetings for new initiatives or to discuss school data

Table 6 shows the complexities of the role and responsibilities, providing more support for Research Question 2. Dual SLPs noted in their short answer and interview responses that they are often overwhelmed by the amount of responsibility required by their role. This responsibility is heavily laden by developing relationships with everyone in the building: all students, staff, and administrators require support in some way, whether through intervention, enrichment, planning, instruction, or building a culture of literacy. The tension created by this duality is palpable. In the

previous chart, dual SLPs work with students in Tier II or III supports about 80% of the time, and the rest of their time at school is divided between teachers and/or administrators and their own planning for lessons or professional learning. When asked if participants would like to share anything else about their role, dual SLPs shared that time is a critical concern. In their words:

- “Being an intervention provider and literacy leader literally requires more time than available in my schedule.”
- “I have little time during my day to do much else other than see students. I have a part-time PALS tutor and that is it besides me to service our students. I occasionally lead/participate in PLCs, but it’s hard to do much more coaching than that.”
- “As a literacy specialist/coach, we wear many hats! There never seems to be enough time in the day - I wish there was more than one literacy specialist at each school or that each school had a specialist and a coach.”

While not a management issue in these examples, these quotes indicate that it is the sheer lack of time that makes it difficult to complete all the responsibilities.

Another attribute contributing to role complexity is that study participants reported that while their role requires additional education, typically through a master’s degree or graduate endorsement program, SLPs receive a classroom teacher contract, and are paid the same amount as if they were a classroom teacher. They are not compensated for any of the extra leadership or administrative roles served.

I am considered a teacher and am paid on the teacher pay scale. I feel I should be compensated more for the many administrative jobs I do. I worked hard to get my degree while teaching full time, and while having a master’s degree raised my salary, I’m still paid a classroom teacher contract. (Deb, Dual SLP)

There is not a separate contract offered to specialists of any kind, including ESOL, teachers of the gifted, and some special education roles. Reading specialists, literacy coaches, and those who serve as dual SLPs are all paid the same as classroom teachers.

Despite the concerns about being overwhelmed in the role, as well as lack of time and funding, many dual SLPs find the complexities to be a positive challenge. Kaitlyn, who also serves in a dual role of both reading specialist and literacy coach (DR), talked about how finding balance between the roles on a daily basis is important to the quality of her work.

Because I am the reading specialist and the literacy coach, I had to find a balance between the roles. I worked with the staff to determine what supports both students and teachers needed, and we worked together to make it happen, so that I wasn't overloaded with one role or the other. I work with students three days and teachers two days so the support balances out and can be flexible if necessary.

Kaitlyn (DR) has taken it upon herself to collaborate with teachers and administrators to come up with a plan. Both groups know her roles and understand her responsibilities within each role, so they are better able to support her in her work. This highlights the importance of these responses concerning Research Question 2 overall.

Theme III: Role Autonomy

My role now is specifically to perform the duties of a literacy coach. I have a lot of autonomy to determine how I work each day. I feel like I have a voice in my school.

Deb (Literacy Coach)

These decisions can be divided into two groups: daily decisions and those decisions for the greater good of the school. For SLPs, daily decisions may include reading assessment

analysis, diagnosis of reading difficulties, book selection, resource development, professional learning planning, or even something as simple as to whether to move a student on or wait. These day-to-day decisions are just as important as those long-range decisions for the greater good of the school. Some of those decisions for SLPs may include school improvement planning or assisting teachers with Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound goal development (SMART Goals), reading event planning, or even grouping students for the next school year. Kaitlyn (DR) shared that she feels autonomous when making decisions at her school.

I feel like I am included 100% of the time in decision making, and for both my role and the responsibilities I have. My principal includes me in bigger picture decisions, like school improvement. I feel like I am part of a team.

Kaitlyn (DR) feels valued and a part of the whole school because the principal includes her in the decision-making process. Kaitlyn (DR) shared that she is trusted to make decisions because her principal and teachers know she is capable by the relationships she has built and the communication she has with colleagues. These perceptions highlight the importance of shared decision-making, supporting Research Question 2.b.

Autonomy is also be represented by leadership abilities, and the trust that school and division level colleagues have for SLPs who develop strong leadership skills. Four of five interview participants shared that they are “trusted” to perform in leadership roles. Examples of this trust from short answer responses include SLP participation in special education meetings, leading professional learning community sessions or parent workshops, or presenting school data at division level meetings or conferences outside the division. The fifth interview participant,

who serves in a reading specialist role only, said of her leadership that she was trusted to be a leader in her own classroom, making intervention decisions as necessary. Jeanine (RS) shared:

I work with teachers to decide which students receive intervention and at what level. I make my own schedule that matches teacher's literacy block times. I develop my own curriculum, based on what I know students need. In this way, I perceive myself as a leader in the classroom.

In this statement, Jeanine (RS) qualifies her autonomy through her own instructional decision-making and leadership of her classroom. This autonomy and trust support Research Question 2.c.

All five interview participants and most of the short answer responses did share a level of autonomy for their role and responsibilities. While each role (reading/literacy specialist and literacy coach) are defined separately in each school division, participants shared that the roles are flexible and that they are able to make decisions and hold leadership roles of their choice. This choice and voice afforded to SLPs really makes a difference in how they perceive their role, and how others perceive the work they do.

One area to note, however, is that all SLPs interviewed agreed that there was one area in which they did not have any decision-making autonomy or leadership, and that was concerning master schedule development. Often, administrators (mostly principals) put together the school master calendar. This painstaking process is often times reliant on itinerant teacher schedules or special programming. It must also accommodate the special educators' ability to provide services for students through push-in/pull-out programming. SLPs shared that typically, their schools have reading/language arts in the morning, while students are fresh. This works well for students and classroom teachers, until an SLP begins to develop an intervention schedule. If every grade

in the building has reading/language arts from 8:15-10:15, SLPs find it difficult to serve students and coach teachers simultaneously. Despite their strong sense of autonomy, three SLPs had something to say about master scheduling:

“The one area in which I did not have any inclusion was the creation of the master schedule. I have never been asked, although I certainly shared my thoughts.”

Kaitlyn (DR)

“The only other thing I can think of is that I'm not included in conversations regarding planning or ELA block arrangement (like the order of the block components). Those are determined by the principal when creating the master schedule.”

Dana (DR)

“I really wish that I had some voice in the master schedule planning for our school. Group times are ridiculous to manage because the schedule is all over the place.”

Jeanine (RS)

In addition to master schedule development, SLPs also said that creating classroom rolls would be an area where they wish they had voice. As they are in and out of classrooms, working with students in Tier II or III as well as teachers, SLPs are definitely knowledgeable and could offer critical information about grouping students or teacher placement. Kaitlyn shared that she was not included in the creation of classroom roles, stating, “I know how the kids should be grouped and which teachers have strengths to address students' needs. I wish I was consulted on that.”

It was surprising to hear the level of autonomy SLPs perceive through decision-making and leadership opportunities. SLPs in this study requested inclusion in master schedule and class roll development. Decision-making and leadership are addressed throughout *Standards 2017*

(ILA, 2018), and administrators have the ability to support SLPs through autonomy in these roles.

Overall Summary of Analysis

These data analyses used the triangulation of multiple-choice survey responses, short answer responses, and individual interviews, and I referred to memos created during the memoing process. As the results were systematically analyzed, SLPs perceptions of their roles and responsibilities emerged, including how they are perceived by others. The performance analysis allowed me to determine the similarities and differences between *Standards 2017* (ILA 2018) and the day-to-day performance of the role and responsibilities of SLPs, as supported by short answer and interview responses. The thematic analysis allowed me to dig deeper into the roles and responsibilities of SLPs by really listening to the short answer and interview responses. I determined through this analysis that the responses were consistent with each other, and that similar themes were evident throughout both. SLPs believe they are perceived as “hard-working and serious” and “seen as a professional.” Through a closer look at those perceptions, some SLPs surprised themselves by realizing just how valued and trusted they are in the school community. Though the roles and responsibilities are complex, particularly for those SLPs who serve in dual roles, they are still positive and willing to try to find the balance between the roles. Autonomy is helpful to building trust, as SLPs are able to have choice and voice in decision-making and leadership opportunities. Perhaps Kaitlyn (DR) said it best:

I feel for people who work in a profession and feel like they don't make a difference, but I don't feel like that at all! I know I make a difference every day in some way in my role. Considering the current state of education, I feel I am perceived as important because literacy permeates every single subject, every students' future.

Chapter 5: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The discussion that follows addresses the research questions outlined earlier in this study to confirm and support responses by SLPs. I also include a descriptive profile in two parts: the voices of the participants, as well as my own voice as an active SLP in a dual role. Finally, implications for further research are noted and recommendations are made based on study responses to *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018).

Discussion

The findings of this study provided perceptions describing what it is like to be an SLP at the elementary level in today's schools. The study was developed based on *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) and the perceptions of roles and responsibilities of SLPs. These perceptions were gained by participant reflection on their day-to-day work in the schools, as well as how they believe they are perceived by teachers and administrators who work with them.

Standards 2017 (ILA 2018) was developed to help college and university preparation programs understand and develop a curriculum based on the key components of the SLP role. Key shifts in role categories were made in an effort to better define the standards necessary for the preparation of those roles. Previously, reading professionals were defined as those who served in a reading specialist/literacy coach role. During the revision of the roles, the term "specialized literacy professional" was created to encompass three roles that are more specific: reading/literacy specialists, literacy coaches, and literacy coordinators/supervisors (not included in this study). This was done to separate the work of supporting students (reading/literacy specialists) and supporting teachers (literacy coaches). While both roles were identified by

participants in this research (seven and five respectively), the overwhelmingly reported role is one that holds duality - thirteen SLPs who serve as reading specialist and literacy coach simultaneously. ILA recognized that all roles are complex in nature and require SLPs to be “nimble” or flexible within the role; however, Division I and II still actively employ literacy professionals to serve in a dual role - a “dual SLP.” When hired for their positions, many served as reading specialists, and did not receive specific training for coaching. Over time, when it became evident that literacy coaching could influence student achievement, it was added on to the title, requiring reading/literacy specialists to serve in both roles. Both Divisions I and II have hired reading specialist-only/literacy coach-only positions. Responsibilities for these roles for both divisions participating in the study are provided upon hire, but each role has its own list of responsibilities listed separately - not as a dual role.

Research Questions

I organized the following discussion by research questions and supported with study data and the analysis of findings in Chapter Four. Consistency in alignment to *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) was established through a performative analysis of SLP responses to survey statements that highlighted the ostensive standards written as “I should...” and the performative standards written as “In reality...” Three themes emerged from the thematic analysis of this study, including: (a) reception versus perception of roles and responsibilities, (b) role complexity, and (c) role duality. I combined some research questions in an effort to make connections between performative and thematic analyses.

What are the differences between the Standards 2017 (ILA, 2018) (ostensive routines) and the performance (performative routines) of SLPs? Results from the study indicate that there are few differences between *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) and the daily performance of

SLPs. Based on frequency of “consistently” established in the performative analysis, SLPs had high consistency with the statements - 77% of statements were ranked at 50% or higher with regards to consistency. Most participants acknowledged that they were not aware of the new standards. Three participants indicated knowledge of the standards from their master’s program, and those were the standards from 2010. Despite lack of knowledge of the standards, SLPs noted that they did consistently use their “Foundational Knowledge” of literacy to guide their responsiveness of instruction with students. Reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing are the research and evidenced-based components of literacy that they felt the most comfortable with, specifically reading and phonological awareness. They shared that this firm foundation, along with their personal experiences in the classroom as a teacher and an SLP, gave them the confidence to make decisions about student learning, support classroom teachers’ Tier I instruction, and discuss assessment results with administration and parents. Most SLPs mentioned how important balanced literacy is in their development as an SLP, and raised questions about the “science of reading” approach. A few shared that a big shift in instructional practices might make them unprepared for supporting students and teachers in the future.

Another high-consistency standard was “Learners and the Literacy Environment.” SLPs shared they work towards developing a culture of literacy within the school by motivating students to read in a variety of ways, like reading month activities, reading challenges, and books clubs. Student engagement is critical in developing a culture of literacy, and participants noted that this coupled with a positive and safe reading environment helped them to develop strong reading programs in their schools. Participants did focus more on reading and less on writing or digital literacies concerning this standard. SLPs who are reading/literacy specialists shared more

about learners who need extra support for reading through Tier II or Tier III intervention and what those interventions may look like.

Even though “Curriculum and Instruction” was ranked higher in some parts of the survey, it was one of the least consistent standards concerning cross-curricular or integrated literacy with planning or instruction. SLPs shared that even though they collaborate often on reading and writing instruction, it does not usually include science, social studies, or math content. While many SLPs shared they participate or even lead professional learning communities (PLCs) in their school, there is no conversation of vertical alignment of curriculum and instruction to ensure teachers are understanding what students bring to the grade and where they should be prepared to go next.

Another area that ranked as one of the least consistent standards was “Diversity and Equity.” This standard states “all forms of diversity are acknowledged, respected, and valued in schools and society,” (*Standards 2017, 2018, p. 14*). The standard makes a call for teachers of literacy to advocate for disruption of inequality in the school and in the school community. SLPs shared that while they support devoting time to providing diverse texts that represent all learners, cultures, and nationalities, there was no mention of “advocacy for the development of curriculum, instruction, or social justice pedagogies” (*Standards 2017, 2018, p. 15*). Advocacy was discussed during several interviews, and SLPs shared that they advocate more for students, not necessarily programs. In the two divisions included in this study, it appears that SLPs have not had opportunities to advocate for marginalized students. Since *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) were published, much has changed in society that has created more opportunities for SLPs to have a voice for advocacy. In time, this may be reflected in the work they do, but at the moment, it is not consistently something SLPs volunteer for or are asked to do. As schools move away

from deficit-based thinking, SLPs have an opportunity to create a culture of literacy that “recognizes diversity, inclusivity, respect, and social justice” (*Standards 2017, 2018*, p. 15). By working with teachers and administrators, reading specialists and literacy coaches can advocate for a disruption in inequality.

How do SLPs perceive their role and responsibilities? How do they perceive others’ perceptions of their role and responsibilities? In the thematic analysis, attention was drawn to SLPs interesting substitution of “reception versus perception.” By probing further in interviews, I was able to discern that SLPs perceive their role and responsibilities as an important part of the overall functioning of the school community. Those who identified as a reading/literacy specialist shared that they perceive their role as mostly interventionist and helper - someone who works with students who struggle with reading, and helps students find strategies that work for them as readers. Those who serve as literacy coaches perceived their role supporter of teachers, someone whose responsibilities include initial and ongoing professional learning, data analysis, and developing curriculum and plans for lessons. Coaches shared that often they perceive their role as leader and coach as one in the same. Those who identified as a dual SLP (serving both interventionist and coach roles) perceived their role more as an interventionist, but that the coach role is starting to be recognized more through PLC work with teachers and administrators. Those in dual roles are often tasked with the complexities of all the responsibilities of both roles, which makes it difficult to do all parts of the role well.

In conversations with SLPs, it was evident that what their own perceptions of their roles and responsibilities and the perceptions of others are often different. This is sometimes based on lack of communication of the role by administration, or because an SLP who served in one role

(interventionist) was now being asked to serve in multiple roles (interventionist and coach). The reading/literacy specialists shared they perceived others perceptions of their role as mostly interventionist. Literacy coaches shared that often they were asked by teachers to pick up a group of students to work with, instead of inviting them to collaborate on instruction in the classroom, which shows teachers' perceptions of literacy coaches is the same as interventionists. Those SLPs in dual roles were mostly reading/literacy specialists first, then had the role of literacy coach added. They shared that teachers' perceptions of their work was still mostly intervention, with some beginning of the year professional learning thrown in-not necessarily viewed as a true coach. While *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) specifically identifies these roles as separate, there is still confusion in the complexity of those who serve a dual role.

How do they perceive their inclusion in the collaborative decision-making process?

Perceptions vary concerning inclusion in collaborative decision-making. Some SLPs in all roles are included in all decisions concerning literacy at the school level, especially concerning the school improvement process, student intervention, and assessment analysis. Two who identified as a reading/literacy specialist and reading interventionist stated they were not included in these types of decisions because their role is primarily that of intervention and supporting struggling readers. SLPs perceived their inclusion in the decision-making process as being part of the school team, an active faculty member who is valued for their knowledge and decisions regarding student progress. It was noted by SLPs in dual roles that making decisions often meant the one part of their role (intervention) relied on the other part of the role (coaching) to determine best practices for instruction. Overall, SLPs reported that in their respective roles they experienced a level of autonomy when it comes to making daily decisions regarding their work.

One area in which SLPs perceive exclusion from decision-making opportunities was in the areas of master schedule and class development. SLPs shared that they were never included in these important school decisions, despite the conflicts that establishing all literacy blocks at the same time affects special education and intervention scheduling. While SLPs, particularly those who serve as interventionists, know the students they support well, they are not asked for input into class role development.

How do they perceive their opportunities for leadership? Most SLPs perceive their opportunities for leadership as endless. The area where leadership was most often referred was that of professional opinion. All SLP role groups shared that they were often asked their professional opinion regarding student performance through the analysis of running records, placement or grouping of students, or inquiry of intervention supports in the classroom. Because their opinion was sought, SLPs felt valued as leaders in their schools.

Serving on school-wide professional learning communities (PLCs) was one way in which SLPs found opportunities for leadership. Much like communities of practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002), PLCs afford SLPs the opportunities to lead school improvement work, especially if school goals are connected to literacy. It is also an opportunity to lead specific professional learning for a grade-level or administrative team. This structure provides multiple opportunities for SLPs to serve as leaders. While reading/literacy specialists did not feel they had a part in collaborative decision-making or leadership, they did feel part of the PLC team.

To what extent are survey responses and interviews consistent? How do these consistencies support the development of a school-wide culture of literacy? In addition to the *frequency of consistency* demonstrated by SLPs in the performance analysis of the multiple-

choice component of the survey, there is a high level of consistency when comparing survey responses (short answer questions) with individual interview responses. In the survey, SLPs were asked to describe a typical day in their role, which was supported by responses to an interview question that asked, “How do you perceive your role and responsibilities as an SLP?” In both, SLPs shared they planned lessons for their groups or with teachers; conducted intervention groups or coaching sessions or both; supported teachers in implementing and analyzing assessments and data; participated in professional learning communities; and supporting teachers who have struggling students in their classrooms. The responsibilities noted are aligned to the specific components detailed in the matrices of roles in *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) including Foundational Knowledge, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment and Evaluation, Learners and the Literacy Environment, and Professional Learning and Leadership.

SLPs were also asked to reflect on decision-making and leadership opportunities in their roles. In both, SLPs shared that while there are job descriptions for reading/literacy specialists, literacy coaches, and reading teachers in both divisions, they had autonomy in their own buildings to make decisions as to what intervention or coaching looked like. This helped SLPs to feel like part of a team, valued and well-respected. Decision-making and leadership responsibilities are woven throughout *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) and these characteristics are a critical part of the success of each SLP role.

All SLPs shared in their short answer and interview responses that getting students engaged and excited about reading was important to establishing a reading culture. Creating a school-wide culture of literacy was important to all SLPs, and this was evident in reading programming developed by SLPs and shared in Table 4 (see Ch. 4, p. 65). Several noted the vital

role they play in the overall school community, and how in this role they feel responsible to make reading exciting for all students, not just those who may need extra support. Building this culture of literacy takes time, and SLPs in this study are vested in making it happen.

Study Limitations

Maxwell stated, “It is impossible to eliminate the researcher’s own beliefs and thoughts,” (p.64); however, my positionality as a specialized literacy professional could be a weakness of this explanatory sequential design. While I attempted to bracket my own biases, particularly with the duality of roles, I made every effort to monitor my reactivity, particularly during individual interviews. There are recommendations that follow, as well as implications for further research, but a limitation is that this research does not provide immediate actionable steps for amending roles and responsibilities at this time. I do believe that there may be limitations with the quality of the survey, particularly with the ranges of response, as they could have provided a greater opportunity for participants to select the answer of “sometimes” as the expected response. Finally, the sample size was a concern despite having a 29% response rate. If this survey was conducted outside the pandemic window I believe the response would have been greater.

Implications for Further Research

The performative and thematic analysis of the survey conducted for this study provided essential understandings about the roles and responsibilities of SLPs. Multiple-choice survey responses provided information through categorical frequency distributions that aligned with *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018). Through analysis using frequency of “*consistently*” responses to determine SLP alignment to the proposed ILA standards, it was determined that SLPs are performing 77% of suggested standards consistently. This could influence future research in

many ways. Future surveys could be conducted by altering the statements, such as those statements from the matrices focused on certain roles of SLPs, or by focusing on a specific standard suggested by ILA. This type of performative analysis could assist in further defining what areas of *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) need revision, or which areas need more emphasis in during role preparation. It could also provide information and feedback for the development of an evaluative tool that could be used by SLPs to self-monitor their perceptions of their role or the responsibilities they have in their role.

There are other implications for future research. Theoretically, the results of the survey and interviews support the idea of practice theory, a theory first established by Lave that states there is an “interconnectedness between the setting or culture and the real-time performances of those daily, generative practices that entail the ways of acting and doing things” (Lave, 1988, p. 14). This was evident in the consistent responses of participants, and could provide support for further practice theory research.

Research like this performative analysis could also help to influence state and national policies regarding the roles and responsibilities of SLPs. During the course of this study, an amendment was requested for the Virginia Early Literacy Bill 319 (Virginia Senate Bill, 2022). This will affect both divisions represented in this study. The bill suggested specific additions to the responsibilities for reading specialists including but not limited to developing knowledge of science of reading instructional practices (Shanahan, 2020) and more development of knowledge of dyslexia (Shaywitz, 1996). It also suggested how many students per building could be serviced by reading specialists. It did not suggest any additions to the responsibilities of literacy coaches or reading teachers. The reality is that more serve in a dual role, and this legislation may

make facilitating both roles difficult. The results shared in this study on roles and responsibilities shed light on the roles of SLPs in this area of Virginia, and lead to future research in other areas of the state, so that legislation like this are based on actual performance needs instead of ostensive expectations.

Specialized Literacy Professional Profile: A Biography

In this section, I present a performance profile of an SLP in a metropolitan area. I am basing this profile on the information gathered from the performance survey components, as well as the interview responses. I chose to represent a SLP in a dual role, because this was the most frequently reported role of study participants. This is important to this study because my goal was to highlight the voices of SLPs. This is a typical description of an SLP.

I live and teach in the Richmond, Virginia area. I am a 42-year-old white female who serves as a reading specialist and literacy coach for a school of about 800 students. I am classified as a resource teacher and receive pay based on the classroom teacher pay scale. This is my 23rd year as a teacher - it is the 16th as a reading specialist (with the last four as a dual specialist and coach). I received an undergraduate degree in child development with a minor in elementary education. I later went back to school and got my master's degree in reading because I enjoyed teaching reading and working with the reading teacher at my school. In my role, I mostly work with students who struggle in reading. Each day I see between 5-8 groups per day. During these groups, I support students' reading needs based on assessments given by the classroom teacher and me. During this group time, students reread, learn a new strategy or skill, and read new books. There is also word work, particularly if working with kindergarten or first graders. This word work is mostly centered on phonological awareness and based on the

results of the PALS assessment. I send home books for students to practice reading. I communicate with parents by sending home notes with their books or by email. I am also asked to support these same students in the classroom by offering teachers suggestions for learning. I coordinate school-wide events, like reading night to get students excited about reading. As a literacy coach, I spend part of my time planning professional development for teachers at my school, most often based on the division focus for learning. This usually occurs at the beginning of the school year during pre-school week, and then I support teacher learning throughout the year during faculty meetings. These meetings are held after school. I also help with school improvement planning and implementation. I try to work with teachers, though I think I'm often seen as an evaluator, or that I have the principal's ear. I don't get to do as much as I would like as a coach because I am limited by the time in my role as a reading specialist. I wish I could work more with teachers one-on-one to support their implementation of their own learning instead of just talking about it at meetings. I am often asked my opinion about student progress and placement, so I am perceived as knowledgeable, and in turn, I know my role matters.

Specialized Literacy Professional Profile: An Autobiography

In this section, I present my own performance profile as an SLP in a metropolitan area of Virginia. I am basing this profile on my own experiences as an SLP. I serve in a dual role, so both reading/literacy specialist and literacy coach performance shared. This is important to this study because while questions on the survey and interview were carefully crafted to avoid researcher bias during the analysis of data and reporting of results, it is also important to locate

myself in this study because I am an SLP in a dual role. This is a description of my role and responsibilities - a true “day in the life” of an SLP.

I live and teach in the Richmond, Virginia area. I am a 53-year-old white female who serves as a core-reading specialist (by contract) but literacy specialist/coach by title and I serve a school of about 650 students. I am classified as a resource teacher and receive pay based on the classroom teacher pay scale. This is my 31st year as a teacher and the 25th as a literacy professional: 9 years as a reading specialist only, 9 years as a coach only, and 7 years in a dual role (serving as reading specialist and literacy coach simultaneously). I received an undergraduate degree in elementary education (NK-4) with an endorsement in social studies education. While I felt prepared as a teacher, I wanted to know more about teaching reading and writing to younger students. I later went back to school and got a master’s degree in reading, an educational specialist degree in reading and writing curriculum, and I am working to complete my doctorate of philosophy in curriculum, culture, and change so that I might pursue a full-time literacy professor position. In my role at the elementary level, I try to find a balance of working with both students and teachers; however, on most days it is more like 70:30, respectively.

Here is a typical day in my life of as an SLP:

7:30-8:00 Arrival, check-ins with students, clerical tasks (email, data entry/analysis, etc.)

8:00-10:30 Intervention Groups: Five small groups of students (2 first, 2 second, 1 third, 27 students total) who are not meeting expectations for reading per reading behaviors outlined in the Literacy Continuum (Fountas and Pinnell, 2017). During these lessons students work on

reading skills that include decoding, fluency, and comprehension. Sometimes writing is incorporated, but the lessons are mostly focused on reading behaviors.

10:30-12:00: Professional Learning Communities (PLCs): *Two grade level teams meet for 45 minutes each to review goals and commitments, priority documents, data analysis, and review student needs. Sometimes this is used for professional learning (book club, article share) and other times it is used for planning (units, writing projects, upcoming events).*

12:00-12:30 Lunch *(with other resource teachers-helps develop community)*

12:30-1:00 Intervention Group: *One small group of students (6 fifth) who are struggling with a particular comprehension skill. Students learn strategies to help them develop those missing skills OR push into classroom for support.*

1:00-1:45 Planning *for groups and meetings; reading research/curriculum development; email/data entry, coaching cycles*

1:45-2:15 Random: *This time varies daily-instructional leadership meetings, child concern meetings, push into classroom for support, small strategy groups (limited time-not continuous), coaching cycles, other*

2:15-2:45 Bus/Car rider duty

2:45-3:00 Planning *for groups and meetings; reading research/curriculum development; email/data entry*

Typically, any planning for larger school-wide events such as reading month take place during committee meetings after school. Recently, over the course of a month, I spent an additional 9 hours planning before, during, and after school for our reading month event. That is time well spent, as it helped to develop a culture of literacy in my school. There are other planning meetings with administration, other reading/literacy specialists/literacy coaches, and the supervisor of literacy for my division. These take

place during the day, so occasionally, intervention or meetings are paused to work in these collaborations for professional learning or curriculum development. I appreciate my administration's efforts to develop professional learning communities, although some teachers haven't found the value of these ongoing discussions about student data and learning. Sometimes it is difficult to switch between interventionist and coach. More planning with teachers has to happen to make coaching effective. In working with teachers on a specific coaching request, I use a coaching cycle model that helps the teacher see the goals, planning, and support necessary for coaching to be effective. Overall, I have enjoyed my experiences in reading education. I have certainly seen the pendulum swing from whole language learning to balanced literacy and now to science of reading. My philosophy is this: if you are a responsive teacher, you will know and understand all approaches and know how to blend them to meet students' needs.

The two profiles presented above are similar in role definition as serving both reading/literacy specialist/literacy coach roles simultaneously and in the work each does as an interventionist. These similarities of practice were found consistently across all participants who indicated they work with students who struggle with reading. However, there were differences noted with their literacy coach roles. Each shared differences in how professional learning was presented and supported throughout the year. While both the example based on collected experiences and my own experiences showed confidence in the roles and responsibilities of SLPs, I know that ongoing support for these professionals is critical for their individual growth as a literacy professional.

Summary of Discussion

The analysis of survey and interview responses provided insight to the research questions of this study and the development of the profiles of SLPs. This demonstrates that there is a level of complexity to the roles and responsibilities of SLPs, which is consistent with the ILA committee's recommendations in *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018). SLPs' perceptions of their role and responsibilities are shared based on their experiences in the role. These perceptions were positive overall, as most SLPs shared they felt valued in their role.

Recommendations

This study shared a glimpse at the roles and responsibilities of elementary SLPs in two Richmond-area school divisions. A synthesis of this information helped to create a profile of the daily expectations of SLPs. The following recommendations are provided as suggestions for continued learning about the work and life of SLPs.

Greater Awareness of Standards 2017 (ILA, 2018)

First and foremost, the standards themselves must be promoted to all colleges and universities, as well as state departments of education, where the preparation and ongoing support of SLPs is taking place. In this study, only a few participants indicated they had heard of or were familiar with the standards. Many had not heard of ILA or the push for these standards to be used as evaluative tools. Awareness and understanding of the standards are critical to develop and maintain highly qualified SLPs at all levels.

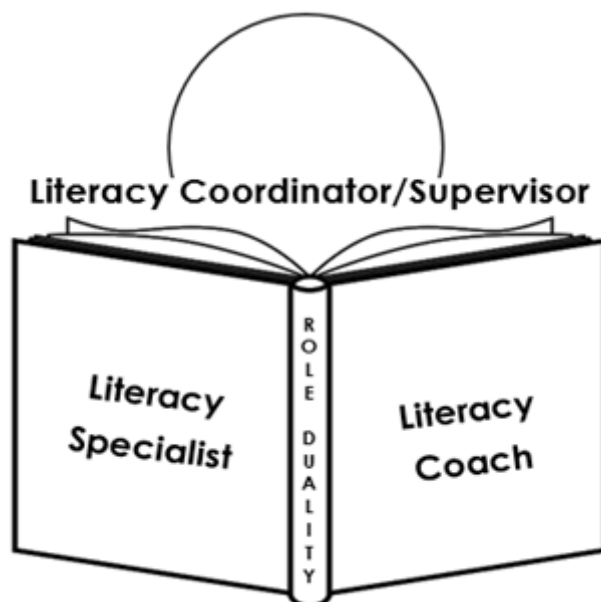
Throughout *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) other topics critical to literacy, like English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) programs, digital literacy, and writing development, are included. During synthesis and analysis of responses in this study, the majority focused solely on reading instruction, support, and development. Awareness of the standards would emphasize the

importance of all components of literacy, not just reading. Including other stakeholders, like ESOL and technology teachers, in discussions about school literacy would strengthen the overall culture of literacy for a school.

Revisiting the ILA Study

There were seven years between the previous set of standards for reading professionals (2010) and the current *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018). We are close to being another seven years out from that most current research. I recommend that it is time for a revisit of the current standards. There have been great shifts in reading research, most notably the push for science of reading instruction included at the school level. For SLPs to be fully prepared and supported, the standards should be revised to include this language.

In *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018), a recommendation was made by the committee to separate the reading specialist/coach role into two separate definitions: reading/literacy specialist and literacy coach (*Standards 2017*, p. 3). This helped to “sharpen the terminology” (Galloway & Lesaux, p.524) and define roles more explicitly through the components in the matrices for each role. Acknowledgement was made that some SLPs may serve in both roles, and they may do specific parts of each role description. In this study it was determined that there are far more SLPs serving in dual roles than anticipated. Because of this reality of roles, I recommend that as ILA revises *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) they consider acknowledging and proposing a combined reading/literacy specialist/literacy coach description that would help SLPs, school administrators, and division level supervisors understand the complex nature of the combined role (Figure 7). This would provide more clarity, so that expectations could be better defined and ongoing support provided. This could also help with the balancing of time in the role for dual SLPs.

Figure 7*The Roles of the Specialized Literacy Professional-Revised****Advocacy for the Role***

Participants in this study spoke of advocacy only in reference to students and the support they need. They did not speak of advocating for themselves or the responsibilities requested by their school division. I would argue that this is such an important part of the role of an SLP. While some SLPs may see advocating for their own needs as self-serving, it is critical to their continued success and growth as SLPs. As seen in this study, advocacy for SLP inclusion in major school decisions, like master schedule development or class roll development, would provide an opportunity for SLPs voices to be heard beyond the work of supporting students and teachers. Throughout the study, time was mentioned as an ongoing hurdle, where SLPs could not support students because of overlapping grade level reading instruction blocks. This made it difficult for SLPs to work with struggling students or support teachers as coaches. By having a

voice in master schedule development, SLPs could help administration work through these time hurdles.

SLPs should also advocate for a greater work balance in supporting students and teachers, particularly those in dual SLP roles. This would include having conversations with administration (Resnick, 2000) about expectations of the roles and responsibilities, and then asking for administrative support to protect those expectations. While out of administrative hands, funding for SLPs in both divisions is based on regular classroom teacher salaries in a step progression. The only additional funding received is if there is a stipend for serving as a team or school improvement chair. This adds to the complexity of the role because reading/literacy specialists and literacy coaches are specialists with extended degrees in a specialty area that is necessary for increased student achievement (Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2010; 2011). SLPs advocacy for a salary increase by the division or state would demonstrate leadership and extended knowledge of their role, particularly if *Standards 2017* (ILA, 2018) were shared.

SLP Continued Professional Learning

Throughout the study, SLPs noted that once they completed their degree or endorsement work, they often did not have division support to further their own development. SLPs often provide the support for ongoing teacher learning of new curriculum and approaches, but they indicated they did not receive the same support for their own new learning. They perceived it to be an expectation that any further learning on their part would have to be sought outside the division. Several interview participants did share they had sought continued development as a reading specialist by attending conferences or workshops, or by participating in book clubs that focused on specific areas of learning, like guided reading (Richardson, 2016) or reading strategies (Serravallo, 2015). Literacy coaches shared that they sought continuing development

through local clinical faculty programs or through coaching workshops offered by Cathy Toll (2022) or Jim Knight (2022). These extra steps to further develop their own moves as specialists and coaches show a commitment to the role. However, the division should support this commitment, at least in part.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to develop a profile of the SLPs' roles and responsibilities in their day-to-day work at the elementary level. This study is significant because it provides insight into the roles and responsibilities of the SLP. It highlights the complexity of the roles and necessity for support for those SLPs serving in dual roles. It will assist in advocating for opportunities for decision-making and leadership for SLPs through collaboration with all school stakeholders, helping to make an effective literacy culture a reality. It will also support the idea of conducting similar qualitative analyses of performance survey research. Looking at how participants rank their perceptions of their own roles and responsibilities has provided a wealth of information with which to make recommendations for moving the perceptions forward through future research. If the ultimate goal of SLP work is to create a culture of literacy in schools (Jacobson, 2017) then understanding and advocating for continued development for literacy professionals is critical. All study participants shared their perceived importance of their role. Kaitlyn, an SLP in a dual role stated, "I feel for people who work in a profession and feel like they don't make a difference, but I don't feel like that at all! I know I make a difference every day in some way in my role as a literacy professional."

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APPENDIX A

To:

Subject: Literacy Professionals! Share YOUR Perceptions and Experiences!

Hello Literacy Professional,

My name is Julie Dauksys and I am currently a literacy specialist with a Richmond-area school division. I am also a doctoral candidate at Virginia Commonwealth University in the School of Education. My dissertation study is titled “Perceptions of Specialized Reading Professionals: A Performance Profile.” In this study, I want to hear and highlight the voices and stories of your work as an elementary literacy professional (reading/literacy teacher/specialist/interventionist or reading/literacy coach).

Henrico County Public Schools has approved this study of literacy professionals. The purpose of the survey is to obtain your perceptions of International Literacy Association’s *Standards for Preparation of Literacy Professionals*, as well as your experiences with decision-making, leadership, and building a culture of literacy in your school. The survey is designed to collect important information that will be used to develop a descriptive narrative of the complexities of the literacy professional role.

You are encouraged to participate in the survey to provide the most helpful information regarding your role as a literacy professional, though you are not required to participate. No information about whether or not you participate will be known; there are no consequences or risks to not participating. Only aggregate results for school divisions together will be reported.

Please complete the survey that is accessible from the following link:

(insert link here) by **October 29, 2021**.

It should take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete.

Please understand the following information regarding consent:

Risks and Discomforts: This study involves no more than minimal risk to you.

Benefits to You and Others: You may not receive any direct benefit from this study, but the information gathered from the survey will help to develop a performance profile for local literacy professionals.

Costs: There are no costs for participating in this study other than the time you will spend completing the survey.

Confidentiality: Your participation in the survey will be anonymous.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal: You do not have to participate in this study. If you begin completing the survey, you may stop at any time without penalty. You may also choose not to answer particular questions on the survey.

Questions: If you have questions, complaints, or concerns at any time, either while you are completing the survey or in the future, please contact:

Julie S. Dauksys

Virginia Commonwealth University

1015 W. Main St., P.O. Box 842020

Richmond, VA 23284-2020

dauksysjs@vcu.edu

540-748-9500

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact:

Office for Research

Virginia Commonwealth University

800 East Leigh Street, Suite 113

P.O. Box 980568

Richmond, VA 23298

Telephone: 804-827-2157

By completing the survey, you are providing implied consent. We appreciate the time you have taken to read this email and if you choose to complete the survey, thank you!

Sincerely,

Julie S. Dauksys

Julie S. Dauksys, Ed.S.

Doctoral Candidate

Virginia Commonwealth University

School of Education

APPENDIX B

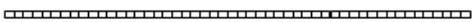
A Survey of the Perceptions of Specialized Literacy Professionals

Page 1

Section 1 of this survey provides a look at the roles and responsibilities of the specialized literacy professional (SLP). First, think of your role along a continuum—drag the button left or right to indicate your role. The next part consists of statements that highlight the expectations of the Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals (ILA, 2018) as compared to what you really do in your day-to-day work. Here is a simplistic way to think about the statements:

1. The standard or what I wish I could do as an SLP.
2. The reality or what I really do as an SLP.

Please select the response that best represents your perceptions and experiences as an SLP.

-
- 1) Along this continuum, where would you find your work as a specialized literacy professional?
- | | | |
|--|------|------------------------|
| reading/literacy specialist | both | reading/literacy coach |
|  | | |
| (Place a mark on the scale above) | | |
-

Foundational Knowledge

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>2) The standard says: I should have foundational knowledge of literacy for learning to read (concepts of word and print, phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension).</p> <p>In reality: I have foundational knowledge of literacy for learning to read (concepts of word and print, phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension).</p> | <p> <input type="radio"/> Consistently (95%-100%)
 <input type="radio"/> Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 <input type="radio"/> Sometimes (50%-83%)
 <input type="radio"/> Not Usually (16%-49%)
 <input type="radio"/> Rarely, if ever (0%-15%) </p> |
| <p>3) The standard says: I should have foundational knowledge of language acquisition (speaking, listening, viewing, and visually representing).</p> <p>In reality: I have foundational knowledge of language acquisition (speaking, listening, viewing, and visually representing).</p> | <p> <input type="radio"/> Consistently (95%-100%)
 <input type="radio"/> Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 <input type="radio"/> Sometimes (50%-83%)
 <input type="radio"/> Not Usually (16%-49%)
 <input type="radio"/> Rarely, if ever (0%-15%) </p> |
| <p>4) The standard says: I should have foundational knowledge of writing development, writing processes (revising, audience, etc.) and writing skills (spelling, sentence construction, word processing, etc.).</p> <p>In reality: I have foundational knowledge of writing development, writing processes (revising, audience, etc.) and writing skills (spelling, sentence construction, word processing, etc.).</p> | <p> <input type="radio"/> Consistently (95%-100%)
 <input type="radio"/> Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 <input type="radio"/> Sometimes (50%-83%)
 <input type="radio"/> Not Usually (16%-49%)
 <input type="radio"/> Rarely, if ever (0%-15%) </p> |

Professional Learning

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>5) The standard says: I should provide professional learning to develop the literacy knowledge of teachers.</p> <p>In reality: I provide professional learning to develop the literacy knowledge of teachers.</p> | <p><input type="radio"/> Consistently (95%-100%)
 <input type="radio"/> Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 <input type="radio"/> Sometimes (50%-83%)
 <input type="radio"/> Not Usually (16%-49%)
 <input type="radio"/> Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)</p> |
| <p>6) The standard says: I should enhance the classroom teachers' understanding of literacy intervention.</p> <p>In reality: I enhance the classroom teachers' understanding of literacy intervention.</p> | <p><input type="radio"/> Consistently (95%-100%)
 <input type="radio"/> Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 <input type="radio"/> Sometimes (50%-83%)
 <input type="radio"/> Not Usually (16%-49%)
 <input type="radio"/> Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)</p> |
| <p>7) The standard says: I should support the development of classroom teachers' knowledge of literacy assessments.</p> <p>In reality: I support the development of classroom teachers' knowledge of literacy assessments.</p> | <p><input type="radio"/> Consistently (95%-100%)
 <input type="radio"/> Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 <input type="radio"/> Sometimes (50%-83%)
 <input type="radio"/> Not Usually (16%-49%)
 <input type="radio"/> Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)</p> |
| <p>8) The standard says: I should support the development of classroom teachers' instructional decision-making for literacy.</p> <p>In reality: I support the development of classroom teachers' instructional decision-making for literacy.</p> | <p><input type="radio"/> Consistently (95%-100%)
 <input type="radio"/> Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 <input type="radio"/> Sometimes (50%-83%)
 <input type="radio"/> Not Usually (16%-49%)
 <input type="radio"/> Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)</p> |
| <p>9) The standard says: I should model problem-solving skills with regards to instructional decision-making for literacy.</p> <p>In reality: I model problem-solving skills with regards to instructional decision-making for literacy.</p> | <p><input type="radio"/> Consistently (95%-100%)
 <input type="radio"/> Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 <input type="radio"/> Sometimes (50%-83%)
 <input type="radio"/> Not Usually (16%-49%)
 <input type="radio"/> Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)</p> |
| <p>10) The standard says: I should model the interrelation between literacy and language acquisition.</p> <p>In reality: I model the interrelation between literacy and language acquisition.</p> | <p><input type="radio"/> Consistently (95%-100%)
 <input type="radio"/> Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 <input type="radio"/> Sometimes (50%-83%)
 <input type="radio"/> Not Usually (16%-49%)
 <input type="radio"/> Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)</p> |
| <p>11) The standard says: I should model connections for literacy through cross-curricular and content area integration.</p> <p>In reality: I model connections for literacy through cross-curricular and content area integration.</p> | <p><input type="radio"/> Consistently (95%-100%)
 <input type="radio"/> Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 <input type="radio"/> Sometimes (50%-83%)
 <input type="radio"/> Not Usually (16%-49%)
 <input type="radio"/> Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)</p> |

-
- 12) The standard says: I should use curriculum and instructional methods to meet the literacy needs of all learners.
- In reality: I use curriculum and instructional methods to meet the literacy needs of all learners.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)
-

- 13) The standard says: I should use knowledge of diverse learners to support teachers' instruction of literacy and language (special education, English Speakers of Other Languages, gifted education).
- In reality: I use knowledge of diverse learners to support teachers' instruction of literacy and language (special education, English Speakers of Other Languages, gifted education).
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)
-

Collaboration and Reflection

- 14) The standard says: I should collaborate with teachers to design, implement, and evaluate literacy curriculum and instructional practices.
- In reality: I collaborate with teachers to design, implement, and evaluate literacy curriculum and instructional practices.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)
-

- 15) The standard says: I should collaborate with teachers to design, implement, and analyze literacy assessments.
- In reality: I collaborate with teachers to design, implement, and analyze literacy assessments.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)
-

- 16) The standard says: I should collaborate with administrators to design, implement, and evaluate literacy curriculum, instructional practices, and assessments.
- In reality: I collaborate with administrators to design, implement, and evaluate literacy curriculum, instructional practices, and assessments.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)
-

- 17) The standard says: I should collaborate with teachers and administrators to develop school-wide vision and goals for the literacy program.
- In reality: I collaborate with teachers and administrators to develop school-wide vision and goals for the literacy program.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)

-
- 18) The standard says: I should collaborate with teachers and administrators to align the literacy vision and goals to district pacing and state Standards of Learning.
- In reality: I collaborate with teachers and administrators to align the literacy vision and goals to district pacing and state Standards of Learning.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)
-
- 19) The standard says: I should collaborate with teachers and administrators to develop a physically and socially literacy-rich environment.
- In reality: I collaborate with teachers and administrators to develop a physically and socially literacy-rich environment.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)
-
- 20) The standard says: I should engage in systematic, reflective literacy practices.
- In reality: I engage in systematic, reflective literacy practices.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)
-
- 21) The standard says: I should guide teachers to reflect on their own literacy practices.
- In reality: I guide teachers to reflect on their own literacy practices. |
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)

Coaching and Supporting Teachers

-
- 22) The standard says: I should provide literacy coaching for teachers to improve literacy and language learning for students.
- In reality: I provide literacy coaching for teachers to improve literacy and language learning for students.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)
-
- 23) The standard says: I should use literacy coaching tools and processes (modeling, problem-solving, observation-feedback cycles, co-teaching, etc.) to support literacy and language learning for teachers.
- In reality: I use literacy coaching tools and processes (modeling, problem-solving, observation-feedback cycles, co-teaching, etc.) to support literacy and language learning for teachers.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)

-
- 24) The standard says: I should design, implement, and evaluate classroom literacy instruction.
- In reality: I design, implement, and evaluate classroom literacy instruction.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)
-
- 25) The standard says: I should support teachers as they design, implement, and evaluate literacy small group instruction.
- In reality: I support teachers as they design, implement, and evaluate literacy small group instruction.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)
-
- 26) The standard says: I should design, implement, and evaluate literacy small group instruction/intervention.
- In reality: I design, implement, and evaluate literacy small group instruction/intervention.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)
-
- 27) The standard says: I should design, implement, and evaluate direct, explicit literacy instruction for students who need intense support.
- In reality: I design, implement, and evaluate direct, explicit literacy instruction for students who need intense support.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)
-
- 28) The standard says: I should understand and implement adult learning methods to support literacy learning for teachers and administrators.
- In reality: I understand and implement adult learning methods to support literacy learning for teachers and administrators.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)

Advocacy for Literacy

-
- 29) The standard says: I should advocate for a school-wide culture of literacy.
- In reality: I advocate for a school-wide culture of literacy.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)
-
- 30) The standard says: I should advocate for literacy and language instructional decisions based on assessments and students' needs.
- In reality: I advocate for literacy and language instructional decisions based on assessments and students' needs.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)

-
- 31) The standard says: I should advocate for literacy equity on behalf of students, teachers, families, and the community.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)

In reality: I advocate for literacy equity on behalf of students, teachers, families, and the community.

-
- 32) The standard says: I should advocate for evidence-based and appropriate literacy practices and policies.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)

In reality: I advocate for evidence-based and appropriate literacy practices and policies.

Culture and Diversity

- 33) The standard says: I should recognize my own cultural background and the impact it has on my own literacy development.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)

In reality: I recognize my own cultural background and the impact it has on my own literacy development.

-
- 34) The standard says: I should recognize the cultural backgrounds of all school stakeholders and the impact they have on literacy development.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)

In reality: I recognize the cultural backgrounds of all school stakeholders and the impact they have on literacy development

-
- 35) The standard says: I should implement culturally responsive pedagogy through equitable and diverse literacy practices and processes.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)

In reality: I implement culturally responsive pedagogy through equitable and diverse literacy practices and processes.

-
- 36) The standard says: I should foster a positive literacy culture at my school.
- Consistently (95%-100%)
 Quite Frequently (84%-94%)
 Sometimes (50%-83%)
 Not Usually (16%-49%)
 Rarely, if ever (0%-15%)

In reality: I foster a positive literacy culture at my school.

Section 2: Short Answer Questions

Now it's time to shine a light on all those other things you do in your role as a specialized literacy professional! Please complete the following short answer questions.

- 37) Please briefly describe a typical day in your role as a specialized literacy professional. _____
-
- 38) What are your perceptions regarding your participation in making decisions regarding your role or responsibilities? _____
-
- 39) What are your perceptions regarding your opportunities for leadership in your school and/or division? _____
-
- 40) In what ways do you help develop a culture of literacy in your school? _____
-
- 41) Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your role and responsibilities as a specialized literacy professional? _____

APPENDIX C

Protocol for Individual Interviews

“Perceptions of Specialized Literacy Professionals: A Performance Profile”

Opening of Interview

Good morning/afternoon/evening! Before we begin, I would like to remind you that I am recording this Zoom in order to transcribe your responses. If you prefer, you may turn off your camera and participate via audio only. You will be provided a copy of the transcription to check to be sure that it is accurate with what you recall from the discussion. The recording will not be shared with anyone and will be erased after it is transcribed.

I would like to begin by thanking you for completing the survey regarding the perceptions of specialized literacy professionals, and indicating that you would be willing to participate in this interview! During the interview, please refrain from mentioning your school division or a specific school.

The purpose of this interview is to discuss your perceptions of your role and responsibilities as a specialized literacy professional. This interview will take approximately 45 minutes.

Process Guidelines

I would like to go over some guidelines that will help our interview run smoothly. I want to assure you of complete confidentiality during today’s session. In the written summaries of the session, no names will be attached to comments. Please know that you can cease participation at any time during the interview.

I am interested in all of your viewpoints- both positive and negative. Please be specific in your responses. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Background Knowledge: What experiences prepared you for your role as a specialized literacy professional?

1. What graduate program did you complete for your certification?
 - a. What practicum experiences did you have?
 - b. Did you complete the Virginia Reading Assessment, Reading for Virginia Educators, or other state licensure exam?
2. Was there other professional development that helped prepare you?
 - a. Probe: School or division-based, workshop/conference, other?
 - b. Did you have a mentor who worked with you in your role?
3. What else can you share about the preparation you received?

Interview Question 1: How do you perceive your role and responsibility as a specialized literacy professional?

1. What is it like to be a literacy professional at your school?
Probe: leader, interventionist, coach, administrative assistant, etc.
2. How do you think others in your school perceive your role and responsibilities?
 - a. What do teachers think you do in your role?
 - b. What do administrators think you do in your role?
 - c. What do parents and the community think you do in your role?
3. What other perceptions you would like to share?

Interview Question 2: How do you perceive your inclusion in collaborative decision-making?

1. Who makes the decisions regarding your role?
Probe: top down/school-based/collaborative, etc.
2. What collaborative opportunities are you afforded in your role?
3. What choice and/or voice in making decisions regarding your responsibilities?
Probe: scheduling, grouping, duty, etc.
4. What other perceptions regarding decision-making you could share?

Interview Question 3: How do you perceive your opportunities for leadership?

1. What types of leadership roles have been offered to you?
Probe: community/top down/school-based, etc.
2. What types of leadership roles are you likely to pursue?
3. What other perceptions regarding leadership you could share?

Conclusion

What else would you like to say about your perceptions regarding your role or responsibilities as a specialized literacy professional?

Thank you all for your willingness to participate in this interview!

VITA

Julie Herndon Smith Dauksys was born on January 5, 1969 in Richmond, Virginia and is an American citizen. She graduated from Hopewell High School, Hopewell, Virginia in 1987. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Longwood University, Farmville, Virginia in 1991 and has taught for both the Hopewell and Hanover Public Schools divisions for 31 years. Julie completed her Master of Education Degree in Reading in 1998 and an Education Specialist Degree in Literacy in 2010, both from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia. She completed her Doctor of Philosophy degree in the Curriculum, Culture, and Change track at Virginia Commonwealth University in May, 2022. In addition to working in the schools as a specialized literacy professional, Julie serves as an adjunct instructor for literacy at Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, Virginia. She is a member of the Virginia College Literacy Educators organization where she has served as secretary and is currently the rising vice president.