



# Literacy Coaching/ Reading Specialists

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# Outline

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Introduction video

What is Literacy Coaching?

Roles and qualifications of the Reading Specialist/Coach

Change in job description over time

How Reading Coaches are like leaders in the community

Is there a difference between a Literacy Coach and a Reading Specialist?

# Video

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Here is an introduction video to give you a brief description about what exactly Literacy Coaching is and what Reading Coaches do on a daily basis.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONqZ2F7bFBw>



# Literacy Coaching

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According to the International Reading Association, “coaching” is as an “ongoing consistent support to teachers for the implementation and instruction components. It is nonthreatening and supportive, not evaluative. It gives a sense of how good professional development is. It also affords the opportunity to see it work with students” (Shaw, 2007).

# Literacy Coaching cont.

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According to new IRA standards, coaching has been added into the preparation of literacy specialist graduate programs.

This title is called “reading specialist/literacy coach”.

These programs have added coaching initiatives to course assignments, so that graduate students get opportunities to assist and support classroom teachers in assessment, instructional grouping, choosing appropriate texts and materials, teaching reading and writing strategies, and conducting professional development.

# Role of the Reading Coach

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Supports teachers in their daily work

They are here to help and give advice to teachers; they are not here to evaluate or threaten

There are three levels of coaching that the specialists does when working with the cooperating teacher

# Three Levels of Coaching

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**LEVEL ONE:** very informal, trying to develop relationships with the teachers. This includes: conversations with colleagues, identifying issues or needs, setting goals, and problem solving, developing and providing materials with and for their colleagues, developing a curriculum, participating in professional development activities, leading and participating in study groups, assisting and assessing students, and learning strengths and needs of students.

**LEVEL TWO** – more formal, where it begins to look at areas of need and focus. At this level, the reading coach is co-planning lessons with the teachers they are working with, holding team meetings with specific grade level and reading teachers, analyzing student work, interpreting assessment data to decide how to future plan for instruction, holding individual discussions with colleagues about teaching and learning, and making professional development presentations for teachers.

**LEVEL THREE-** the most formal and intense level, where it may create anxiety for both the classroom teacher and coach. At this level, the reading coach is modeling and discussing lessons, co-teaching lessons, visiting classrooms, and providing feedback to teachers, analyzing videotape lessons of the teachers they are working with, and doing lesson study on teachers

# Five Requirements

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Along with many roles that the reading coach must play, there are five requirements that every reading coach should obtain and have, according to the IRA.

- 1 - Every reading coach should be an excellent teacher themselves, since their primary role is to provide support to classroom teachers for reading instruction.
- 2- Reading coaches should have in-depth knowledge of reading processes, acquisition, assessment, and instruction.
- 3- Reading coaches should have experience working with teachers to improve their practices.
- 4- Reading coaches should be excellent presenters and be familiar with presenting to teacher conferences at the local, state, and even national level.
- 5- Reading coaches should have experience or preparation that enables them to master the complexities of observing and modeling in classrooms and providing feedback to teachers. Reading coaches must also be sensitive to the need to develop open, trusting relationships with teachers in order to serve effectively in a coaching role.



# Change in Job Description

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## **Before:**

Reading Coaches were seen at “Title 1” teachers. They would work with struggling readers, known as a pullout program. Struggling readers would be pulled out of their regular classroom to receive a beneficial, small-group instruction, implemented by the Title I teacher or the reading specialist. Under Title I, the instructional focus was on an additional intervention for students who struggled with reading. Classroom teachers continued to teach most of the students, and those students who were failing were sent to the Title I teacher for additional instruction. In this model, little attention was paid to the instruction provided by the classroom teacher. There was hardly any communication between the teacher and the specialist.

# Change in Job Description cont.

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## Now:

Today, the reading specialist and teacher work collaboratively to implement a quality reading program that is research based and meets the needs of the students. This allows the classroom teacher and reading specialist to align instruction so that the teaching is congruent and of high quality. In order to promote congruency, collaboration, and communication between the classroom teachers and reading specialists, the instruction provided may take place in the classroom. However, there are programs in which the reading specialist can provide instruction outside the classroom as well.

# Leadership

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The leadership role, for the Reading Coach, is **multidimensional**.

- They need to be a resource to other educators, parents, and community.
  - They play an essential role in supporting individual teachers, -
- Reading coaches lead professional development workshops, model strategies, or techniques for teachers, and conduct collaborative lessons.
- They have a strong influence on the overall reading program in the school.
  - They serve as advocates for the literacy program.
- They need to be able to communicate with various types of audiences, such as school boards, parents, and community agencies
- Reading specialists may also be involved in teacher supervision and could also be designated as district reading supervisors or coordinators
  - They have responsibility for evaluating the district reading program and its outcomes

## Literacy Coach and Reading Specialist: Is there a difference?

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According to the IRA, Literacy Coach and Reading Specialists have the same role and job description. This specialist may have primary responsibility for supporting teacher learning. These professionals, often known as literacy or reading coaches, provide coaching and other professional development support that enables teachers to think reflectively about improving student learning and implementing various instructional programs and practices.

# Literacy Coach and Reading Specialist: Is there a difference? cont

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For certification, a Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach Candidate must have the following:

- a valid teaching certificate,
- previous teaching experience,
- a master's degree with a concentration in reading and writing education
- experiences that build knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to working with students, supporting or coaching teachers
- leading the school reading program.

The role of the Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach remains as one role because IRA expects to see evidence of both in this candidate: reading specialist and literacy.



Questions???

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