

Instructional Coaching

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Why:

Sanders, W.L., & Rivers, J.C. (1996). Cumulative and residual effects of teachers on future student academic achievement. Knoxville: University of Tennessee.

Helping:

Prochaska, J.O., Norcorss, J.C., & DiClemente3, C. C. (1994). Changing for good. New York: Avon Books.

Identity

Stone, D., Patton, P. M., & Heen, S. (1999). Difficult conversations. New York: Penguin-Putnam.

Thinking

Davenport, T. H. (2005). Thinking for a living: How to get better performance and results from knowledge workers. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Status

Schein, E. H. (1992). Organizational culture and leadership (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Motivation

Pink, D. H. (2009). Drive: The surprising truth about what motivates us. Cambridge,MA: Riverside.

Partnership Principles:

Equality: Instructional Coaches and Teachers Are Equal Partners. Partnership involves relationships between equals. Thus, instructional coaches recognize collaborating teachers as equal partners, and they truly believe that each teacher's thoughts and beliefs are valuable. Instructional coaches listen to teachers with the intent to learn, to really understand, and then respond, rather than with the intent to persuade.

Choice: Teachers Should Have Choice Regarding What and How They Learn. In a partnership, one individual does not make decisions for another. Because partners are equal, they make their own individual choices and make decisions collaboratively (Block, 1993). For instructional coaches this means that teacher choice is implicit in every communication of content and, to the greatest extent possible, the process used to learn

the content. Instructional coaches do not envision making teachers “think like them” as the purpose of their job. Rather, an instructional coach’s goal is to meet teachers where they currently are in their practice and offer choices for learning.

Voice: Professional Learning Should Empower and Respect the Voices of Teachers. All individuals in a partnership have opportunities to express their point of view. Indeed, a primary benefit of a partnership is that each individual has access to many perspectives rather than the one perspective of a leader (Covey, 2004; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2000). Instructional coaches who act on this principle encourage teachers to express their opinions about content being learned. Instructional coaches view coaching as a process that helps teachers find their voice, not a process determined to make teachers think a certain way.

Dialogue: Professional Learning Should Enable Authentic Dialogue. To arrive at mutually acceptable decisions, partners engage in dialogue. In a partnership, one individual does not impose, dominate, or control. Partners engage in conversation, learning together as they explore ideas (Bohm, 2000). For instructional coaches, this means that they listen more than they tell. Instructional coaches avoid manipulation, engage participants in conversation about content, and think and learn with collaborating teachers.

Reflection: Reflection Is an Integral Part of Professional Learning. If we are creating a learning partnership, if our partners are equal with us, if they are free to speak their own minds and free to make real, meaningful choices, it follows that one of the most important choices our collaborating partners will make is how to make sense of whatever we are proposing they learn. Partners don’t dictate to each other what to believe; they respect their partners’ professionalism and provide them with enough information, so that they can make their own decisions (Brubaker, Case, Reagan, 1994; Killion & Todnem, 1991; Palmer, 1998; Schön, 1987). Thus, instructional coaches encourage collaborating teachers to consider ideas before adopting them. Indeed, instructional coaches recognize that reflective thinkers, by definition, must be free to adopt or reject ideas, lest they simply are not thinkers at all.

Praxis: Teachers Should Apply Their Learning to Their Real-Life Practice as They Are Learning. Partnership should enable individuals to have more meaningful experiences. In partnership relationships, meaning arises when people reflect on ideas and then put those actions into practice. A requirement for partnership is that each individual is free to reconstruct and use content the way he or she considers it most useful (Bernstein, 1983). For instructional coaches this means that in partnership with collaborating teachers they focus their attention on how to use ideas in the classroom as those ideas are being learned.

Reciprocity: Instructional Coaches Should Expect to Get as Much as They Give. In a partnership, all partners benefit from the success, learning, or experience of others—

everyone is rewarded by what each individual contributes (Freire, 1970; Senge, 1990; Vella, 1995). For that reason, one of an instructional coach's goals should be to learn alongside collaborating teachers. Learning about each teacher's strengths and weaknesses while implementing new teaching practices will enhance a coach's ability to collaborate with all other teachers and the coach's skill in using the new teaching practice.

What Coaches Do:

Push and Pull

Hargrove, R. (2008). *Masterful coaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Informed Adaptive Response

Heifetz, R. A., Linsky, M., & Grashow, A. (2009). *The practice of adaptive leadership: Tools and tactics for changing your organization and the world*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Enroll

1. One-to-one interviews.
2. Large-group presentations.
3. Small-group presentations.
4. Principal referral
5. Workshops
6. Informal conversations

Identify

1. Suggest that the teacher revisit the video from a previous coaching session.
2. If the teacher hasn't worked with you before, offer to video tape a class.
3. Share the "Big Four" survey and suggest that the teacher view the video with the survey in mind. Suggest they complete the survey after they
4. Meet the teacher to review the survey (if they wish) and to identify a coaching goal
5. Create a SMART goal
 - Specific
 - Measurable
 - Attainable
 - Realistic
 - Timely

Mediate the Content

- Get a copy of teacher's curriculum materials (text books, state and/or school curriculum, state standards)
- Look for ways you can speed up coaching by proposing ways they can incorporate a new teaching practice into their Share your list of concepts
- Co-construct a lesson plan that integrates the new teaching practices

Explain

- Meet the teacher one-to-one.
- Give the teacher a copy of a checklist (when appropriate) for the teaching practice being learning
- Go through the checklist item by item and explain each one
- After discussing each item, ask the teacher whether or not that the item is OK with them, or would they like to modify it (95% of the time the teacher will not want to modify it)
- Modify the form to reflect the teacher's concerns if they wish to change it after discussing the reason why the form is organized in the manner it is organized
- Co-construct an observation protocol for additional teaching practices
- Confirm already scheduled date for you to model in the classroom

Model:

- Arrive in the class well before the lesson is to be given
- Give the teacher a copy of the co-constructed checklist (when appropriate) for the teaching practice being learning
- Explain how he/she should use the checklist
- Ask the teacher if she/he would like to record it
- Speak to students informally before the class begins
- Have the teacher introduce you
- Prompt the students to create name tents if you don't know their names
- Model the lesson doing everything on the checklist
- Involve the teacher in the lesson, and authentically praise the teacher
- Keep your model short by focusing on the practice being learned
- Offer to download a copy of the lesson to the teacher's computer

Observe

- Arrive in the classroom well before the lesson to confirm that the teacher wants you to observe the lesson
- Find an inconspicuous spot in the classroom where you can watch the teacher and the students
- Position the camera so that you will be able to record the entire lesson
- Set up the camera on a tripod so that you will be able to take notes
- After the teacher begins to use the new practice, be especially attentive for anything the teacher does well
- Write brief descriptions of all the positive aspects of the lesson in the comments column
- Put a checkmark in the OBS column beside each teaching practice you see teachers do, and leave a blank space in the OBS column beside any teaching practices that you do not see
- Before leaving the classroom, confirm that you will meet at your pre-determined time to discuss the lesson
- Download a copy of the lesson onto the teachers computer before you leave the classroom

Explore the Lesson

- Prior to meeting, review the recording of the lesson and identify at least 3 sections that you think are excellent, and two sections that you think would be meaningful to discuss.
- Ask the teacher to also identify 3 sections that they think are excellent, and two sections that they have concerns about?"
- Give the teacher a copy of the observation protocol(s)
- Review the video as well
- Identify at least 3 clips you think are well done and plan direct, specific, non-attributive feedback
- Identify sections that you think would be profitable to discuss
- Choose questions (review the question sheet) that you think will open up the conversation
- Meet with teacher to review the teacher's and your clips
- Pause the recording when you talk
- Use open-ended non-judgmental questions to open up meaningful conversation
- Identify a SMART goal for the next step

Publications:

Knight, J., (2007). *Instructional coaching: A partnership approach to improving instruction*.

Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Knight, J. (2009). Instructional Coaching. In J. Knight, Editor, *Coaching: Approaches and*

Perspectives (pp. 29-55). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Sprick, R., Knight, J., Reinke, W., & McKale, T. (2006). *Coaching classroom management:*

A toolkit for coaches and administrators. Eugene, OR: Pacific Northwest Publishing.

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support can improve teaching. *Journal of Staff Development*. 25(2), 32-37.

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teaching. *The School Administrator*, 63(4), 36-40.

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Development. 28(1), 26-31.

Knight, J. (2009). What can we do about teacher resistance? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 90(7),

508-513.

Staying Connected

Website: www.instructionalcoach.org

Blog: <http://jimknightoncoaching.squarespace.com>

Big Four Ning: <http://thebigfour.ning.com/>

Twitter: @jimknight99

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