

Coaching to Empower Teachers: An Introduction to Working with Adult Learners

Sessions 1 and 2

Room to Improve

Holly Hertberg & Catherine M Brighton

Home improvement concept helps staff developers lead a variety of personalities to differentiated instruction in their classrooms

Kendra Martin, district staff developer, has been charged with helping the teachers at Happy Valley Middle School implement differentiated instruction in their academically diverse classrooms. Martin has been working with the faculty for a year, providing direct instruction, visiting classrooms, co-planning, co-teaching, providing feedback, and sharing resources. As she begins the end-of-the-year meeting with the faculty, Martin looks around the room. There's Betty Patterson, sitting with her arms folded and purposely avoiding eye contact. Angela Rogers sits at the front table with Lisa Crawford, a notebook of cubing and RAFT examples open in front of them, ready to share with the rest of the group. Rick Jones sits at the back of the room, silent but engaged (His intensity often unnerves Martin -his questions are always pointed and difficult, but right on target) Sally McIntire sits in the middle of the room, looking a little tired from the school year, but she is, as always, ready to listen and absorb as much as she can. Martin takes a deep breath before starting, wondering for the hundredth time, "How do I help them all move along toward differentiating instruction when their needs are so different?"

| PROFILE | CHARACTERISTICS | COACHING APPROACHES |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Resisters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overt resister: dramatic refusals, verbal acknowledgement of disagreement • Covert resister: creative avoidance, lack of engagement • Communicates a conflict between the teacher and the project goals, methods. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-site coaching. • Assume the role of contextual analyst • Play multiple roles in response to information collected. |
| Accessorizers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial implementers • Potential for shallow interpretations and serious misunderstandings about instructional innovations • Limited ability for personal reflection • High perception of personal competence, often reinforced by parents, administrators, and students. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play role of critical analyst • Deliver a balanced message affirm efforts and give constructive feedback • Develop reflective practices • Play multiple roles in response to information collected. |

| PROFILE | CHARACTERISTICS | COACHING APPROACHES |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Redecorators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted implementers, focusing efforts on those practices that align with deeply held beliefs • Technically accurate interpretations of select components of innovations • Strong command of content • Traditional approach to teaching • Less showy than accessorizers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess belief systems • Play the role of the calculated shepherd • Appeal to the logical, intellectual • Provide strategic pathways in incremental steps. |
| Renovators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivated by feeling of responsibility to students and personal need to grow • Belief system aligned with philosophy of differentiation • Possess understanding that risk-taking, discomfort, and failure are a part of the growth process • Strong command of content, pedagogy, and classroom management. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipate potential problems and provide solutions • Provide a road map for anticipated challenges shaken confidence, ambiguity. |

The teachers described here represent four categories of teacher response that staff developers often confront when working with teachers on differentiating instruction. Some teachers respond with enthusiasm; others respond with frustration and sometimes even anger. The mixed responses from teachers are understandable; for many teachers, differentiating instruction requires a considerable shift in classroom practices and, often, in deeply held beliefs about teaching and learning.

If we envision teachers' practices metaphorically as houses that they have designed and constructed, then what we ask teachers to do when we ask them to transform their classrooms through differentiation is to tear down walls, rip up floors, and rebuild their visions of themselves as architects of learning. Using this metaphor of house renovation to understand and classify common teacher responses to differentiation, four categories of teacher response can be identified: resisters, accessorizers, redecorators, and renovators. Staff developers can address the needs of teachers in each of the four categories in different ways.

COACHING RESISTERS FOR DIFFERENTIATION

In the scenario on p.42, Patterson represents the kind of teacher who makes all professional developers and coaches uneasy: the resister. Through their words and actions, resisters communicate to anyone listening that the educational philosophy and associated classroom practices that the coach is suggesting are not workable options for them. In the language of the metaphor, resisters are the teachers who respond to the invitation to change their practices by shutting the door in the faces of the staff developers. While resistance takes diverse forms, resisters tend to demonstrate strong avoidance behaviors or uncooperativeness. Resistance can be overt or covert. Overt resistance is unmistakable: anger, resentment, and general uncooperativeness. Overt resisters make it very clear, both in staff development sessions and outside of them, that they do not believe differentiation is possible or desirable in their classrooms.

A second form of resistance, covert resistance, is more subtle. Some covert resisters demonstrate strong avoidance behavior (e.g., constant scheduling conflicts preventing observations, interviews, or attendance at meetings). Others fabricate lengthy reasons and rationalizations about why deadlines can't be met, lessons executed, or assessments completed.

Whether they are overt or covert resisters, resisters present the coach with the daunting challenge of taking this largely unwilling group of educators to the next step in their responsiveness to students' diverse needs.

The first step in this important task is to assume the role of the contextual analyst. Contextual analysis involves playing the role of the detective, uncovering the reasons behind the teacher's resistance to differentiation. Martin finds she is most effective approaching each resister individually. Resistance is more difficult to deconstruct in groups; Martin's first tactic is to initiate a general, nonthreatening conversation unrelated to differentiation with the goal of opening up lines of communication. Martin has found that these nonthreatening conversations often provide powerful hints about teachers' concerns, fears, frustrations, and anger - important information Martin can use to guide her next steps. For example, Martin may discover that Patterson feels that she does not have the skills or tools necessary to make differentiation work, but to admit that lack publicly would threaten her status as a teacher in the school. Or Martin may discover that Patterson is struggling with an illness that drains her physically and emotionally to the point where she cannot conceive of taking on new approaches that feel unfamiliar and difficult to implement. Martin also may discover that Patterson fully invested herself in the last educational initiative that came through Happy Valley and still feels resentment and cynicism about the faddish nature of educational reform efforts.

Once Martin has more clarity about what is contributing to a teacher's resistance to differentiation, she can respond appropriately. If Martin finds that Patterson is intimidated by differentiation and does not feel that she has the skills to make it work, Martin can leave user-friendly differentiation materials and lesson plans in Patterson's mailbox or talk to Patterson about what is working in her classroom and how certain differentiation strategies would mesh easily with what she already is doing. This way, Martin is affirming Patterson's teaching skills while providing attractive, unthreatening next steps toward using differentiation in the classroom. If Martin finds that Patterson is struggling with an illness, Martin might model a lesson using "low-prep" differentiation strategies (differentiation strategies that require less teacher preparation time than others), following up with a discussion of how Patterson might build on what she is already doing in her classroom using the modeled strategies. If Martin finds that Patterson is weary of what she considers "flash-in-the-pan", initiatives, Martin might focus on making concrete how differentiation is grounded in best curricular and instructional practices of a number of enduring educational movements. Martin can help Patterson see that she does not have to "throw away" what she has been doing in her classroom. Rather, she can build strategically on the best elements of her practice.

When coaches like Martin assume the role of contextual analyst, uncovering the reasons behind the resistance, they commit to understanding their teachers as learners and as people, the important first step in beginning a differentiated learning experience. The successful coach will then use that information to assume multiple roles as coach to differentiate for the teachers' diverse needs -in much the same way that she will ask the teachers in her project to do for the students in their classrooms.

COACHING ACCESSORIZERS FOR DIFFERENTIATION

In the scenario on p. 42, Rogers and Crawford represent accessorizers. These are teachers who initially are very involved with and excited about differentiation, but who never develop beyond a surface and somewhat inaccurate understanding of what differentiation is. In the language of the metaphor, accessorizers are willing to add a plant or put down a throw rug, but they are not interested in making changes to their houses beyond those that are small and superficial. Accessorizers do not sense a real need to alter their houses. They are happy with their classrooms as they are. While coaching resisters may initially seem like the most difficult task, one might argue that effectively coaching accessorizers is actually a more formidable challenge. Rogers and Crawford jumped out early onto Martin's coaching radar -these teachers eagerly took initial ideas from professional development and study group sessions into their classrooms. They began a positive campaign for differentiation within the school and used the terms and vocabulary often in public discussions. Where they fell short, however, was in implementing strategies without considering and then attending to the more important goal of responsive teaching.

They failed to recognize the important principle that merely using a RAFT (an acronym that stands for Role, Audience, Format, and Topic: a writing planning template that teachers can use to create differentiated writing assignments) writing strategy is not, in itself, differentiating instruction; rather, using the RAFT strategy to address a range of students' abilities to make complex connections in history is the more substantive leap.

While, because of their enthusiasm, accessorizers may seem like the easiest teachers to work with, they are, in fact, difficult to move forward because their understanding of the philosophy of differentiation and differentiation practices is shallow and, in some instances, misdirected. Taking teachers like Rogers and Crawford to their next level of professional development will require the coach to forge a delicate balance between affirming their early efforts to implement differentiated instruction into their classroom practice and at the same time providing them honest feedback about their misunderstandings and shallow first attempts. To make this happen, the coach must play the role of critical analyst. Through this lens, the coach will analyze what the teachers say they are doing and how that translates into practice, encouraging the accessorizing teachers to reflect on their beliefs and practices related to differentiation. The coach should observe the accessorizing teacher's classroom and ask the accessorizer to reflect, either aloud, in a reflective journal, or in e-mail discussions, on how class went for individual students. The coach should ask the accessorizer teacher to explain the learning goals around which the lesson was planned; the purpose behind the differentiated activity; the information she used to determine student groupings, pacing, support structures, and materials for the different activities; and to consider how it might be more effectively implemented in the future. With accessorizing teachers, emphasizing that differentiation must be purposeful rather than simply "cute" or "showy" is critical. It is not an easy task for coaches to deliver a balanced message -complimenting the energy and enthusiasm evident in the accessorizer's willingness to jump into a difficult and often daunting task, while simultaneously providing constructive feedback about where there may be misunderstandings -but to do so will help the teacher move forward in her efforts to differentiate.

COACHING REDECORATORS FOR DIFFERENTIATION

Jones represents the kind of teacher who seems like a paradox. At first glance, his quiet intensity and pointed, even argumentative, questions might be misinterpreted as the hallmarks of a resister, but in his own quiet way, Jones can also be a powerful ally for the coach. Martin knows that Jones' incisive questions indicate that he is not categorically dismissing differentiation like a resister, and not adopting it without thought like accessorizers, but that he is wrestling to make differentiation work within the confines of his existing beliefs and skills.

Redecorator teachers lack the obvious enthusiasm and outward signs of support that are characteristic of accessorizers, but instead bring a strong command of their content, an intellectual view of the teaching profession, and a desire to provide as powerful a learning experience for their students as possible.

While most redecorators do not have a rich pedagogical background, this in many ways is an asset as it reduces the need to unlearn bad habits and correct misunderstandings. Redecorator teachers tend to be targeted implementers of differentiation, focusing their efforts only on those practices that align with their deeply held (and often traditional, teacher-centered) beliefs about teaching and learning. Generally, unlike their accessorizer peers, redecorators tend to become committed to effectively implementing differentiation strategies and approaches with a high degree of accuracy and appropriateness. However, while redecorators are metaphorically willing to redo the kitchen or refinish floors, they are not willing to change the overall structure of their homes. That is, while redecorators will make accurate and substantial changes to a specific part of their teaching methods, they hold firm to their traditional, teacher-centered beliefs about teaching in general.

Challenging redecorators to move to the next level in their professional development requires that Martin first assess the teachers' belief systems, such as their perceptions about the roles of the teacher and learner in a responsive classroom. By listening carefully to the nature of Jones' questions in staff development sessions, Martin gains insight into his feelings and concerns about differentiation. She can then follow up with a conversation with Jones about how he sees differentiation fitting into his classroom. Unlike resisters, redecorators are more open to conversations and discussions about the realistic possibilities of using differentiation in their classrooms. Martin knows she can talk candidly with Jones about the issues because she knows he is open to trying to understand the initiative better and is interested in making it work within the existing structures of his classroom. However, Martin also knows to expect pointed questions about the logistics (such as parental concerns, grading, resource allocation, and planning time) of differentiation, and she knows she needs to have concrete, workable responses to his questions. Without workable solutions to their concerns, redecorator teachers can become resisters who believe that differentiation is a nice idea in theory, but not feasible in reality.

Martin knows that Jones, like many redecorator teachers, tends to be traditional in his views of classroom instruction and that while he might acknowledge that students differ in their readiness to learn a particular concept, he may be unwilling to deviate from his deeply held beliefs about the importance of direct instruction and individual student practice. Given this information, Martin assumes the role of the calculated shepherd and makes strategic recommendations for instructional approaches that align with Jones' more traditional belief system, while at the same time beginning to address his students' differing needs.

From this view, Martin appeals to Jones' intellectual tendencies and makes a logical argument about how a strategy such as a tiered assignment could address students' different readiness levels within his classroom but could be managed using direct instruction and individual practice.

Gradually, Martin will encourage Jones to try strategies that move further and further away from his teacher-centered philosophy, but she knows she needs to take on this task incrementally and carefully.

COACHING RENOVATORS FOR DIFFERENTIATION

Renovators, like McIntire in the opening scenario, are those teachers who, in the language of the metaphor, entirely rebuild their teaching practices and belief systems from the ground up when they are confronted with differentiation of instruction. Coaches charged with moving teacher groups toward more responsive, differentiated practices hope that there are large groups of renovator teachers in their midst. In many ways, renovators are ideal change agents. They are intrinsically motivated to find better, more effective ways to reach and teach their students, are knowledgeable about the discipline they teach, and are willing to consider alternative teaching practices. They are reflective about their beliefs and view the change process as a complex and multifaceted journey not a destination in itself.

Martin knows that she won't immediately be able to spot a renovator. Renovators emerge over time from all of the previously discussed categories in response to thinking about and wrestling with the idea of responsive teaching. However, in both listening to teachers and watching them work, Martin can see the characteristics of a renovator emerge. Martin knows she is working with a renovator when she hears a teacher talk about differentiation as an overarching philosophy of recognizing and responding to student diversity, not as a group of strategies to supplement her already established teaching practices. Martin knows she is working with a renovator when she observes a teacher implementing differentiated lessons appropriately and purposefully to address identified student needs, when she sees a teacher focused on the needs of students over the challenges that differentiation presents to herself, when she sees a teacher look creatively at the possibilities offered by differentiation instead of cynically at the liabilities, and when she observes a teacher using the skills she needs to differentiate instruction or working doggedly to acquire them.

Once Martin has identified a teacher as a renovator, she knows the teacher will require different supports than the other categories of teachers. Renovators are already motivated, their belief systems are consistent with the philosophy of differentiation, and they are open to new ideas. Martin knows that what renovator teachers need from her, however, is a road map for their change process that anticipates and suggests ways to handle potential problems, such as resistance from other teachers, questions from parents, and lack of resources.

Additionally, as renovator teachers change to become more systematically responsive to students' diverse needs, they make great leaps of insight, but also at times suffer from shaken confidence and feelings of anxiety. Martin feels that her greatest contributions to renovator teachers often are creating a safe environment for taking the necessary risks, providing access to resources, and giving them regular support and feedback through coaching sessions or e-mail exchanges during the change process.

RESEARCH METHODS

This article summarizes the findings from a five-year study funded by the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented at the University of Connecticut (Brighton, Hertberg, Moon, Tomlinson, & Callahan, in press). This mixed-methods study sought to investigate factors that inhibit and support middle school teachers' implementation of differentiated instruction and assessment practices in mixed-ability classrooms. Approximately 75 teachers from nine middle schools across the United States participated in the research project, agreeing to attend monthly coaching sessions, follow-up classroom observations, formal interviews, and sharing their journeys in journals, myriad planning documents, and student work samples.

Research for these materials was supported under the Javits Act Program (Grant No. R206R000001-01) as administered by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. Grantees undertaking such projects are encouraged to express freely their professional judgment. These materials, therefore, do not necessarily represent positions or policies of the government, and no official endorsement should be inferred.

CONCLUSION

While it may be tempting to consider professional development for differentiated instruction as a "one-size-fits-all" proposition, doing so contradicts the message staff developers hope to convey to and instill in teacher-learners. Teachers who come to staff development are as diverse as the students they teach. Professional developers need to respond to this diversity by differentiating their approach to staff development. As in the classroom with student learners, there are times in professional development when whole group, direct instruction is the most appropriate instructional vehicle. At other times, individual or small group coaching tailored to address teachers' specific learner needs is necessary. To make this coaching time as effective and productive as possible, coaches must recognize where teacher-learners are in regard to differentiation when they come in. Using the house reconstruction metaphor to understand teachers' common responses to differentiation, we can identify which categories teachers fall into and provide them with the support and feedback they need to grow as responsive teachers.

REFERENCE

Brighton, C., Hertberg, H., Moon, T., Tomlinson, C., & Callahan, C. (In press). *Feasibility of high-end learning in the academically diverse middle school*. Storrs, CT: National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented.

Coaching Teachers Through the Transition to the B.E.S.T. ELA Standards: Implementation Action Plan

| | Adult Learner Characteristics | Activities and Actions to Support Teachers Through the Transition to the B.E.S.T. Standards | Notes/Ideas |
|----------------------|---|--|--------------------|
| Resistors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overt resistance and avoidance behavior ● Lack of engagement during PD ● May engage in verbal disagreements ● Visible disdain for new initiatives ● Very fearful of appearing unknowledgeable ● May have health/personal issues occurring ● Often feels threatened ● Needs a lot of reassurance and support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share state/district requirements, implementation expectations, and planned timeline ● Explain organization of B.E.S.T. Standards ● Implement a process for studying the standards with various groups ● Set goals and provide coaching support to reach specific goals for learning and implementing the B.E.S.T. Standards ● Supply ample positive feedback for any small willingness or progress observed towards implementation | |
| Redecorators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deeply held beliefs about teaching and learning ● Often has strong preference for traditional teaching strategies ● Usually flies under the radar ● May have a strong command of content and responds on an intellectual level ● Will often implement a strategy to appear compliant but does not change underlying belief systems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share state/district requirements and implementation plan ● Implement a process for studying the standards with various groups ● Confer with individual teachers to analyze data and consider their students' current needs to build urgency and buy-in for transition to new B.E.S.T. Standards ● Develop methods of feedback and self-reflection opportunities on implementation efforts | |
| Renovators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Knowledgeable about content ● Willing to consider change and reflective about beliefs and practices ● May be impacted by negativity ● May become anxious with timelines ● Benefits from reassuring feedback, modeling and coaching ● Will rethink and rebuild practices when confronted with evidence that what they are doing is not working | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set goals with teachers, provide coaching support to reach specific goals for learning and implementing the B.E.S.T. Standards ● Confer with individual teachers to analyze data and consider their students current needs to build urgency and buy-in for transition to new B.E.S.T. Standards ● Implement a process for studying the standards with various groups such as grade-level teams, vertical teams and literacy leadership teams ● Co-plan standards-based lessons/units ● Model, co-teach and observe in classrooms | |
| Accessorizers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Loves to “talk the talk” on new initiatives but struggles with implementation ● Often has a high perception of personal competence ● Often viewed in high esteem with peers and administrators ● Requires a balance between positive affirmations for efforts and honest feedback regarding implementation efforts ● May not be accustomed to self-reflection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduce B.E.S.T. Standards with a focus on the “why” and that the Standards are designed to support building background knowledge ● Implement a process for studying the standards with various groups such as grade-level teams, vertical teams and literacy leadership teams ● Confer with individual teachers to analyze data and consider their students current needs to build urgency and buy-in for transition to new B.E.S.T. Standards ● Co-plan standards-based lessons/units ● Develop methods of feedback and self-reflection opportunities on implementation efforts with individuals and grade-level teams | |

Tools *for* LEARNING SCHOOLS

EVERY EDUCATOR ENGAGES IN EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING EVERY DAY SO EVERY STUDENT ACHIEVES

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Summer 2014

Vol. 17, No. 4

Teacher-coach relationships

An excerpt from *Coaching Matters*

By Joellen Killion, Cindy Harrison, Chris Bryan, and Heather Clifton

In any professional learning program, teachers and coaches must have a good relationship in order to get the work done.

To have a productive relationship, teachers and coaches need to trust one another, respect each other professionally, commit to keeping their partnership agreements, and clearly define the work they will do together. Teachers must believe that the coach supports them and that the coach's top priority is student academic achievement. The coach must believe that teachers are committed to continuous improvement and that teachers' top priority is student academic achievement. The mutual respect and professional focus of the coach-teacher relationship minimizes personal factors that may detract from a productive relationship.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH TEACHERS

Building strong, productive relationships with teachers requires six key elements:

- Creating effective partnership agreements;
- Building teacher leadership capacity;
- Communicating about coaching services;
- Allowing teachers to identify their needs and to choose how a coach provides support (allowing teachers "a voice and a choice");
- Encouraging feedback; and
- Managing resistance and conflict.



CREATING EFFECTIVE AGREEMENTS

To have a constructive and productive relationship, teachers and coaches agree in advance on how they will work together and the kind of work they will do. An agreement reduces teachers' anxiety about what the coaching experience is and creates a foundation for a trusting relationship.

A coach may want a partnership agreement with individual teachers and with teams of teachers. Partnership agreements often describe each party's roles and responsibilities, outline desired outcomes for the work, define how the work will be measured, specify what data the coach and teacher will examine and how they will follow up, describe what the coach and the teacher need from one another to be successful, tell how they will interact with one another, and spell out what is confidential.

One of the most important aspects of partnership-agreement conversations teachers and coaches have is about

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COVER STORY Teacher-coach relationships

Continued from p. 1

what confidentiality means in their relationship. The coach is more likely to be able to establish trust and gain teachers' confidence if everyone explicitly understands that the coach's work does not influence the principal's evaluation of teachers in any way or affect the principal's regard for the teachers. If teachers think the coach tells the principal about their practices, they are less inclined to want to work with the coach or to see the coach as a support. Coaches and teachers can negotiate what is permissible to share with other teachers or the administrator.

Learning Forward BELIEF

More students achieve when educators assume collective responsibility for student learning.

An astute coach discusses the bounds of confidentiality with administrators as well as with teachers when establishing partnership agreements. Conversations about partnership agreements allow teachers to share how they might work most effectively with the coach and what specific needs they have. The coach may want to use an agenda or conversation map to focus the conversation. A summary

restatement ending the conversation ensures that the teacher and coach agree on the specifics of the working relationship.

Usually both the parties write and sign the partnership agreement, but the agreement also can be less formal, such as having one person, usually the coach, take notes during the conversation and copy the notes for the other person.

Partnership agreements are not stagnant — they evolve as the relationship between the coach and teacher evolves. Early on, when the coach and teacher are more tentative about the relationship, the agreements are clear and explicit. As the relationship matures and becomes more focused, businesslike, and intentional, the agreements, while never ignored, may require less focus.

BUILDING TEACHER LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

One indicator that coaching is effective is when teacher leadership grows. Coaches are not the only teacher leaders at a school site. Coaches who see it as their responsibility to develop teacher leadership send the message that all teachers have leadership potential and responsibilities. These coaches see themselves as models of leadership practices and make their practices transparent so that other teachers can learn to coach. Teachers are more engaged when coaches demonstrate respect for teachers' knowledge and practices.

Coaches can foster teacher leadership in many ways. Coaches can:

- Invite other teachers to facilitate a team meeting, and guide and support novice facilitators.
- Seek other teachers' support with complex challenges related to student learning and teaching.
- Invite teachers to add resources, examples, models, or

ideas to conversations.

- Invite teachers to discuss their instructional decisions so that others understand the theoretical, research, or contextual rationale for the decision.
- Use reflection protocols to foster reflection.
- Encourage teachers to present in critical friends' groups.
- Encourage teachers to facilitate professional development for their peers.
- Provide professional development in teacher leadership skills for interested teachers.
- Coach team, grade-level, or department chairs on their leadership skills.
- Share practices or resources with designated teacher leaders or those who want to develop their leadership capacity.
- Pair teachers as peer observers to provide each other feedback.
- Engage teachers in walk-throughs or instructional rounds to gather data about teaching and learning, and participate in debriefing sessions.
- Invite teachers to serve as hosts for walk-throughs or instructional rounds.
- Encourage teachers to open their classrooms to other teachers to visit.

Some teachers hesitate to take leadership roles, seeing the challenge as adding responsibilities to their regular work. Others consider leadership responsibilities only as a track to school administration. However, schools today have enough leadership opportunities and forms of leadership to allow just about any interested teacher to lead in some way. Coaches also can help create leadership opportunities for teachers who prefer to remain in the classroom.

To build teachers' confidence as they step into leadership roles, coaches apply the same gradual-release principle they use in coaching instruction to build leadership expertise — I do, we do, you do. As teachers gain confidence, they can gradually assume some of the coach's responsibilities so that eventually the coach can shift responsibilities or assume new ones. Other teacher leaders can take over roles including data coach, learning facilitator, instructional specialist, and more. When teacher leaders are active within a school and assume leadership responsibilities, their sense of collegiality is stronger, they feel more engaged and professional, and they have a greater effect on student achievement.

Coaching is most successful when instruction improves, student learning increases — and more teachers see themselves as leaders and contributors to the professionalism within their schools.

Continued on p. 3

COVER STORY Teacher-coach relationships

Continued from p. 2

COMMUNICATING ABOUT COACHING SERVICES

Coaches can encourage teachers to participate in coaching by communicating which coaching services are offered. What the coach can provide and the coach's availability depend on the coaching program's goals and parameters. For example, if a district has determined that its coaches will serve as data coaches, instructional and curriculum specialists, and learning facilitators, the coach will need to provide services associated with those roles. So a data coach would meet with teachers individually or in teams to analyze student data and also might help the principal facilitate whole-school faculty meetings to review data about student achievement, engagement, demographics, perceptions, and so on. Some coaches have surveyed staff and then outlined services that respond to teacher needs.

Coaches have different ways of letting teachers know what support is available. Some coaches have created electronic or print menus listing the coach's support options. Others have created one-page descriptions or brochures. Some approaches are creative; others are more straightforward. The form of the communication sends a message about how the coach intends teachers to view coaching.

In almost all of these communication tools, coaches include details such as how to connect with the coach and the best way, whether by email, a note in the coach's mailbox, or with a phone message. Written or electronic formats generally include a place for the teacher's name and a spot to check off the requested service. These communication tools help a coach prepare and be ready to focus when working with teachers. Teachers then can consider in advance how to benefit from the coach's support, which increases their engagement, intentionality, and, potentially, the results.

In addition to communicating the services they offer, coaches periodically report to the staff, principals, and the coach champion which services they have provided. Most coaching programs require coaches to complete some form of log that the coaching program director and school principal use to manage the program.

Teachers often wonder how coaches spend their time when the coach is not with a particular team or individual teacher. To keep teachers informed, coaches can create a summary to share with all staff — a circle graph of how the coach's time is allocated or a description of the amount of time the coach spent in various services. The data can be pulled easily from the coach's log. The summary could be included in the staff newsletter, shared in a faculty meeting or school leadership team meeting, or posted on the faculty Web page. By seeing this information, teachers may get ideas about how to benefit from coaching services in the future.

Coaching Matters

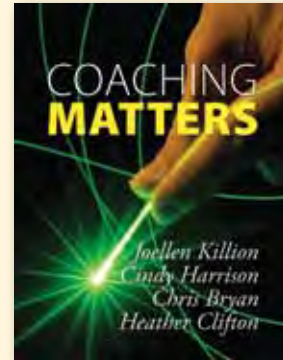
Joellen Killion, Cindy Harrison, Chris Bryan, Heather Clifton

This article is excerpted from *Coaching Matters* (Learning Forward, 2012). Each chapter describes an element of research and the authors' firsthand experiences in making coaching effective.

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ALLOWING TEACHERS A VOICE AND CHOICE

Teachers can't be forced to engage in coaching. A more positive approach is to set clear expectations and allow teachers to identify their needs and choose the services the coach provides and the focus of the coach-teacher interaction. Giving teachers a voice and choice empowers and respects the voice of teachers (Knight, 2007). Choice means believing "that teachers should have choice regarding what and how they learn" (Knight, 2007, p. 41).

When teachers are respected and given choice in their professional learning and the professional learning the coach provides aligns more closely with teachers' unique needs, teachers are more likely to perceive value in the coaching and apply what they learn from the coach.

As principals convey expectations about coaching, it is important that they expect that teachers take an active role in the coaching process by clarifying the specific type of support they want and their goal for the coaching interaction.

The coach's role is to create a trusting, collaborative relationship with teachers to make the process inviting, to listen deeply, to seek to understand teachers' needs, and to support them in meeting their individual, team, school, and district goals.

REFERENCE

Knight, J. (2007). *Instructional coaching: A partnership approach to improving instruction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. ●

TOOL

Sample partnership agreement between instructional coach and teacher

Coaches can define the bounds of their professional relationships by establishing partnership agreements. Use this tool to create an agreement between a coach and a teacher that defines their working relationship and expectations for the coach's work.

| BASIC AGREEMENTS | DESIGN ISSUES |
|---|--|
| <p>What are your worst fears and best hopes for our work together?</p> <p><i>Teacher:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am afraid that you will judge my teaching to be less than satisfactory. I am afraid that having you in my classroom will distract the students. I hope that our work together will make a difference for my students. I am hoping that I will learn many new things. <p><i>Coach:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am afraid I won't be able to help you enough to see a difference in student achievement. I hope you will see me as a peer. | <p>How will we know about student achievement in your classroom? What data will we collect?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will plan an entire unit together, examine student work along the way, and evaluate the results of the final assessment. We need to know what skills students are starting with in relation to the unit being taught. |
| <p>How do you want me to interact with you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will communicate by email. We will each have a copy of all of our joint work. We will be totally confidential as far as any evaluative comments we may make about each other's work. | <p>How and when will we co-plan and teach?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will meet Wednesday to plan the lesson. We will each need to bring our materials with us. We will start teaching this unit the next Monday. |
| <p>What resources and materials will we need?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher will bring curriculum guide and pacing chart. Coach will bring additional books that we could use for reading aloud during the unit. | <p>How can we implement demonstration lessons/co-teaching/visits with feedback in your classroom?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will start this unit with the coach modeling the first read-aloud lesson. Then we will co-teach during the first week. By the end of week 2, the teacher will teach a lesson incorporating a read aloud with a focus on the English language learner students. |
| | <p>Where do we want to start in your classroom? What are our priorities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our priorities are to master using reading aloud as part of our reading mini-lessons. We also want to integrate reading into all the content areas. |
| | |

Source: *Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches*, by Joellen Killion and Cindy Harrison. Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council, 2006.

Session 2 Note Catcher

Creating Effective Agreements

Building Leadership Capacity

Communicating Coaching Services

Supporting Teachers with B.E.S.T.

One way my thinking was confirmed was...

One new idea I want to remember is...

One action step I need to take is...

Sample Communication 1

Dear Truman Elementary Staff,

My name is Janine Santiago, and I am so excited to be serving as the new Truman Elementary Literacy Coach. My family and I have recently moved from Ohio where I served as a K-5 Reading Interventionist. I look forward to getting to know each one of you as we work together this year to see our students thrive!

Coaching and supporting teachers is my passion because I believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to grow their practice through coaching services! Below are some of the ways we might work together:

- Co-planning
- Nonevaluative observation with feedback and reflection
- Exploring resources and curriculum
- Scheduling the literacy block
- Examining student work samples
- Team teaching
- Examining student data and creating next steps
- Listening and support with brainstorming to solve problems

I would love to talk with you more about these opportunities to see which one might be the right fit for you as you begin a new school year. Feel free to reach out to me via email at santiago@lssd.edu or stop by my office for a brief chat. I look forward to our work together this year!

Your coach,

Janine

Alex's Coaching Menu

This menu provides a brief overview of the ways we can work together. I am always up for new ideas and opportunities!

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Co-planning: collaboratively plan a lesson or series of lessons incorporating best practice</p> <p>Lesson Plan Feedback: provide suggestions and strategies</p> <p>Scaffolding Support: offer resources and strategies for differentiating lessons, materials, and texts</p> | <p>Team Teaching: teach a lesson together after co-planning</p> <p>Demonstration Lesson: demonstrate a lesson in your classroom while you observe and debrief following the lesson</p> <p>Instructional Feedback provide non-evaluative observations with specific feedback based on an area you choose</p> | <p>Reflection: reflect on student learning in your classroom through conversation</p> <p>Listening and Support: lend an open and confidential ear for a topic of your choosing</p> <p>Brainstorming Session: collaboratively bounce ideas off each other for upcoming lessons, classroom issues, etc.</p> |
| <p>Topics to Study Together: Explicit Minilessons Supporting Academic Vocabulary Implementing the New B.E.S.T. Standards Scaffolding Instruction</p> | | |

To take advantage of these opportunities or to share an alternative idea you have for working together, please send an email to ballada@pncp.edu. You may also drop by my office to pick up a "Working With You" slip to fill out and leave in my mailbox. I look forward to hearing from you because...

Everyone Deserves a Coach!

