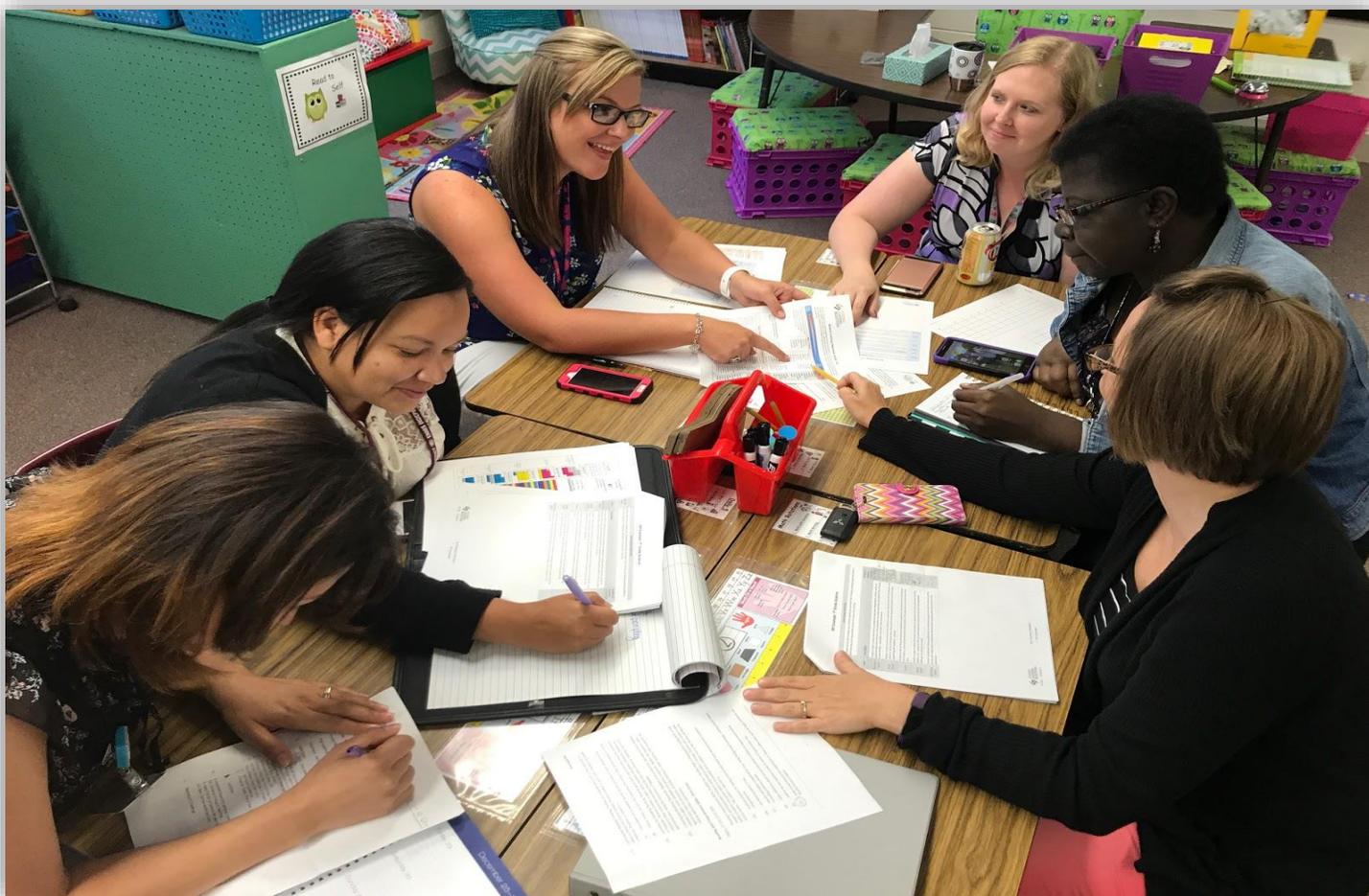


Ennis Independent School District



Instructional Coaching Handbook



“When teachers stop learning, so do students.”

—Jim Knight, Unmistakable Impact: A Partnership Approach for Dramatically Improving Instruction

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INTRODUCTION

Vision

Through school community partnerships, the learning and leadership team will inspire, empower, and equip lifelong learners to positively impact the future.



Mission

The mission of the learning and leadership team, as a student and teacher focused partner, is to enrich the capacity of teachers through high-quality, research-based learning experiences to facilitate the refinement of their craft.

Goals

The goals for the Instructional Coaching program are to:

- Facilitate educator growth, development, and professional learning in ways that lead to higher learner achievement
- Enhance educational learning experiences for all students
- Facilitate use of formative assessment to drive high-quality, research-based instructional decisions
- Encourage and support educator reflections about evidence-based practices
- Serve as a link between campus and district

We Believe...

Mutually trusting relationships is the foundation of coaching partnerships.

Coaching promotes collective and individual growth in implementation of high-quality, research-driven learning experiences.

Coaching promotes a culture of continuous improvement of educator quality that results in high levels of learner success.

Guiding Purpose and Intent

The purpose of the Instructional Coaching Model is to help close the student achievement gap and accelerate learning for all students by building teacher capacity through implementation of effective instructional practices (Casey, 2006).

Instructional coaching supports all educators at all schools. According to Medrich, Fitzgerald, Skomsvold (2013),

Teachers and teaching are at the forefront of the school reform agenda. There is a consensus that in addition to better teacher preparation, a stronger curriculum, better diagnostic tools and assessments, and significant changes to accountability systems, effective professional development is one key to improving the quality of instruction in schools. Instructional coaching is one approach to professional development that is of particular interest in many schools and school districts across the country. (p.1) The purpose of the Instructional Coaching Program is to help close the student achievement gap and accelerate learning for all students by building teacher capacity through job-embedded professional learning and implementation of effective instructional practices.

The Instructional Coaching Program is aligned to the goals and objectives of the campus and district improvement plans. Instructional coaching is about teachers, teacher leaders, coaches, administrators, coordinators, directors, and superintendents examining practices in reflective ways with the focus on student learning. The ultimate result is to build teacher capacities so they know every student by name and need and are able to respond to those needs in a timely manner.



INSTRUCTIONAL COACH

What is an Instructional Coach?

An Instructional Coach is an on-site professional developer who collaborates with teachers and administrators. However, the principal must be the instructional leader. The chart on the following page depicts the outcomes of different elements of professional development: theory, demonstration, practice and coaching. Based on research, an estimated 95% of teachers who receive ongoing support and guidance through coaching are more likely to learn and implement new practices in the classroom. Researchers also estimate that teachers generally need to utilize a new instructional strategy approximately 25 times before it is transferred into their daily teaching routine.



Professional Learning Outcomes			
Professional Learning Elements	Knowledge Level (Estimated percentage of participants understanding contents)	Skill Attainment (Estimated percentage of participants demonstrating proficiency in the instructional practices)	Transfer to Practice (Estimated percentage of participants regularly implementing instructional practices in the classroom)
Theory (e.g., presenter explains content - what it is, why it is important, and how to teach it)	10%	5%	0%
Demonstration (e.g., presenter models instructional practices)	30%	20%	0%
Practice (e.g., participants implement instructional practices during the session)	60%	60%	5%
Coaching (e.g., participants receive ongoing support and guidance when they return to the classroom)	95%	95%	95%

Source: Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (2002). *Student achievement through staff development* (3rd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.



An instructional coach supports and provides training in order to improve classroom instruction that leads to improved student achievement. An instructional coach is one who supports others in building their teaching skills, assists in application of new knowledge, and provides ongoing learning and sustainment. The instructional coach increases the overall quality of effective classroom instruction.

Characteristics of Effective Coaches

“Just as the quality of teaching determines student success, the quality of coaching determines how well coaching succeeds with teachers. Just as the quality of teaching depends on the teacher’s expertise and classroom conditions, coaching depends on two factors: the coach’s skills and the conditions in which coaching occurs.” (Killion, 2012)

Beliefs	Teaching Expertise	Coaching Skills	Relationship Skills	Leadership Skills
<p><i>An effective coach...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is willing to learn. • has a passion for ongoing development. • believes in others’ capacity to grow and develop. • Has the attitude that everyone is important. • does not presume to have “The Answer”. • understands his or her own assumptions and makes those transparent. • is committed to continuous improvement. • has a moral purpose. • can let go of feeling responsible for another person’s behaviors. 	<p><i>An effective coach...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is skilled in instructional planning. • possesses, demonstrates and cultivates the pedagogy of teaching and the ability to select appropriate instructional strategies based on student need. • uses multiple methods of assessing students. • is fluent in multiple methods of delivering instruction. 	<p><i>An effective coach...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understands and applies knowledge about adult development • diagnoses teachers’ needs. • aligns support to teachers’ identified needs. • demonstrates effective verbal and written communication skills. • listens skillfully. • uses questioning skills. • understands and employs reflective processes. • is solution driven and effective. 	<p><i>An effective coach...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has good interpersonal relationships. • wants to be a part of a team. • fosters trust. • works effectively with teachers and principals. • is respected by peers. • has patience for the learning process. 	<p><i>An effective coach...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stays abreast of best practices in professional learning. • engages others in developing plans for improvement. • maintains a productive culture. • communicates the school and district vision. • aligns work with school and district goals. • uses data to make decisions. • understands and applies knowledge about change.

Source: Killion, J. & Harrison, C. (2006). *Taking the lead: New roles for coaches and teacher leaders*. Oxford, OH: National Staff Development Council.

GENERAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Roles of the Instructional Coach

Role #1: A Learning Leader and Facilitator of Learning

Instructional coaches model and facilitate learning opportunities for campus including:

- Engaging in continuous learning through professional development opportunities and professional reading to build capacity
- Practicing and reflecting about learning
- Designing and leading job-embedded, formal and informal, professional learning
- Supporting the development and implementation of the district and campus professional learning plan
- Fostering an expectation of participation and individual growth from collaboration within PLCs



Role #2: Instructional Specialist and Content Facilitator

Instructional coaches support educators' implementation of curriculum and effective learning design through strategies including but not limited to:

Curriculum and Assessments

- Participating in the review and revision process of the district curriculum resources, including but not limited to district assessments
- Communicating information to campus regarding curriculum resources and assessments
- Promoting a risk-free environment for educators to design formative classroom assessments and learning experiences
- Empowering educators to utilize effective formative assessments to gain evidence of mastery of learning to determine students' differentiated learning pathway
- Utilizing and ensuring vertical alignment during planning process
- Supporting educators in using the TEKS as the curriculum

Learning Design

- Building capacity amongst educators to understand and utilize a variety of research-based learning experiences
- Encouraging educators to design constructivist learning experiences, knowing these support higher order thinking and a deeper understanding
- Empowering educators to utilize appropriate curriculum bundling to maximize opportunities for the learners in the classroom
- Providing experiences for educators to consider various virtual/digital learning environments

Role #3: Learning Partner

Instructional coaches provide direct support to educators in their classrooms through co-planning, co-teaching, and modeling effective instructional strategies (Killion & Harrison, 2006). Instructional coaches increase the quality and effectiveness of classroom instruction as they partner with educators by:

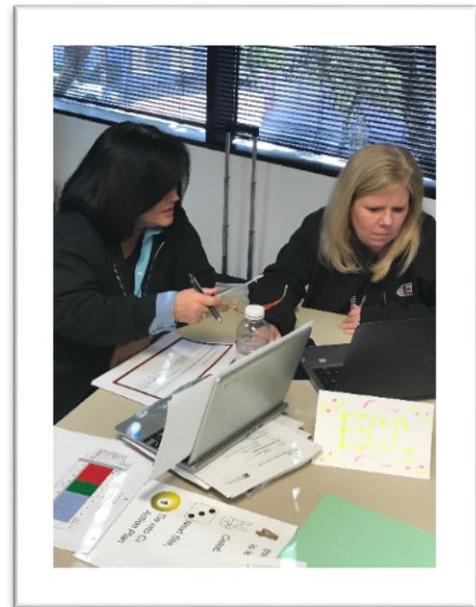
- Engaging educators in the Coaching Impact Cycle (Identify, Learn, Improve)
- Co-teaching and modeling strategies and techniques that ensure rigorous core instruction for all learners
- Co-planning instructional units with educators using backward design and effective learning experiences
- Observing educators and providing feedback with a focus on students' responses to the instruction
- Collaborating to promote reflection and to identify next steps

The Roles of the Campus Administrator

Role #1: Communicator

Campus administrators build understanding of the interconnectedness of the coaching model, campus improvement plans, and district initiatives including but not limited to:

- Articulating the purpose and components of the instructional coaching model to staff
- Promoting, supporting, and sustaining the instructional coaching model
- Leading and communicating district and campus initiatives
- Maintaining the fidelity of the instructional coaching model by supporting all key people to align their actions to their appropriate roles and responsibilities
- Participating in weekly calibration meetings with the instructional coach in regards to instructional focus for work



Role #2: Facilitator

Campus administrators plan collaboratively and coordinate professional learning by:

- Fostering a safe and trusting environment built on confidentiality and respect
- Aligning professional learning with the campus and district goals and improvement plans
- Intentionally creating conditions for educators to access the instructional coaching model
- Facilitating and cultivating the partnership between educators and the instructional coach

Role #3: Instructional Leader

Campus administrators support coaches and teachers in the instructional coaching model by:

- Implementing and sustaining the campus and district initiatives
- Scheduling, planning, and facilitating regular meetings with an instructional leadership team to examine data and assist in campus-wide planning and learning opportunities
- Advocating for student learning based on data to improve instruction
- Sharing best practices and current research
- Committing to meet regularly with the instructional coach to reflect and support his or her personal growth
- Promoting and modeling continuous learning through engaging in professional reading and learning opportunities

Role #4: Supervisor

Campus administrators support, supervise, and evaluate the instructional coach by:

- Clearly communicating the expectations with the instructional coach regarding the instructional coaching model
- Ensuring the coach complies with campus and district expectations of the role and job responsibilities
- Providing timely feedback through observations and dialogue that allow for ongoing professional growth
- Informing the curriculum department of curricular, instructional, and coaching concerns
- Assisting in the evaluation of the instructional coach using the district approved evaluation instrument

Role #5: District Partner

Campus administrators foster a shared responsibility between the campus and district by:

- Attending and participating in district meetings and professional learning sessions that support the work of the instructional coaching model
- Synthesizing and applying the learning through providing job-embedded campus professional development for teachers and staff
- Scheduling timely opportunities for the instructional coach to communicate curricular and instructional updates to educators and staff
- Ensuring the responsibilities and the role of the administrator are carried forth to guarantee the fidelity of the instructional coaching model
- Fostering a partnership between campus and district through healthy and continuous communication

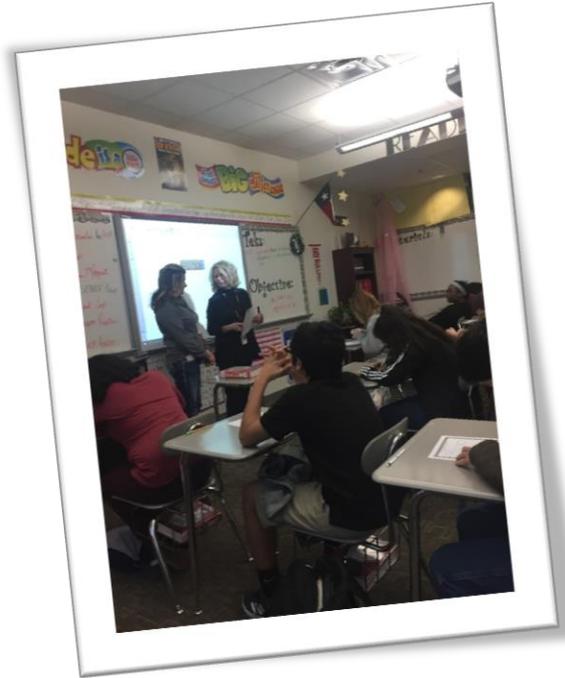
The Roles of the Classroom Educator

All educators can benefit from working with an instructional coach, from the experienced to the novice educator, and from the generalist to the content expert. By engaging in a professional collaborative relationship with an instructional coach, an educator will benefit from just-in-time support, formally and informally, in order to improve practice.

Role #1: Instructor

Educators reflect, refine and implement effective instructional practices to increase learner achievement by:

- Aligning instruction to standards (written, taught and assessed curriculum)
- Effectively identifying and responding to a learner's needs
- Collaborating with instructional coach
- Collaborating with campus teams



Role #2: Learner

Educators engage in continuous learning by:

- Participating in all relevant learning opportunities supported by the instructional coach (e.g. collaboration time, campus-based professional learning, one-to-one coaching, co-planning with the coach, book studies)
- Creating learning goals consistent with campus and district expectations
- Initiating opportunities to collaborate with an instructional coach to support successful implementation of instructional best practices

Role #3: Learning Partner

Educators engage in professional collaborative relationships including but not limited to:

- Fostering a safe, trusting environment with peers and coach
- Participating actively in the coaching process

Role #4: Assessor

Educators participate in data conversations that influence instructional decisions by:

- Creating and analyzing formative and summative assessment data to guide instruction for all students
- Knowing every child by name and need to systematically monitor growth over time
- Participating actively in the coaching process

The Roles of the Instructional Coach Supervisor

Role #1: Communicator

The Instructional Coach Supervisor builds understanding of the interconnectedness of the instructional coaching model, campus improvement plans, and district initiatives by:

- Articulating the purpose and components of the instructional coaching model
- Leading and communicating to instructional coaches, administrators, and directors the district initiatives about the instructional coaching model
- Maintaining the fidelity of the instructional coaching model by supporting alignment between actions and the designated roles and responsibilities for themselves and the instructional coach

Role #2: Facilitator

The Instructional Coach Supervisor plans collaboratively and coordinates professional learning by:

- Fostering a safe and trusting culture for continuous growth
- Supporting the instructional coaching model
- Facilitating instructional coach meetings
- Aligning professional learning with the campus and district goals and improvement plans

Role #3: Instructional Leader

The Instructional Coach Supervisor supports instructional coaches, administrators, and directors in the instructional coaching model by:

- Supporting implementation and sustainment of district initiatives
- Advocating for learning design that is based on data to improve instruction
- Sharing and modeling research-based best practices to support instructional coach implementation of job-embedded professional learning at the campus level (e.g. district professional learning, learning walks, instructional coach meetings)
- Committing to meet with the instructional coaches to reflect and support his or her role
- Empowering and building capacity in instructional coaches' practices
- Promoting and modeling continuous learning through engaging in professional learning opportunities

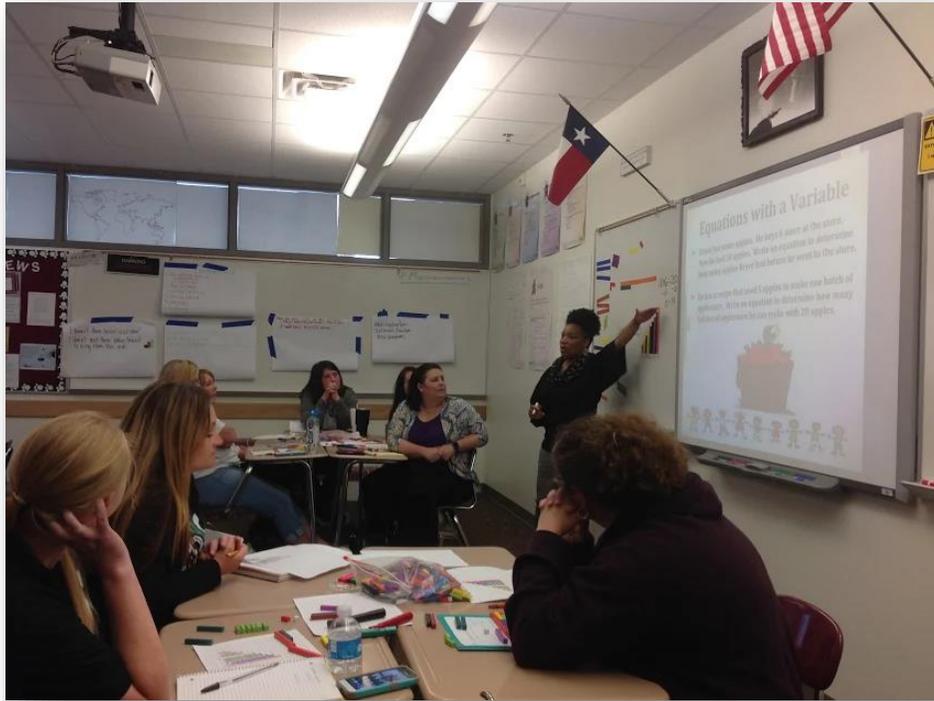
Role #4: Campus Partner

The Instructional Coach Supervisor fosters a shared responsibility between campuses and the district to know every student by name and need, and respond to those needs by including but not limited to:

- Collaborating with and supporting the instructional coach in planning targeted professional learning based on campus needs



- Communicating curricular and instructional updates to instructional coaches, administrators, and other directors in a timely manner
- Fostering a partnership between campus and district



What it is not: The Role of the Instructional Coach Does Not Include...

- Evaluating teachers
- Providing information that would be used for evaluation
- Serving as substitute teacher
- Serving as principal designee
- Taking primary responsibility for the instruction of a specifically assigned group of students
- Developing or preparing school or district budgets
- Disciplining students in an administrative capacity
- Assuming full responsibility for gathering and reviewing student data
- Being the instructional leader of the campus
- Sorting and keeping inventory of textbooks and instructional materials
- Performing lunch/morning/afternoon duties
- Expertise upon entry

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING MODEL

The foundation of the Ennis ISD Instructional Coaching Model is based on the research of Jim Knight (Instructional Coaching). It is a partnership approach to professional learning and improving student outcomes through a strategic focus on the classroom.

Instructional Coaching Focus-The Big Four

Focus and leverage are important to the work of instructional coaching. In order to maximize improvement of instruction, our model focuses on what Jim Knight calls the Big Four: behavior, content knowledge, direct instruction, and formative assessment.



Behavior

Creating a safe, productive learning community for all students is extremely important to student success. Instructional Coaches will work to empower teachers in managing behavior in the classroom along with setting up a conducive learning environment for student engagement increased learning time.

Content Knowledge

Instructional Coaches can assist teachers in sorting through, prioritizing, planning and differentiating the content taught in the classroom. This is done through developing essential questions, mapping content, recognizing and teaching content structure, and identifying, defining, and teaching concepts. Instructional Coaches can help to make content more accessible to students.

Direct Instruction

Researchers have identified and validated instructional practices that teachers can use to help student learn effectively. Powerful instructional practices ensure students master content they are encountering at school. Instructional Coaches can assist teachers in a variety of ways to enhance those research based instructional practices in the classroom.



Formative Assessment

Teachers need to know whether students are learning the content and if their skills are being affected by the instructional practices presented. Instructional Coaches support teachers and students by empowering them to see the relationship between effort and success through the use of effective formative assessments.

Coaching Continuum

An effective instructional coach differentiates professional learning opportunities by thinking of coaching as a continuum. The diagram below is a continuum that coaches can utilize to differentiate support so that teachers are able to implement proven practices.

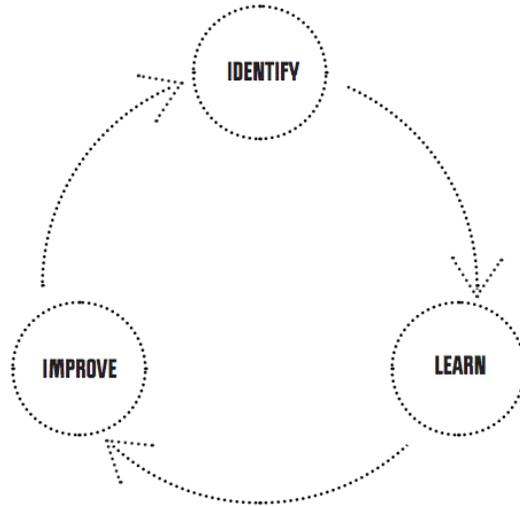
Continuum of Coaching Interactions			
MENTOR		COACH	
Inform		Share	
Mediate			
Purpose	Provide information and technical assistance, solve a problem, give advice	Share ideas and problem solve collaboratively	To improve instructional decision making and increase reflection on practice
Focus	Includes logistical information on “how we do things around here”; provides content and pedagogical knowledge	Reciprocal support for growth and improvement of practice	Nonjudgmental support for planning, instruction, assessment, reflection, problem solving (cognitive aspects of teaching)
Actions	Providing resources, demonstrations (including model lessons), offering assistance in accessing resources	Brainstorming co-planning/co-teaching, exchanging resources, action research	Learning-focused conversations which include inquiry, reflection, generation of insights regarding professional practice, and reconstruction
Language	Pay attention to...It’s a good idea...Always...Keep in mind...	We might...Let’s...How might this affect our...?	What might be some ways to...? What research supports your decisions to...?

Source: Lipton, L. & Wellman, B. (2001). *Mentoring matters: A practical guide to learning-focused relationships*. Arlington, MA: MiraVia LLC.



Coaching Impact Cycle

The purpose of the coaching cycle is to build teacher capacity through implementation of effective instructional practices in order to boost student achievement. The cycle consists of a series of coaching conversations engaging the teacher in identifying a goal, learning the practice, and improving through reflection/data. This is a cyclical process and can begin at any point in the cycle.



Identify

- Teacher gets a clear picture of current reality by watching a video of their lesson or by reviewing observation data (video is best).
- Coach asks the identify questions with the teacher to identify a goal.
- Teacher identifies a student-focused goal.

Learn

- Coach shares a checklist for the chosen teaching strategies.
- Coach prompts the teacher to modify the practice if the teacher wishes.
- Teacher chooses an approach to modeling that they would like to observe & identifies a time to watch modeling.
- Coach provides modeling in one or more formats.
- Teachers set a time to implement the practice.

Improve

- Teacher implements the practice.
- Data is gathered (by teacher or coach in class or while viewing video) on student progress toward to the goal.
- Data is gathered (by the teacher or coach in class or while viewing video) on teacher's implementation of the practice (usually on the previously viewed check list).
- Coach and teacher meet to confirm direction and monitor progress.
- Coach and teacher make adaptations and plan next actions until the goal is met.

Source: Knight, J. (2018). *The Impact Cycle: What Instructional Coaches Should Do to Foster Powerful Improvements in Teaching*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

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