IU PIIC News

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Accessing Classrooms… From Troubleshooting to Planning

By Mike Baker, IU 10 Curriculum and Innovation Consultant

My entry into "coaching" coincided with a large technology grant. One of the grant's stipulations was that a faculty member serve as a coach. The technology coach helped teachers use the hardware and software provided through the grant. Duties included plugging in printers, software training, and network troubleshooting.

Despite my love of technology, this type of "coaching" wasn't very fulfilling. What I was doing had more to do with using "stuff" than improving teaching and learning.

Thankfully, I was introduced to PIIC and the B-D-A coaching cycle shortly after taking on this new role. I worked with my PIIC mentor who suggested that technology could serve as a "foot in the door" to B-D-A coaching cycle. The plan was to use the technology support visit as the before coaching discussion. Rather than simply fixing the problem, I began to ask how the teacher planned to use the technology.

For example, after fixing a color printer, I asked the teacher how the students were using the printer. She told me that they were printing images of authors found on various websites, then affixing the images to posters that represented different literary eras.

This was the perfect opportunity to mention a piece of software found on the student computers, one that created graphic organizers that could include links to online sources.

After I showed her the software, she asked me to come back to teach it to her class. I agreed, but with one request: we needed to plan the lesson together. That was our *"before"* conversation. We decided that she would handle the content while I handled the technology. Perfect!

> *"As I became more confident in my coaching skills, I began to work literacy practices in along with the technology."*

The students quickly took to the software. We found that most of the questions were about the assignment's requirements or the content. This co-taught lesson constituted the *"during"* part of the coaching cycle.

Next was the *"after."* My questions focused on how the teacher thought the activity went and what could change for the next time. We talked about how a digital graphic organizer -- one with hyperlinks -- differs from a traditional poster. The teacher wondered what other digital tools could be used to update some of her more traditional assignments. The B-D-A process began anew.

Similar scenarios played out across all academic departments. I used bugs and hardware failures to launch numerous B-D-A coaching cycles. As I became more confident in my coaching skills, I began to work literacy practices in along with the technology. I felt like I was making an impact.

The prospect of a coach -- a "stranger" -- in the classroom is threatening to some. Technology can serve as a less threatening springboard to meaningful B-D-A coaching.

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Coaching Tip of the Month… Help

teachers cope with student anxiety and trauma. It affects the child, teacher, and classrooms. How can coaches help? Read the November Coaching Tip of the Month, https:// www.tpiic.org/coaching-tip-of-the-month/ november-2019/ https://www.tpiic.org/coaching -tip-of-the-month/november-2019/

PIIC'S MISSION: To support instructional coaching which helps teachers strengthen instructional practice, increase student engagement, and improve student learning

Letter from TPIIC's Executive Director

Instructional coaches wear so many hats in their daily coaching lives. And, we know from our work that these multiplex roles are as diverse as the population the coaches serve. In Taking the Lead (NSDC 2006), Killion and Harrison state that *"In some districts, coaches are highly valued by teachers and principals alike and, as a result of the work coaches do in their schools, teacher instructional practice is more focused, classrooms include more focus on core curriculum standards, and student achievement increases"(pg. 27).* This is not the case in schools where the coaching role and expectations are undefined, unfocused, and amorphous. They go on to say that, *"… it is not the number of roles that makes coaching difficult, but the agility that is required if coaches are to be successful in serving so many distinct clients"* (pg. 29).

So, what does that mean for instructional coaches who try to do it "all"?

 "Less is more" (Robert Browning) is the adage that comes to mind. Although their time is limited, the multitude of accountabilities is not!

Instructional coaches need to organize, categorize, synthesize, and strategize how they will facilitate their coaching work. Not so easy. And, add the role of technology integration and their roles expand even more. So "less is more" takes on a new meaning for most coaches. Maybe it means less time and more

to do!!

Technology can be a great springboard for instructional coaching. Everyone loves cool tools; they are engaging, invigorating, and clever. They certainly grab a person's attention as soon as the screen lights up! But, the human connection and the sense of personal networks is what creates change, not the tool.

In Brian Grazer's new book, he says that eye contact is the *"Wifi of human connection. Just as wifi connects us to endless information on the internet, making eye contact opens up endless possibility"* (Face to Face: The Art of Human Connection).

Instructional coaches have a responsibility to do more than just introduce teachers to these tools. Just like "data coaches" must do more than just give teachers data they collected. They must provide ample opportunities for their teaching colleagues to engage in ongoing conversations to discuss how the data or the tools influence teaching and learning. They must make that "eye contact" and establish those relationships that focus on helping teachers understand the power of technology as a support to teaching content and building literacy skills. They must develop their own content knowledge, skill set, and pedagogical "toolbox" so they can collaborate with their teaching colleagues and share resources that will help the teachers implement effective instructional practices

and reach their instructional goals. Again, the use of technology to transform practice is the goal; it's not to replace one tool for another or to use a whiteboard as an overhead projector!

It is not hard to recognize that sustained, relevant, data driven, job-embedded professional learning aligned to standards and research improves student learning. We also know that fidelity to a coaching model, providing the opportunities for all teachers to collaborate regularly, and exposing all students to classrooms with coached teachers makes an incredible difference.

Pursuing the BDA cycle of coaching regardless of content or discipline sets the tone for all instructional coaching interactions. Identifying goals, visiting classrooms, and debriefing to ensure those goals were met are the conversations that create change. It is the personal approach that weighs what was planned against what was delivered and where adjustments in teaching are realized. This communication is the lifeline of the coaching practice and if technology makes that communication a little easier, go for it… but nothing supplants a face to face conversation where eye contact is made!

Sincerely,

Ellen B. Eisenberg

Look for *Instructional Coaching in Action: An Integrated Approach That Transforms Thinking, Practice, and Schools*. Available on ASCD.org and Amazon.com!

Write Like This

Book Review by Tom Sebastian, former PIIC Regional Mentor Coordinator

Kelly Gallagher has written a number of books that have been well received by teachers, administrators, instructional coaches, and mentors. These books include *Readicide, Reading Reasons, Deeper Reading*, and *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. In *Write Like This*, Kelly Gallagher has once again written a book that can be a valuable resource for educators involved in improving adolescent literacy. In this book he shares two main premises for building real-world writers:

> *"PIIC participating districts, coaches, and mentors can use the wealth of knowledge in this book to improve classroom practice, student engagement, and student learning."*

- If we are to build students who grow up to write in the real world, we must move our writing instruction beyond a "cover the state standards" mind-set by introducing our young writers to additional real-world discourses.

- In teaching our students how to write, we must provide them with authentic modeling – modeling that comes from both the teacher and from real world texts.

He emphasizes that "Writing well does not begin with teaching students how to write; it begins with teaching students why they should write. Students who are taught how to write without being taught the real-world purposes behind authentic writing are much more likely to end up seeing writing as nothing more than a school activity- nothing more than a series of obstacles to overcome in order to pass a state test or get to graduation."

Gallagher helps his students understand the real-world writing purposes by providing them with a chart adapted from Bean, Chappell, and Gillam (2003) that lists six purposes for writing and gives an explanation for each. The purposes listed are: Express and Reflect; inform and explain; evaluate and judge; inquire and explore; analyze and interpret; and take a stand/propose a solution.

Students authenticate this chart by reviewing newspaper articles that have been written for each of these purposes. In addition, the chart is incorporated in a brainstorming tool that students use to identify multiple topics for each of the six purposes.

In each chapter, Gallagher offers many specific field-tested strategies that are designed to make writing purposeful and engaging. Content area teachers would be particularly interested in this book because of the wealth of ideas and activities that are easily understood and replicated.

In *Write Like This,* the author shares his ten core beliefs about the teaching of writing and how he often revisits these beliefs to reenergize his writing instruction. These beliefs offer an inside view of Gallagher's thought processes and provide the reader a deeper understanding of why the *Write Like This* approach to writing instruction works. PIIC-participating districts, coaches, and mentors can use the wealth of knowledge in this book to improve classroom practice, student engagement, and student learning.

For more information, please contact: www.info@tpiic.org
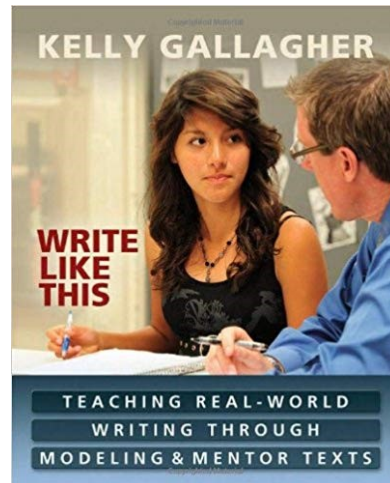
"The conundrum here is evident: in a time when the ability to write has become not only a 'predictor of academic success' but also a 'basic requirement for participation in civic life and the global economy,' writing seems to have gotten lost in many of our schools."

Write Like This

Blending Technology and Instructional Coaching

By Melissa Hamby, Megan Smith, & Brandi Swavely, Manheim Township SD Technology Integration Specialists

As Technology Integration Specialists we have worked on finding a balance between our "tech-y" side and our instructional coaching side. Through PIIC sessions, we've challenged ourselves to go further than the shallow coaching that occurs when we simply troubleshoot or discuss tech tools. In order to dive deeper, we have been trying to encourage our teachers to focus on their strengths and how technology can support what they already do well. These are the three things we have learned along the way:

Strategy over technology
So often we hear, "Technology is my goal!" Although we appreciate the enthusiasm, we want teachers to see the bigger picture and how technology can support good instruction. Good instruction and the learning outcome should always be the focus. Once we begin to talk more about pedagogy, we can talk about how a digital tool can support the learning outcome.

Continuing the relationship
Once we begin to build trust and a relationship with teachers, we can begin to move from shallow to deep coaching. We think about the teacher's comfort level with technology and consider next steps that are appropriate for that level of comfort. If a teacher is not comfortable with technology, we may co-plan together and then demonstrate a gradual release.

"A tool like Kahoot! Is fun for kids, but if you don't use the data to drive your instruction, then you're missing out."

There are, of course, times that teachers simply reach out for a quick how-to, but we hope that by building a relationship we can eventually segue into talking about why they are choosing that tool and how it will enhance student learning outcomes.

Focus on the data
Technology is wonderful in that data can be created instantaneously as students participate in class and submit work. This allows the teacher to make instructional decisions in real-time and lends itself nicely to an after conversation. In that conversation, we ask three questions:
1. What do you notice?
2. What do you make of it?
3. What are you going to do next?

This conversation is where we all celebrate because we are into deep coaching! A tool like Kahoot! is fun for kids, but if you don't use the data to drive your instruction, then you are missing out.

It is our hope that using technology in the classroom will eventually become ubiquitous. Through our work, teachers are becoming more tech-savy, but more importantly we are springboarding into instructional decisions that make a lasting impact for students.

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Technology is a Tool, Not a Toy!

By Lauren Sargent, Southern Tioga SD Instructional Coach, and Rebecca Gibboney, IU 17 PIIC Mentor

In education, technology is not just a toy; but rather, when used appropriately, it is a tool. In the coaching realm, it is no different. Technology is a tool that promotes innovation, and it is a tool that helps introduce the world to the 21st century. Yet, most importantly, it is a tool that has the power to change the coaching practice through ongoing conversation about the practice. The conversation comes first; the tool is a resource that helps the teacher achieve the lesson's goals. Within the BLaST IU17 region, Instructional Coach, Mrs. Lauren Sargent, uses technology to maximize instructional practices in the Southern Tioga School District with my support as the IU PIIC mentor. Through the BDA cycle, we collaborate and discuss ways to help the teachers achieve their goals and offer various opportunities to integrate technology into their work.

aligned those reflections with the goals she determined from our "before" conversation. She stated, "I noticed that it took me longer to get groups started than I thought. Also, a student was just sitting when I thought he had been working the whole time!" Overall though, she realized her reality was not as bad as what she had perceived. Yet, these reflections allowed us, the coach and teacher, to have an open coaching conversation. The "after" conversation evolved into the next "before" conversation where the teacher was able to plan her next steps based on her own reflections; and I simply supported her, as a coach, through the process.

> *"Technology is a tool that promotes innovation, and it is a tool that helps introduce the world to the 21st century."*

The Coach's Perspective

Lauren Sargent, Instructional Coach, Southern Tioga School District

Reflection is an essential practice for any educator. One often asks, "How can I engage my students more?" or "Why didn't the lesson go as planned?" Through reflection, the teacher may validate, confirm, or change his/her perspective on the answers to those two questions.

But what happens when perception does not match reality?

As a coach, I often challenge myself and my colleagues to use technology to videotape a lesson in the classroom. We plan the lesson in the *"before,"* participate in the *"during,"* and watch the lesson (both individually and collectively) and reflect upon that lesson in the *"after."* This cycle of doing, watching, and reflecting allows any educator the opportunity to change their perception and really view their reality.

What we did…

Recently, I challenged a new teacher to videotape herself using a Swivl for 20 minutes and then watching the video at least three times. Those three viewings allowed her to recover from the initial shock of seeing herself on camera. After all, videotaping is never a fan favorite! Once she viewed the video, we had an "after" conversation around her reflections and

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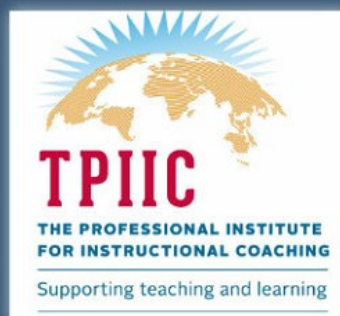
The PIIC 4-Quadrant Framework

PIIC advocates ***one-on-one and small group support*** for teachers, coaches, and school leaders using the ***BDA cycle of consultation***	PIIC focuses on ***collecting, analyzing, and using data*** to identify student needs, assess changes in classroom instructional practice and measure student progress.
PIIC emphasizes the use of ***evidence-based literacy practices***.	PIIC supports ***reflective and non-evaluative*** practices.