

PIIC News

The Pennsylvania Institute for Instructional Coaching

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If You Feed Them, They Will Come

By Jennifer Zahuranec and Jackie Wynkoop, Bellefonte Area School District Instructional Coaches

In the field of instructional coaching, the first challenge any coach faces is simply getting the players to show up. As literacy coaches for the Bellefonte Area School District, we use various methods to engage and build relationships with teachers as we support the B, D, A cycle of coaching and the PIIC 4-quadrant framework.

One of the most effective ways we have found to get teachers on our team is to help them realize they are appreciated. Having coffee, snacks, and chocolate

available in the office, at meetings, and during other times of collaboration shows teachers how much we value their commitment to learning. Since time is so precious, another way we support teachers is by raffling off free planning time coupons as a motivation to attend professional development opportunities throughout the school day. Finally, we have found that incentives such as book giveaways, office supply prizes, and gift cards are a great way to get teachers to join our team.

Once we get teachers to be dedicated team members, there are limitless ways to help them grow professionally. At the beginning of the year, we send out a coaching "menu" that details the various ways that a teacher and coach can collaborate. Some of the menu items include:

- Co-planning
- Team teaching
- Data analysis and conversations
- Lesson modeling
- Resource gathering

In addition to offering ongoing one-on-one support to individual teachers, we also have numerous opportunities to provide professional development in small groups. Targeted mini-

sessions are held monthly to reinforce research-based literacy strategies. Collaboration sessions are also held several times a year with grade levels (elementary) and departments (secondary). One way we keep teachers up to date on current educational issues is by holding monthly article club meetings at the local coffee shop. Similar to a book club, these get-togethers allow us to closely read a professional article in a relaxed and intimate setting.

Finally, as a way to communicate with the entire staff, we send out a quarterly "Coaching Connection" newsletter. The newsletter includes:

- Important information from PDE
- Ways to incorporate technology
- Alerts to upcoming professional development opportunities
- Book recommendations for teachers and students
- A showcase of teachers and their awesome ideas

These are just some of the ways that we, as coaches, get teachers to be active players on our winning team. We listen to teachers and make deliberate time to meet with them and help them reflect on their practice. If there is one piece of advice that we can leave you with, it's: *First feed their bodies; then feed their minds.*

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"One of the most effective ways we have found to get teachers on our team is to help them realize they are appreciated."



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for Instructional Coaching
A Partnership of the
Annenberg Foundation and the
PA Department of Education

Professional Learning Opportunity Dates

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Conference Center
State College, PA

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October 1, 2014
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Conference Center
State College, PA

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

Letter from PIIC's Executive Director

The process of communicating is critical for establishing and maintaining any relationship. Think about your own personal relationships... not every day is predictable, easy, or without challenge. There are always struggles that are compounded by lack of communication and fear of the "We need to talk" request – those dreaded four words!

With instructional coaching, a coach and teacher are drawn together either by design (administratively assigned), by choice (seeking out support from another colleague), or by curiosity (what does the coach know that I don't). Regardless of how a coach and teacher "get" together, a coach must take time to understand the culture of the school as a coach, even if the coach was a former teacher in the building. Not all staff members will automatically accept the coach as a colleague who provides support and helps teachers implement effective instructional practices. Remember, coaches must renegotiate their roles when they move from teacher practitioner to coach practitioner. Yesterday, the coach was next door discussing how to engage students; today, the coach is at the door discussing how to engage students. There's a difference in purpose, performance, and perception.

Effective instructional coaching is not a deficit model. Teachers and coaches

work together to make "things" better – school climate, student learning, professional development, and engagement on all levels. Students need to be engaged but so do the teachers and administrators who hold each other accountable for school success. This cannot happen, however, unless there is open communication, ongoing conversation, and mutual respect for the stakeholders in that building. And that doesn't happen until strong, trusting relationships are established and continuous efforts are made to sustain them.

Coaching is a long-term relationship. It requires effort, compromise, appreciation, awareness, and the ability to know when to nag and when to nurture. As all relationships grow, it involves change. The partners in a coaching relationship must be good listeners and recognize each other's needs. Although teachers and coaches cannot "choose" each other, there must be honesty in the relationship and willingness to understand and accept each other's philosophies, styles of teaching, and perspectives on student learning. The outcome in a coaching relationship is not who is right or who has the answer; the outcome is all about how a teacher and coach work together to increase student engagement, improve student learning, and to build teacher capacity so that

all students are in classrooms with highly effective teachers and in schools with highly effective administrators.

Teams are built when ideas and work issues are shared. In schools, the common denominator is student achievement. Our goal is to help improve student outcomes and to support their teachers and administrators in that process. We are collaborators who work together and make contributions to the lives of the students, their teachers, administrators, and schools. Coaches continue to make a difference in teaching and learning and reinforce ways for teachers to learn from each other and network with colleagues from across the state. Coaches continue to ask the question, "What can I do to help you?" which results in collective problem solving, critical thinking, open communication, and collaborative coaching interactions. Relationships cannot be established and sustained without deliberate and focused conversation. As H. Lerner says, "Our conversations invent us. ... How we use our voice determines the quality of our relationships ..." (The Dance of Connections... 2001).

Sincerely,



Please access PIIC's online resource, *The Instructional Coaching Resource Guide*:
www.instituteforinstructionalcoaching.org

Coaching Matters

Book Review by Kathy Gori, PIIC Regional Mentor Coordinator (RMC), and Jeremy Gaborin, IU 28 PIIC Mentor

Coaching Matters has been advertised as the "go to" book for those who are interested in coaching programs. As we read and discussed this book, we continuously noted parallels to the PIIC framework. Many of the essential elements of a successful coaching program as outlined by Killion, Harrison, Bryan and Clifton have been cornerstones of PIIC. For example, in the instructional coaching section, Killion and her fellow contributors outline how instructional coaches "demonstrate lessons, co-plan lessons with teachers and teams, and co-teach to help teachers grow professionally

"Many of the essential elements of a successful coaching program as outlined by Killion, Harrison, Bryan and Clifton have been cornerstones of PIIC."

and learn new strategies." The authors proceed to discuss that while instructional coaches consult and collaborate with teachers, their primary role is to reflect with teachers in a non-judgmental manner. They reinforce the concept that reflective coaches help teachers reflect on teaching before, during, and after the lesson so that the teachers can focus on and gain insights into their instructional practice.

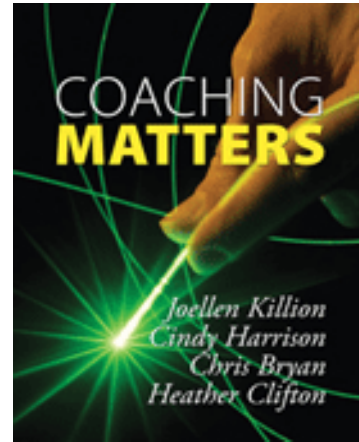
Similarly, we were impressed by the design that the authors used. Each chapter culminates with a scenario that is

Continued on page 3, Coaching Matters

realistic and school-based. In addition, the authors provide reflective questions that guide the readers' thinking about the scenarios. Furthermore, they provide recommendations for administrators and coaches that help define the roles and responsibilities of each group in designing and maintaining an effective coaching program. Finally, each section has a set of tools available for download that address every aspect of an effective coaching program. These could be easily used or modified for the implementation of the PIIC framework.

Finally, we were impressed by the thoroughness of Killion and her co-authors' systematic description of the factors necessary to design, implement, evaluate, and sustain an effective coaching program. The authors begin by asking the essential question, "Does coaching work?" When staying true to the factors necessary for a successful program, the authors indisputably believe coaching does work. Throughout the course of their book, the authors provide a clear understanding of the conditions, structures, and supports that are critical for an effective coaching program.

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"Coaching influences teacher practice, and some studies have found that coaching also affects student achievement and school culture."

Coaching Matters

A Collaborative Partnership: How Principals Can Support the Coaching Role

By Christina Cheffo, Hermitage School District Instructional Coach

In order to have a successful coaching program, a positive principal-coach relationship is essential. With the principal as the instructional leader and the coach sharing in the support for the common vision of the school, a coaching program can be successful. Sometimes, however, the principal may not be aware of the ways in which he/she can support the role of the coach in ways that encourage the use of the PIIC B, D, A cycle of coaching and the 4-quadrant framework. In order to maximize a successful coaching program, a first step in this process is for a principal to explain the role of the coach to the staff and show respect for the parameters of coaching.

Administrators who are too passive are likely to have an adverse effect on the coaching program. Negative attitudes among teachers, unclear expectations of the coach, and a coach's time that is spent on frivolous tasks rather than professional learning can all be the results of a principal who does not clearly define, publicize and frequently revisit the coach's role and

responsibilities. Secondly, ensuring that teachers understand that coaches are partners and colleagues, NOT evaluators, is extremely important on the part of the principal. Maintaining trusting relationships is the cornerstone of a teacher-coach relationship. Principals must protect this relationship and guard against the belief that a coach is a spy or has an evaluative role.

In addition to supporting the coaching role through clearly defining it and

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respecting confidentiality, principals need to provide time and resources for teachers and coaches to collaborate. Providing opportunities for meeting one-on-one and in small groups help create a culture of growth and learning and allows structured time for meetings to take place. This illustrates that the principal believes in the professional growth of his/her school. In order for professional

learning to take place among all stakeholders, the principal and coach also need to engage in learning together. This supports a common vision for instruction and allows both the principal and coach to exemplify a collaborative relationship for the staff.

Instructional coaching disrupts the status quo and opens doors for reflective, and sometimes, difficult conversations with teachers. Principals who want to see both improved teaching and continued student growth can maximize the role of coaches. When administrators offer heavy support for coaching practices and the PIIC model, a school culture can change and a growth mind-set can be born.

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Deepening Understanding to Increase Trust

By Leah Vey, Berks Career and Technology Center Instructional Coach

Sometimes people just “click.” In fact, many of us have had an experience where we’ve met someone for the first time, yet we felt as though we’ve known them all our lives. More often than not, however, relationships grow and strengthen over time as trust is established, shared interests are discovered, and a supportive partnership is formed.

As instructional coaches, we strive to build this same foundation when forming relationships with colleagues. Without a doubt, however, an instructional coach must break down some barriers in the professional world that simply don’t exist when establishing personal relationships. For one, earning trust can be a huge hurdle. Often, distrust stems from misunderstandings and/or a lack of knowledge about the role of the coach. While a coach’s interests are the same as anyone else in the building, increasing student achievement and furthering professional growth, this is not always apparent to colleagues. Furthermore, to form successful partnerships, it is important for the coach to provide the type of individual support a person requires to fulfill his or her goals. This is perhaps the area where coaches must work to dispel their own misunderstandings. The field of education is undergoing an enormous amount of change at a rapid pace, and as coaches, it is our job to help people to navigate and to implement change at the local and state level. Understanding the very natural and often predictable reactions to change that people experience may just be the key in delivering better, more personalized professional development to colleagues. Consequently, when we are better able to support our colleagues, we stand a greater chance of earning their trust. To that end, coaches make deliberate time to work one-on-one and in small groups with their colleagues and honor their voices.

One model that helps to develop a better understanding of my colleagues’ professional needs is the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM). The Concerns Based Adoption Model consists of six stages of concern which describe how people respond to change related to their feelings and actions. The stages include: awareness, informational, personal, management, consequence, collaboration, and refocusing. In the first stage, awareness, people are cognizant that a change is taking place, but they lack interest in the change. In the informational stage, people have a desire to learn more about

the change, but they want only limited amounts of information. Those in the personal stage are self-centered and wonder how the change will affect them. During the management stage, people tend to have concerns over how they will implement the change in terms of time, organization, and resources. In the consequence stage, people look more outward and consider how the change will influence the school community at large. During the collaboration stage, people join with others to share information and to engage in problem solving. In the last stage, refocusing, people work to sharpen their skills to make the change even more effective (Holloway, 2003).

“Often, distrust stems from misunderstandings and/or a lack of knowledge about the role of a coach.”

In time, a coach can learn to identify where someone falls within the stages of concern and can offer the individualized support to help that person advance to the next stage. All of this can be done through the B, D, A cycle of instructional coaching and

meeting one-on-one and in small groups with teachers. For example, those in the awareness stage may benefit from gentle, non-threatening support, such as providing limited amounts of information and engaging these colleagues in brief, informal discussions about change. For those in the personal stage of concern, it is important to validate their questions and concerns and to build confidence through encouragement. For those in the management stage who are concerned about time, offer to model a strategy or to co-teach a lesson. Assist with lesson planning, and create and provide custom resources for them (Holloway, 2003).

The Concerns Based Adoption Model provides a roadmap for delivering the personalized professional development that is such an integral part of PIIC’s model of effective coaching. Establishing those supportive, trusting relationships is essential to the change process.

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Resources:
Holloway, K. (2003, February/March). “A measure of concern: Research-based program aids innovation by addressing teacher concerns.” *Tools for Schools*. Retrieved from <http://www.learningforward.org/docs/tools-for-learning-schools/tools2-03.pdf?sfvrsn=2>.

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