SCHOOL REFLECTIVE PRACTICES NON-EVALUATIVE STUDENT CLASSROOM PROGRESS TEACHING MENTORING LEADERS ONE-ON-ONE IU-BASED RESEARCH SUSTAIN ACHIEVEMENT PROFESSIONAL GROWTH ENGAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT LEARNING SKILLS NEEDS SUPPORT ADVOCATES COACHES PA LITERACY STUDENT DATA QUALITY

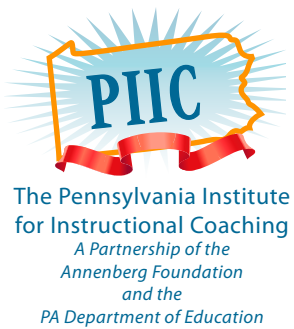## Professional Development Dates:

January 9-11, 2012
Penn Stater
Conference Center
State College, PA

May 2-4, 2012
Penn Stater
Conference Center
State College, PA

More information available on our website:
www.pacoaching.org

www.institutefor
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Instructional coaches provide professional development for teachers and school leaders focused on classroom practices to increase student engagement and improve student learning

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PIIC

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

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Supporting One Mentor, One Coach, and One Teacher at a Time
By Kelly Galbraith, IU 13 PIIC Mentor

A New Mentor's Perspective
Everyone needs a coach: someone who will listen and serve as a sounding board, someone who will offer support, someone who will think and work alongside us, and someone who will push and stretch us when the time is right. The first core element in the PIIC model is providing one-on-one support for teachers, coaches, and school leaders. As a new PIIC mentor, I have found that this focus on individualized support helps me to establish a positive rapport with coaches and school administrators.

Taking on the role of a new mentor is just like starting out as a new coach. A new coach has to establish strong and trusting relationships with teachers. Often times, she must define her role for the teachers (and administrators) with whom she works. She often starts small, with volunteers who want to work with her. Through their work, the coach establishes the BDA coaching cycle of planning, instruction, and reflection. The hope is that through the coach's work with that small few, word will spread amongst the staff that working with the coach is worthwhile. As a new mentor, or coach's coach, my work parallels the work of new coaches. To begin to establish strong relationships with coaches, I have incorporated varied opportunities involving one-on-one and small group support including virtual or face-to-face coaches meetings, individual site visits, and virtual office hours.

A Coach's Perspective
New to PIIC this Fall, Denise Logue, Literacy Coach from Cocalico School District, offered the following insights about PIIC. "I am seeing that

> *"...coaching is truly a process and a partnership where the coach is simply providing a framework of support."*

PIIC is transforming how I view coaching. I think that my view has been one of 'showing' teachers how to do things, and I felt a lot of pressure to be able to provide those model lessons. Now, I am realizing that the process doesn't end there, that coaching is truly a process and a partnership where the coach is simply providing a framework of support. The coach and teacher are thinking through a challenge or a task together and making adjustments based on evidence as they go along."

Celebrating the PIIC Model
As a new mentor, one of the things I love about the PIIC model is that it provides one-on-one and small group support at every layer of the organization. Teachers receive one-on-one support from their coaches. Coaches receive one-on-one support from their PIIC Mentors. Mentors receive one-on-one support from Regional Mentor Coordinators. Because PIIC provides this layered approach of one-on-one support for coaches and mentors, it gets at the heart of promoting positive change: improving classroom instruction.

PIIC would like to wish everyone a very happy and healthy New Year!

Featuring:

Letter from PIIC's Executive Director

Learning Forward's 2011 revised publication, Standards for Professional Learning, clearly defines the purpose and goal of professional learning – to improve instructional practices and student learning. For this to happen, professional learning must be "based on research and successful practice" and be "consistently implemented and supported" (Foreword, Standards for Professional Learning, pg. 6).

Instructional coaches are the perfect conduit for creating a culture of practice that focuses on providing opportunities for teachers and administrators to work together to strengthen professional practice. The best way to ensure collaboration, consistency, and sustainability is to set a standard for performance and provide ways to meet and/or exceed that standard.

The seven standards (http://www.learningforward.org/standards/standards.cfm) offer the gateway for educators to plan and deliver high quality professional learning that is tied to standards, teacher practice, data analysis and collection, and research. Instructional coaches work with their colleagues to ensure that the professional learning is relevant and meets the needs of the students and their teachers. Under the coaches' guidance, meaningful and effective professional learning is designed in ways that differentiate the learning for both staff and students.

The Pennsylvania Institute for Instructional Coaching's BDA cycle of coaching and 4-quadrant framework focus on the process that enables coaches and their school teams to plan together, think together, and reflect together. When this process is completed in a one-to-one setting or in small groups, professional learning becomes the norm. It is a deliberate and intentional approach to identify student and staff needs and then work together to generate ways to address those needs. With literacy as the common denominator supported by instructional coaches, staff members share a variety of techniques in a no-risk environment that spans the spectrum of student learning. Add consistency in language and practice to the mix and students travel from one class to another understanding and seeing that learning does not stop at the ringing of any bell but rather continues throughout the day.

No one can argue that changes in student learning must happen in the most important place – the classroom. This, however, does not mean that only students learn. It means that teachers must be given the time and tools to nourish their own professional growth so that they can expand and extend their students' learning. It means that increasing teacher effectiveness is a process of continuous improvement with colleagues working one-on-one or in small groups and includes understanding literacy; collecting, analyzing and using data; and being a reflective practitioner in a non-threatening community through a system that meets the standards for high quality professional learning. This we can do!

Sincerely,

Ellen B. Eisenberg

Motion Leadership: The Skinny on Becoming Change Savvy
Book Review by Jordan Lozosky, IU 1 PIIC Mentor

Michael Fullan's Motion Leadership provides valuable insight on how educational leaders can implement change into their respective institutions. Within his work, Fullan describes the basic ideas, insights, and obstacles a leader will face when implementing change. The relatively short read will leave you wanting to take the next step forward in becoming a true change agent for the schools with whom you are working.

Fullan states that the "skinny" on motion leadership can be best expressed around the following key elements: change problems, change itself, connecting peers with purpose, transparency, trust, and resistance. However, he makes a strong argument that building an organization's capacity to engage everyone in leadership is the true goal of his work.

Problems will undoubtedly arise when change occurs within

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an institution. Often a fear of change serves as a major roadblock for true change to occur. Fullan illustrates that leaders must take the fear out of change with his example of Sallyann Stanton. Sallyann is a newly appointed-grade level leader from England. She informed her teachers that she would first try out new ideas and take responsibility if they failed. This allowed her to gain the trust and respect of the staff while consciously building relationships. After she developed rapport with the staff, she was able to bring them on board ready and willing to take the steps to instill change within her school. An effective leader and change advocate is willing to take these risks to move both individuals and institutions forward. As a PIIC mentor, I strongly feel that developing a good rapport and building trusting relationships with the individuals with whom I work will allow me to become a true catalyst for change.

Additionally, I felt that Fullan does an exceptional job

explaining change itself. He provides the example of "ready-fire-aim" as a metaphor for how change is too often implemented. The key to change is to develop relationships first. Leaders must be careful when entering into a new setting. He states, "If the leader comes on too strong, the culture will rebel." There is a good deal of truth to this statement. Leaders need to build trusting and working relationships with individuals before any radical change can be made. Moreover, leaders must not forget to listen and learn from the veterans as well. Fullan suggests that leaders should reach out to those veterans for valuable insight and suggestions that can best benefit the institution. In my experience as a PIIC mentor, I have found that reaching out and listening to the input others can provide is an invaluable resource.

Fullan ends Motion Leadership with the paradox that becoming change savvy makes you both confident and humble at the same time. He closes with stating that "motion" leaders have two main responsibilities: "to always be learning and refining the skinny of change and to realize that they have an equal responsibility to teach others the same." Fullan's insight is something every leader should take into deep consideration when implementing change.
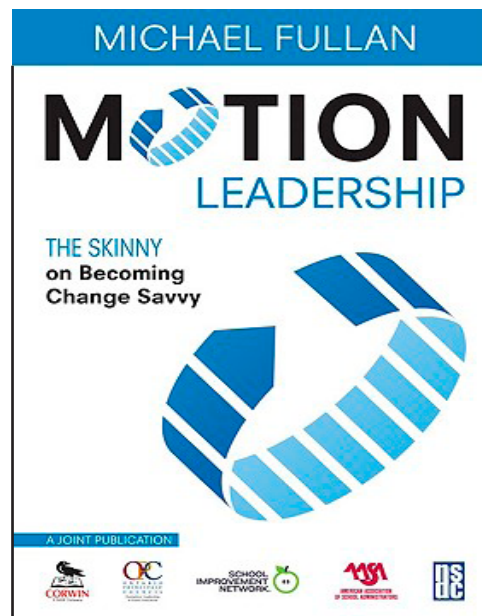
The complex has become simple while the result has dramatically improved - a perfect recipe for powerful change.
-Motion Leadership: The Skinny on Becoming Change Savvy

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

Literacy in the Content Areas
By Amy Walker, IU 4 PIIC Mentor

After nearly thirty years in the teaching profession, I have attended scores of conferences and professional development sessions. Only at a few of those teacher learning opportunities, have I been inspired to make real changes in the ways that I think about teaching and learning.

This fall I attended a conference that was outside of my field of expertise and my "expert blind spot" became quite clear. I've talked to groups of teachers and coaches for years about the importance of literacy in content areas and I've thrown around terms such as "reading like a historian" or "reading like a scientist." I've spoken about the importance of teachers letting their students in on the teacher's process of making meaning while they read or wrote about their content. However, I will admit that before actually participating in the struggle to make meaning from high-

level, complex texts in history, I had no genuine sense of what that meant. After grappling with history teachers to make sense of some primary source material, I was finally able to comprehend what it meant to "read like a historian." I used a number of different literacy strategies, and watched my group members do the same as we worked to achieve consensus on the meaning of the texts.

"It is important not to let the 'literacy expert blind spot' prevent coaches from listening to their teacher partners talk about the content goals that they have for their lessons."

As we worked, I thought how effective it would be for content teachers and their coaches to co-plan intentional instruction on the literacy processes needed to understand the content and successfully achieve the content area goals for the lesson. So often,

I suspect, content area teachers are given a litany of literacy strategies that they could or should be using in their courses. My recommendation is for instructional coaches and content area teachers to work together to make explicit the literacy demands and the content demands of the tasks assigned. Once those literacy demands are clear, the teacher and the instructional coach can plan together to scaffold the foundational strategies that help the student successfully complete the task. It is important not to let the "literacy expert blind spot" prevent coaches from listening to their teacher partners when they talk about the content goals that they have for their lessons. Opportunities to learn and authentically use literacy strategies are abundant in content area courses and coaches have to be open to finding them and making them clear and sensible for all teachers, regardless of their area of expertise.

Coaches Help Teachers use Data to Increase Student Achievement: An Elementary Perspective

By Cassie Grassmyer and Mary Sabatino, Altoona School District Instructional Coaches

There are many different forms of data that coaches and teachers can utilize. Athough data can be intimidating, it is a way to help build relationships with your teachers, and can be used as a coach's first steps towards being welcome in the classroom.

Types of Assessment Data

As coaches, we want to work with teachers to reach their personal goals to increase student achievement. At Altoona Area SD, we start the year by analyzing our school's Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) data. Teachers and coaches analyze their incoming student data as well as the previous years' student data to determine strengths and weaknesses. Coaches and teachers collaborate and use this data to help form flexible groups. We need to use the data from assessments to drive our instruction to increase student achievement.

In September, January, and May, the 4Sight Benchmark assessment is given to students in grades 3-6. Teachers are able to access the Success For All Members Center to pull reports and data about their students' progress. Coaches in our district created a 4Sight Checklist for teachers to use in conjunction with the 4Sight benchmark assessments. This gives teachers a clear picture of their entire class and is geared towards item analysis of eligible content. As formative assessment tools, these data can be used over an extended period of time to create flexible groups for differentiated instruction

Item Analysis can help teachers and coaches delve more deeply into detail with respect to test results. For example, the final score of a hockey game may tell you who won and who lost, but it does not reveal details about an individual player's performance. This data could be helpful in strategizing for future games. The same concept applies to tests we give our students. We have discovered the overwhelming importance of reviewing the questions asked and the students' responses. At the elementary level, we developed Item Analysis

> *"We need to use the data from assessments to drive our instruction to increase student achievement."*

Checklists for our reading and math assessments. With the checklists, teachers can now use the data to strategically plan instruction to meet the needs of their learners.

Students and Data

It is vital for teachers to share data with their students. In the fall, students and parents receive their personal PSSA report. Our elementary coaches provide parent involvement events to explain and answer questions concerning these reports. For our students, the previous year's PSSA results are irrelevant to them in their present school year. However, sharing the current, individual 4Sight data with each student allows them to take ownership and set realistic goals.

In September, we teamed up with our teachers to co-teach a lesson using a knowledge rating about the purpose of the 4Sight assessments and to develop an understanding of the state performance levels (advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic). During this lesson, we helped our teachers share the individual data with their students. Students at the elementary level had difficulty with the concept of a scaled score, but understood the number of questions they got correct. Our coaching team developed a student-friendly conference form that included a growth bar and a place to reflect after each time the 4Sight is given. Thus, their growth bars resembled a ladder where students highlighted the total number of questions they scored correctly. Not only is this number more of a tangible concept, but they also have the bar as a visual marker. Students could then reflect on their progress and set personal goals. This is a positive way to utilize data for setting purpose and making those coaching connections.

As coaches, our job is to help make the data useful and meaningful for our teachers and students. Do not be afraid of data; embrace it!