

PIIC News

The Pennsylvania Institute for Instructional Coaching

Inside...

- Letter from the Executive Director, p. 2
- Book Review: Teaching the Core Skills of Listening and Speaking
- Ooze and the Professional Learning Opportunities will Come, p. 3
- Collaborative Conversations to Support Student Success, p. 4

March 2016
Volume 6 - Issue 3

How Coaches Facilitate One-on-One and Small Group Professional Development

By Christie Peiffer, Hempfield SD Instructional Coach

Ever notice that when people make New Year's resolutions, they often don't get past the first month before being broken? We begin with good intentions to make our lives better with new shifts in behavior, but before too long we fall back into our comfort zone of old habits.

Coaching makes me think of resolutions, as it exists to help others improve their teaching practices and ultimately the lives of their

students. I can relate this to the subject of professional development (PD) in how it has, or in some cases, hasn't transformed my teaching behaviors over the years. I think we've all attended dynamic trainings where we leave energized and ready to transform our classrooms, only to get back to school and be overwhelmed with the missing piece of accountability.

Thankfully the role of the instructional coach is recognized as a vital component to school wide improvement. Elena Aguilar points out in her book, *The Art of Coaching: Effective Strategies for School Transformation*, "The likelihood of using new learning and sharing responsibility rises when colleagues, guided by a coach, work together and hold each other accountable for improved teaching and learning" (2013). This was the piece that was missing when my good intentions of implementing PD flopped in the past.

While coaching directly increases teacher capacity with on-site PD, the situation in which it is delivered and carried through can greatly increase the chances of transformation.

As the coach meets with a teacher one-on-one

in PIIC's Before, During, After (BDA) cycle, the instructional coach collects necessary data to guide PD to meet the needs of the teacher in a meaningful way. They set goals, collect data, and reflect on the process for future work together by planning their next BDA cycle. The personalized PD offers continued learning in

a way that outside PD cannot. Much of my one-on-one coaching blooms from a question in the hallway; however, it's the follow up meeting with the teacher

and discussing the question that makes the difference in sustained growth.

Another opportunity for increasing teacher capacity is through small group PD. Unlike one-on-one PD, working with groups of teachers allows for an atmosphere of collaboration amongst several colleagues. Some of my coaching work this year has emerged from conversations in grade level meetings. On one occasion, I facilitated ½ day PD sessions within the school day for two different grade levels. The interaction in both sessions gave teachers the sense of ownership for their learning and yet a comfortable place to ask questions among peers. These small group PDs have subsequently lead into one-on-one BDA meetings with teachers for additional resources and feedback.

Whether PD is offered one-on-one or with small groups, the accountability piece is key to lasting growth. So when you make your resolutions for the New Year, take into consideration having a coach along the way.

For more information, please contact:
Christie Peiffer,
christie_peiffer@hempfieldsd.org

"Much of my one-on-one coaching blooms from a question in the hallway; however, it's the follow up meeting with the teacher and discussing the question that makes the difference in sustained growth."



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

Professional Learning Opportunity Dates

May 2-4, 2016
Penn Stater
Conference Center
State College, PA

October 24-26, 2016
Penn Stater
Conference Center
State College, PA

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

[www.institutefor
instructionalcoaching.
org](http://www.instituteforinstructionalcoaching.org)

[www.
cultureofcoaching.
blogspot.com](http://www.cultureofcoaching.blogspot.com)

Follow us on
Facebook and
Twitter @PIICcoach!

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 nature of relationships among the adults within a school has a greater influence on the character and quality of that school and on student accomplishment than anything else" (Roland Barth, EL, March 2006, Vol. 63 No. 6). If the relationships in the school are adversarial and based on controversy, conflict, and competition, the effects of these conditions will impact the school culture. The entire school community becomes dysfunctional where distrust, disappointment, and disinterest reign. These conditions set the stage and create an unfavorable environment conducive for collaborative learning.

The issues surrounding adult relationships in school must be handled with care, sensitivity, and common sense. Sometimes the issues are crystal clear – teachers work in isolation and don't want to or know how to collaborate. They often project a *"this is not broken so don't fix it attitude."* Building relationships and creating a transparency about teaching and learning remain in the school's dark corners either because no one knows how to approach the issues or more likely, staff members are too afraid to bring the issues to the forefront. They don't want to bring attention to their own practices and besides, who listens?

Without recognizing these issues

or how they influence adult relationships in schools is a mistake. Effective instructional coaching moves practice and changes the paradigm of teaching and learning. As Jim Knight says, *"Instructional coaches who use a proven coaching cycle can partner with teachers to set and reach improvement goals that have an unmistakable, positive impact on students' lives"* (Knight, et al, JSD, Feb. 2015, Vol. 36 No. 1). The catalyst for creating school wide changes in practice comes from coaches establishing respectful working relationships built on trust and confidentiality. They create enabling conditions for collaborative work.

Our PIIC research followed an evidentiary trail and explored how instructional coaching generates close working relationships among colleagues, influences teaching and learning, and helps create an environment where everyone is a member in a community of learning and practice. In the 2014-2015 PIIC survey conducted by fhi360, findings indicated that 92 percent of teachers working in schools with instructional coaches were coached regularly. 90 percent of those teachers worked one-on-one with their PIIC coach; 84 percent of the teachers reported that they changed their instructional practice as a result of one-on-one or small group coaching. Digging deeper, the fhi360 research

team found that teachers explained how their practices changed: they were more willing to try new instructional techniques; they reflected more and more effectively on their practices; and they assigned more reading and writing in the content areas. 99 percent of the teachers working with coaches said that the changes in their classroom practices had a positive impact on student learning. So how did that happen?

Coaches work one-on-one and in small groups to provide ongoing, side-by-side support to their teaching colleagues. They work diligently, providing non-evaluative feedback helping their teaching colleagues make adjustments in their teaching. Coaches encourage and reinforce collective learning, collaborative coaching, and shared reflection. They help build awareness of the thinking that goes into planning and the thinking that follows planning a.k.a. the reflective practice, the deliberate and intentional time to talk about teaching. This can only be accomplished once safe relationships have been established and everyone involved recognizes that their community is a "safe, judgement-free zone."

Sincerely,



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

Teaching the Core Skills of Listening and Speaking

Book Review by Kelli Livermore, Altoona Area SD Instructional Coach

How do you teach good listening skills? How do you teach good speaking skills?

My new favorite book, *Teaching the Core Skills of Listening and Speaking*, is filled with classroom examples and activities targeted in helping students acquire these skills. I was shaking while reading this book because it's that good. Good for building the listening and speaking capacity of students. Good for a professional book study. Good for my toolbox as an instructional coach. Good listening and speaking practices targeted for all ages and

grades. Is anyone listening? This is a GOOD book!

Why are students continually giving speeches in school, yet not improving their speaking skills?

"Coaches will be able to springboard instructional practices from this book into engaging BDA sessions."

Is it possible to practice a skill and not get better at it?

According to author Erik Palmer, practice doesn't make a skill better; good practice makes a skill better. In his compelling book, Palmer shares concrete instructional practices for developing listening and speaking skills. Palmer, a veteran teacher of 20 years, focuses instruction for listening and speaking

Continued on page 3, Teaching the Core Skills

through the lenses of the Common Core Standards. Palmer's approach is aligned to the six Common Core standards for speaking and listening with a focus on 21st century skills. A clear distinction is made between listening and speaking *activities* and listening and speaking *instruction*.

For teachers, this means reflecting on and reexamining current practices. His focus on the standards is to make instruction for listening and speaking more purposeful, directed, and precise. The book includes many activities connected with the Common Core's Speaking and Listening Standards. Palmer provides direct and explicit instructional activities for building strong listening and speaking skills. This book is designed to encourage reflection on effective listening and speaking practices used in the classroom.

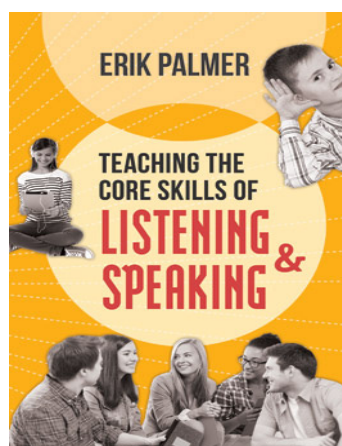
For instructional coaches, this means providing professional learning in listening and speaking instruction one-on-one or in small groups, collecting, analyzing, and using data, modeling evidence-based practices, and supporting teachers through reflection and practice in developing these skills, the core components of the PIIC model. *Teaching the Core Skills of Listening and Speaking* is a practical and indispensable resource for coaches and teachers. This book can easily be used by instructional coaches looking for a current and engaging topic for a PLC and/or professional book study. A study guide to encourage discussion for *Teaching the Core Skills of Listening and Speaking* is available on the internet at no cost. This is

an added benefit for anyone planning a professional book study. Coaches will be able to springboard instructional practices from this book into engaging BDA sessions.

Have we been shortchanging instruction for listening and speaking in the classroom? Take this opportunity to dive deeper into instructional practices that support listening and speaking instruction that will impact student achievement. Fostering good communication skills will impact our students in the classroom and beyond.

Did you hear me? This is a GOOD Book!

For more information, please contact:
Kelli Livermore, kivermore@altoonasd.com



"But just as making students write a lot doesn't automatically make them good writers, making students listen a lot does not automatically make them good listeners. And occasionally making them speak in front of the class does not automatically make them good speakers."
Teaching the Core Skills of Listening and Speaking

Ooze and the Professional Learning Opportunities will Come

By Dana Kramaroff, Boyertown Area SD Instructional Coach

Facilitating a one-on-one professional learning opportunity with a teacher begins with conversation that is carefully and strategically planned. Even a quick hallway conversation can be orchestrated to expand at a later time. After all, it is not too often that a teacher comes to me out of the blue saying, "Can I please give up my 40-minute prep time so you can provide me with some professional development?"

As a coach, I start the conversations that lead to continuous Before, During, After (BDA) cycles by casual Hall Talks. I choose a morning before school begins and walk the halls, popping into classrooms with "Hey! What's happening?" This looks casual but is well-planned!

After getting a pulse and "climate" read, I share something I learned and move towards a one-on-one meeting. I talk up

the strategy or idea, connect it to best practice in a non-threatening way, and finish with, "I'd love to set up a time to continue talking about this." Thus starts the BDA cycle of consultation.

Recently, I was speaking with a teacher, getting caught up with her about all the latest and greatest, and I started oozing

"I talk up the strategy or idea, connect it to best practice in a non-threatening way, and finish with, 'I'd love to set up a time to continue talking about this.' Thus starts the BDA cycle of consultation."

excitement for a new idea. That is the passion, the *I-have-you-in-my-hands-moment*, the *I-am-going-to-take-you-somewhere-with-me-on-a-journey*, ooze. This was a "pre" conversation that set up the real "before" session.

I mentioned how I learned something

on Twitter that I thought would interest her and offered to bring food for a "chat and chew" session. She immediately scheduled a time to talk and learn new things. And there you have it... the start of the BDA cycle with this teacher.

We met, ate, and learned. This conversation opened up a dialogue about other areas of instruction and lead to heavier coaching opportunities. The tool may have initiated the conversation but the talk about practice was the driver, the "B" in the BDA cycle.

Start with a conversation, ooze the passion about effective practice; follow with intentional planning, dialogue, and reflection. The one-on-one professional learning opportunities will come!

For more information, please contact:
Dana Kramaroff, @LitCoachDanaK,
dkramaroff@boyertownasd.org

Collaborative Conversations to Support Student Success

By Karen DeNunzio, Exeter Township SD Instructional Coach

How do we, as coaches, support an effective data team process that will build teacher capacity, increase student engagement, and improve student learning opportunities? An effective data meeting occurs one-on-one or in small groups and has a BDA cycle to support teachers with goal setting, data collection and analysis of data. This is through a formal structure, creation and implementation of an action plan, and resources or professional learning experiences to meet the goals. An instructional coach has a role in every part of this complex process which ultimately creates an increase in student learning opportunities and academic growth.

"During a small group or one-on-one meeting between the teacher and coach, a needs assessment can be utilized to establish data meeting goals and the continuum necessary to successfully achieve them."

The goals of a data meeting are to establish an understanding of a student's progress through the collaborative analysis of data and align it to the expected growth of the benchmarks within their grade level. It is an inquiry based process in which a team uses this data to evaluate if students are able to learn, to retain their learning, and to use it for higher levels of applications through a continuum across content areas. This level of collaboration involves a team of educators and may include administrators, guidance counselors, school psychologists, teachers, reading and intervention specialists, and the instructional coach. Through this process, the team remains cognizant that behind every line of numerical data is a student, and plans are designed to address the needs of the whole child. The coach then works with the teacher to ensure that the diverse needs of the students are met.

The structure of the meeting begins through a backward design of a team deciding what goals they need to accomplish to support the students' growth prior to the meeting date. During a small group or one-on-one meeting between the teacher and coach, a needs assessment can be utilized to establish data meeting goals and the continuum necessary to successfully achieve them. Using the PIIC model, a coach can support teachers in creating the protocol for a meeting to structure the most effective use of time, offer options of how to effectively gather and store student data, and collaboratively create an agenda for the meeting. When all persons on a team are informed of the transparent goals and structure, the stage is set to support student success.

During the data team meeting, a coach supports collaborative dialogue in small groups by modeling how to adhere to the established norms and engage in a process of productive listening and speaking. These conversations help coaches become aware of possible future professional development topics to support the teachers' action plans. In addition, teachers may need support with components of their plan and a coach can schedule follow up meetings, effectively creating a new or continuing BDA cycle about effective instruction. This support may include a plan for differentiated lessons, modeling or co-teaching a lesson, or finding and discussing appropriate resources.

On many levels, an instructional coach can become an effective support in the data meeting process and is able to design focused support for teachers that will directly benefit student performance. Collaboration builds teacher capacity to problem solve and support each other after the data meeting is complete. The data team process is an ongoing BDA cycle, which fosters the reflective practice of teams, who closely examine effective teaching, and student learning through research based teaching pedagogy and productive conversations.

For more information, please contact:

Karen DeNunzio, kddenunzio@exeter.k12.pa.us

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.

The Holly Building
104 1/2 Forrest Avenue
Suites 21-24
Narberth, PA 19072
484-278-4147 (O)
484-278-4148 (F)
info@pacoaching.org
www.pacoaching.org
www.instituteforinstructionalcoaching.org



The Pennsylvania Institute
for
Instructional Coaching

Staff
Executive Director
Ellen Eisenberg
Associate Director
Bruce Eisenberg
Communications
Coordinator & Editor
Erin Saunders