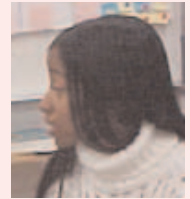


T3 TEACHERS TEACHING TEACHERS™

FOR A DYNAMIC COMMUNITY OF TEACHER LEADERS

WHAT'S INSIDE

NSDC profile
The first day of school presented new anxieties when Christy Christian moved from the classroom to become a reading coach.
PAGE 3



ROLE: Curriculum specialist

PURPOSE: To ensure implementation of adopted curriculum.

BY JOELLEN KILLION AND CYNTHIA HARRISON

Fifth in an eight-part series about roles of the school-based coach

- A**s a curriculum specialist, coaches have multiple responsibilities. They include:
- Deepening teachers' content knowledge;
 - Developing teachers' understanding of the structure of the curriculum (hierarchical, thematic, conceptual, etc.);
 - Aligning the written, taught, and tested curriculum;
 - Developing pacing guides;
 - Identifying power standards and/or essential learnings;
 - Dissecting a standard to identify the essential knowledge and skills students need to achieve the standard;
 - Writing benchmarks to measure progress toward the standard;
 - Identifying what to assess;
 - Analyzing curricular materials to discriminate which parts of those materials support achievement of the standards; and
 - Integrating the content areas to pro-



vide additional opportunities for students to practice and apply their learning.

Coaches serve as curriculum specialist when they assist teachers in developing pacing guides, preparing unit and lesson plans, developing assessments, and designing accommodations for various

NSDC tool
Four-step reflection process helps teachers look back on lessons.
PAGE 6



Focus on the NSDC standards
Joellen Killion tackles the Quality Teaching standard.
PAGE 7



National Staff Development Council
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Our goal: All teachers in all schools will experience high-quality professional learning as part of their daily work.

T3 presents one role of the school-based coach each month.

SCENARIO:

Curriculum specialist at work

At the beginning of the year, Jerry Fenton, the instructional specialist at Tomlin Elementary School, assesses the level of implementation of the math curriculum in each classroom. The school is in its second year implementing the Everyday Math program. The biggest issue for teachers last year was keeping up with the expected pace of the curriculum. Teachers struggled with students not mastering every skill before they moved on to the next unit.

In the first few weeks of school, Fenton observes classroom practice and has teachers assess their own level of implementation against the implementation innovation configuration map (Hall & Hord, 2001). He discovers that most teachers are at the developing (second of four) level. Fenton meets with each grade-level team to discuss his observations and their self-assessments. They also examine student performance from the pretests. Based on these three sets of data, they identify the support they want from Fenton. He learns that they all want help with pacing and knowing when

to move on. Fenton reminds teachers about the concepts of developing and secure goals for students. This reminder assuages teachers' anxiety about making an incorrect decision related to moving on, especially when they are teaching to developing goals that do not require mastery.

Second-grade teachers decide they want to plan a unit together with Fenton so they can learn how to map the amount of time needed for all parts of the unit and how to assess progress throughout the unit. Fenton gathers materials, sets an agenda for the meeting, and facilitates the 2nd-grade team meeting. They examine the curriculum and decide which goals are developing and secure goals for 2nd graders. They select one goal to use as the focus of their unit and begin to identify both the concepts and skills within that goal so they can sequence them for instruction. They work together over three meetings to plan the unit and look forward to implementing it. Fenton suggests that one teacher volunteer to teach the unit and that others observe before they implement it in their classrooms to ensure they have included the best examples, problems, and practice for their students.

** Fictitious person and school*

learners. Increasing teachers' understanding and implementation of the written curriculum is a major focus of coaches' work because, along with instruction, consistency in and alignment of curriculum leads to increased student learning. When teachers use the curriculum to plan instruction, differentiate what is essential from what is "nice to know," identify power standards — those standards upon which others depend — instructional time is more focused. Coaches help teachers recognize interdisciplinary connections within standards across disciplines to maximize students' opportunities to learn and apply their learning.

Knowledge and skills

To be successful in the role of curriculum specialist, coaches depend on their understanding of national, state, and local curriculum in all disciplines, how those curricula are structured, the distinction between demonstrative and procedural knowledge, and discrimination and task analysis skills. Coaches know how to determine broad and finite learning outcomes, recognize the

sequential, hierarchical, and conceptual relationship within the curriculum, how to "peel" a broad content standard into its essential knowledge and skills, and how to plan pacing guides.

Challenges

The major challenge facing coaches in the role of curriculum specialists is having an adequate understanding of the curricula of all disciplines. This is especially challenging for coaches who have developed expertise in one content area but who work with teachers in all content areas. This challenge is particularly apparent in secondary schools when teachers with a content major in one subject area become instructional coaches of teachers in other content areas. Establishing credibility as a curriculum specialist becomes more challenging in these situations and may lead a coach to choose other roles than curriculum specialist to maintain the coach's comfort and credibility with other teachers. Choosing other roles may be problematic if decisions related to curriculum are the source of low student achievement. ◆

9 roles of the school-based coach

- Catalyst for change
- Classroom supporter
- **Curriculum specialist**
- Data coach (T3, Oct. 2005)
- Instructional specialist
- Learning facilitator (T3, Sept. 2005)
- Mentor (T3, Nov. 2005)
- Resource provider
- School leader (T3, Dec./Jan. 2006)

From
9 Roles of the School-Based Coach
by Joellen Killion
and Cynthia Harrison



PHOTO BY ALI MCCULLOUGH, STUDENT TEACHER FROM SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

Christy Christian, right, meets with teachers at Brookwood Forest Elementary School in Mountain Brook, Ala. They are Brittney Bowen, left, a student teacher from Samford University, and Karen Jackson, a 5th grade teacher at Brookwood Forest.

Reading coach greets her new class — of adults

BY JOAN RICHARDSON

Like most teachers, Christy Christian always saw the first day of school as a joyous new beginning.

But confronting the first day of school as a coach was a new kind of challenge, she said. “I always look forward to the first day of school. But I had major withdrawal on the first day of school (when I became a coach). That day was really hard for me. I’ve always wanted to teach or train teachers but I

didn’t really know what that was going to mean,” she said.

“My preparation for the first day of school is completely different. I knew what I had to do to prepare for my kids. It was almost innate! What I have to do to prepare to work with teachers is completely different,” she said.

Christian was tapped to become a reading coach at Brookwood Forest Elementary School in the Mountain Brook Schools in suburban

Birmingham. Mountain Brook is one of Alabama's highest performing districts and one that is widely respected for its professional development program. In 2000, Mountain Brook received the U.S. Dept. of Education's Model Professional Development Award. (Supt. Charles Mason also serves on the NSDC Board of Trustees.)

Because of the district's reputation, Mountain Brook has attracted some of the best teachers in the state, Christian said. That's a situation that presents its own challenges to a young coach. "I'm working with a lot of teachers who read professionally and some who present across the state," she said.

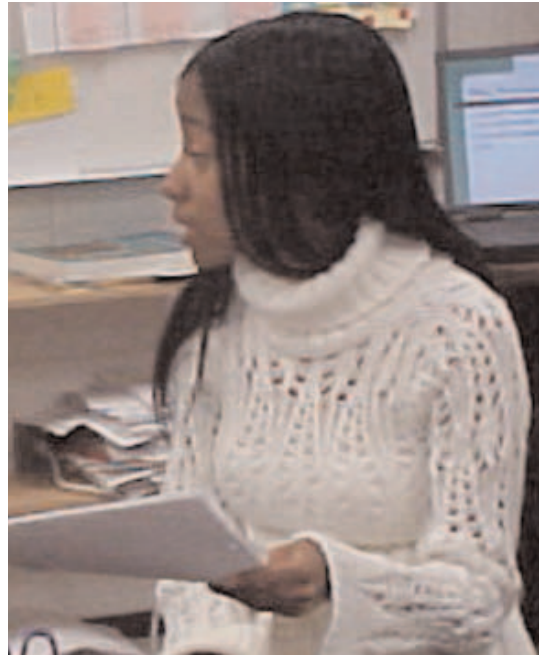
Christian is one of four coaches in Mountain Brook. Being able to connect with other reading coaches in her own district was essential during her first year as a coach, she said. In addition, she asked the district's staff development director to provide her with a mentor. Her assigned mentor had been a coach for several years and was able to provide immense support for her. Christian is now repaying that debt by mentoring the new reading coaches this year.

But Christian is also part of a cohort of 700 K-3 reading coaches supported by the Alabama Reading Initiative, a statewide program managed by the Alabama Department of Education. Its goal is to significantly improve reading instruction and ultimately achieve 100% literacy among public school students. ARI focus is on providing professional development to support teachers in integrating best practices into their reading instruction.

ARI, which was created through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, requires participating schools to hire a fulltime reading coach, use a scientifically-based comprehensive reading program, buy scientifically-based assessments, and provide substantial professional development for teachers. ARI funds pay Christian's salary.

Christian said ARI provides a wealth of excellent, credible resources for teachers. "But it's a real challenge for teachers who teach traditionally and who still think traditionally," she said.

When she became an ARI reading coach, Christian began by attending a week-long sum-



mer professional development institute along with other teachers and administrators from her building. The summer program was held at a school outside her district where teachers could learn reading strategies and also teach students during a portion of the day.

During her first year as a coach, Christian attended monthly meetings with a small group of other novice coaches led by an ARI coach trainer. Those meetings focused on beefing up the content knowledge of the novice coaches, said Georgina Pipes, coordinator for elementary reading coaches for ARI.

The next summer, Christian attended an intensive two-week institute that included a coaching internship, Pipes said. This institute is also connected to a summer school for students. The internship enables coaches to practice their coaching skills with teachers who are not part of their regular schools. The coaches led content studies, did demonstration lessons, and offered feedback to teachers, all under the observant eye of their coach trainer.

Now in her second year as an ARI coach, Christian is in the advanced strand. She videotapes her coaching work at Brookwood and takes those tapes to the ARI coaches meetings where her work is critiqued by other coaches and her coach trainer.

"I'm working with a lot of teachers who read professionally and some who present across the state."

Alabama Reading Initiative is a statewide program managed by the Alabama Department of Education. It was created through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

ARI also funds five days of professional development for teachers who are “faculty facilitators” at its partner schools. One of those faculty facilitators from Brookwood Forest accompanies Christian to each of her ARI coaches’ meetings. Each of those meetings is followed by what ARI calls “turnaround training” in which Christian and the faculty facilitator determine the best way to present what they have learned to other teachers at Brookwood Forest.

Finally, ARI coaches are expected to do walkthroughs in their buildings once a month. Typically, these involve Christian, her ARI coach trainer, the principal, and one other person. Sometimes, that is another teacher in the building, sometimes it’s another ARI coach. Hosting other ARI coaches at her school has been very well-received by Brookwood Forest teachers, she said. “They really feel empowered by the opportunity to show implementation of what was learned this summer,” she said.

Even with the enormous support from the district and from ARI, Christian acknowledges that there have been challenges in her new job.

She struggles with the never-ending nature of the work. “I was warned in advance that this job has many aspects and that I couldn’t be perfect at every aspect of the job. I have to pick and choose. And I didn’t expect all of the paperwork. I can’t keep up with that,” she laughs.

Initially, teachers found it difficult to understand that she was not an interventionist who would work with students who were struggling. “I spent my whole first year building rapport and answering their needs. I was really good at finding information for them and really good at teaching lessons for them,” she said.

By the second year, however, it was time for her to move more into encouraging them to change their practice. Christian views coaching as a “non-threatening staff development strategy.” Successful coaching requires a coach to develop a relationship with another teacher and to work one on one with that teacher. Inside that relationship, the teacher is allowed to become more trusting and to ask for the guidance that he or she needs.

Even though she was a classroom teacher for

CHRISTY CHRISTIAN

Position: Reading coach

School district: Mountain Brook Schools, Mountain Brook, Alabama

Professional history: Taught 2nd grade in Shelby County, Ala., for one year before moving to Mountain Brook as a 2nd grade teacher at Brookwood Forest Elementary School. Taught 2nd grade at Brookwood Forest for three years before becoming the school’s reading coach.

Education: Earned a bachelor’s degree in music from Converse College, Spartanburg, S.C. Earned a master’s of science in education and an education specialist’s DEGREE, both from Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama. Currently enrolled in a doctoral program at Samford University.

Professional service: Tutors kindergarten through 8th-grade students in Birmingham City Schools in math and science in Saturday tutoring program. Adjunct professor at Samford University in early childhood education.

To continue this conversation, e-mail Christian at ChristianC@mtnbrook.k12.al.us.

only four years, Christian said that experience equipped her to empathize with the challenges that teachers face. But understanding and respecting the challenges of classroom teachers doesn’t always mean that you’re accepted as a player on the same team.

“One of the things that changes is that teachers no longer see you in the trenches. You’re really in the middle when you’re a coach. Even socially, you’re in the middle. You’re not part of the administration but you’re not a classroom teacher. You really are in the middle.”

“Sometimes, I feel very alone. I didn’t expect to have as much withdrawal from working with kids and building my own community in my classroom.

“Working with adults is different. What helped me was starting to look at the teachers as my new class. I’m still building a community, except it’s with adults,” she said. ◆

“One of the things that changes is that teachers no longer see you in the trenches. You’re really in the middle when you’re a coach. Even socially, you’re in the middle.”

FOUR-STEP REFLECTION PROCESS: Coaches can help teachers to look back on lessons

1	<p>WHAT HAPPENED? (Description)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did I do? What did students do? • What was my affect at the time? What was their affect? • What was going on around us? Where were we? When during the day did it occur? Was there anything unusual happening?
2	<p>WHY? (Analysis, interpretation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do I think things happened in this way? • Why did I choose to act the way I did? What can I surmise about why students acted as they did? What was going on for each of us? • What was I thinking and feeling? Or was I thinking at the time? How might this have affected my behavior? • How might the context have influenced the experience? Was there something about the activities? Something about the timing or location of events? • Are there other potential contributing factors? Something about what was said or done by students that triggered my response? Are there past experiences — mine or the school's — that may have contributed to the response? • What are my hunches about why things happened in the way they did?
3	<p>SO WHAT? (Overall meaning and application)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did this seem like a significant lesson to reflect on? • What have I learned from this? How could I improve? • How might this change my future thinking, behaving, interactions, lessons? • What questions remain?
4	<p>NOW WHAT? (Implications for action)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there other people I should actively include in reflecting on this lesson? If so, who and what would we interact about? • Next time a situation like this presents itself, what do I want to remember to think about? How do I want to behave? • How could I set up conditions to increase the likelihood of productive interactions and learning?



→ Coaches can use this tool to assist teachers in reflecting on taught lessons. It provides a way for a coach to debrief a lesson with a teacher.

→ Share questions with the teacher in advance of the lesson so that he or she will be more aware of key behaviors, perhaps allowing him or her to adjust a response during the lesson.

→ You may choose to have teachers write out their reflection in a lesson journal rather than debrief with you in person.

Source: *Reflective practice to improve schools* by Jennifer York-Barr, William Sommers, Gail S. Ghere, and Jo Montie (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Corwin Press, 2001).

Students learn when the teacher knows

NSDC’s standard on quality teaching identifies the three elements of quality teaching. Quality teaching includes many tasks; however, it essentially involves deep content knowledge, assessment, and instruction. These elements are the core of a teacher’s work and are at the heart of what helps students achieve.

The axiom “what a teacher knows and does influences what a student learns” is at the heart of this standard. Teachers’ content knowledge determines not only what a teacher teaches, but also how. When a teacher’s understanding of complex concepts, content, or processes is fragmented, shallow, or insufficient, the lessons the teacher designs and teaches are likely to reflect this. I remember an experience that drove this point home for me.

Several years ago, I was invited to a symposium at the National Research Center on mathematics teaching at the middle school. As a former middle and high school English teacher, I felt a bit out of place. I had been invited to facilitate a series of discussions. I am a confident facilitator and agreed to participate and simultaneously promised myself to facilitate and not talk.

Hyman Bass, an international authority on mathematics teaching, delivered one of the plenary sessions. He invited participants to view a videotape of a middle-school math lesson. I was awestruck by the enthusiasm of the young teacher. She used students’ names and visual models, asked students to explain their thinking, invited them to diagram their solutions on the board, complimented students positively. I saw her gently encourage a shy, uncertain student until she stepped forward and spoke about her

solutions. In my estimation, her teaching behaviors rivaled those of a more experienced teacher.

When Bass came back to the podium to address the audience, he asked several people to comment on the teaching. I started to raise my hand and then remembered my rule. It was a good thing. Before long, Bass was telling us how students in this teacher’s classroom would struggle with subsequent mathematical concepts because, while she was a good teacher, what she taught was wrong. I was shocked. It never occurred to me before that a teacher could be so

masterful in one area of her instruction and so wrong in her content knowledge. I will long remember that teacher and her students. What a teacher knows does influence what a student learns.

In addition to a deep content knowledge, students benefit when their teachers have considered what learning looks like and when they have designed assessments both of and for learning. Teachers use assessment as an instructional tool to help students know what they know and can do and to assist both the teacher and the student to identify where the student needs additional instruction.

Assessment for learning helps

teachers clarify what students already know and can do, where their gaps are, and targets the next step of instruction. Assessment of learning helps teachers look at what students have learned before moving to another unit or concept. Teachers also take time to consider how to design assessments to allow students to demonstrate success. This might mean having more oral than written assessments for students who fare better when they are not struggling with written language. It means making accommodations for students who need them so that they too can be suc-

QUALITY TEACHING

Staff development that improves the learning of all students deepens educators’ content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, and prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately.



Joellen Killion is director of special projects for National Staff Development Council.

For more information about the NSDC Standards for Staff Development, see www.nsd.org/standards/index.cfm

cessful. It might mean asking students to demonstrate their learning in diagrams, songs, demonstrations, or other forms of performance. Designing assessments before instruction helps focus instruction.

Selecting the most appropriate instructional methodology to teach particular concepts can determine the degree to which a student achieves. If the assessment asks students to demonstrate their learning through a diagram or graphic organizer and the instruction fails to engage students in that type of process, some students will fail. If at the end of instruction, students are expected to analyze a concept, yet their instruction is primarily focused on receiving facts, some students will fail. If instruction is not differentiated for students who learn differently — whether they are special needs students, gifted students, males, females, English language learners — some students will fail. Students learn when their teachers know which instructional methodologies are supported by research, can select the most appropriate method for the content they are teaching, can explain their reasons for selecting the strategy, and can execute well a lesson using that method.

What role then does a coach play in helping teachers become masterful at quality teaching? A coach helps teachers deepen their content knowledge by taking time to discuss or model complex concepts for teachers. They may share resources with teachers that will help them deepen their understanding of the content. They may engage teachers in conversations about the content. Coaches also help teachers design assessment both for learning and of learning, alter them for different types of learners, and differentiate how students demonstrate their learning. Lastly, coaches model research-based instructional practices, help teachers learn how research supports the use of certain instructional methods, engage teachers in conversations either one-on-one or in small groups about their decisions to use particular instructional strategies, and provide feedback to teachers or engage teachers in reflection on their lesson delivery.

Quality teaching is challenging and complex work. Coaches are a key resource for teachers in helping them refine their teaching especially when the focus reaches across all three dimensions of quality teaching — content knowledge, assessment, and instruction. ◆

Students learn when their teachers know which instructional methodologies are supported by research, can select the most appropriate method for the content they are teaching, can explain their reasons for selecting the strategy, and can execute well a lesson using that method.

Teachers Teaching Teachers

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