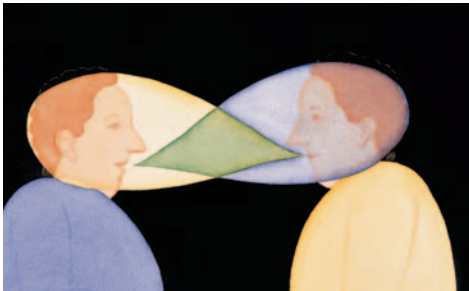


T3 TEACHERS TEACHING TEACHERS™

FOR A DYNAMIC COMMUNITY OF TEACHER LEADERS



Conversations can kick off the coaching

By Jim Knight

How do you get teachers on board for coaching? Simply hanging out your shingle or sending teachers an e-mail about the new coach in the building is unlikely to get the reaction you want.

Instructional coaches and other professional developers affiliated with the Kansas University Center for Research on Learning have learned the value of conducting one-to-one interviews with teachers to introduce coaching in schools. Sue Woodruff, a leader of professional developers from Muskegon, Mich., observes that “interviews provide teachers a chance to see you not as ... some expert coming in, but as someone like them ... it’s not ‘I’m better than you,’ or ‘I’m going to come tell you something.’ It’s ‘we’re going to have a conversation.’”

The benefits of interviews

Interviews help coaches achieve at least three goals.

First, interviews help coaches gather specific information about teacher and administrative challenges, student needs, and cultural norms specific to a school. Coaches can use this information to tailor coaching sessions and other professional learning to the unique needs of teachers, administrators, and students.

Second, interviews enable coaches to educate participants about the philosophy, methods, and opportunities offered by coaching. Professional learning is tricky, and effective coaches have to communicate that they authentically respect, value, and believe in their collaborating teachers at the same time that they motivate those teachers to move forward and change. If a teacher feels her identity is threatened by a coach, she likely will not engage in coaching. For that reason, coaches should

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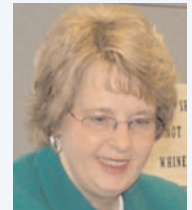
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Our goal: All teachers in all schools will experience high-quality professional learning as part of their daily work.

explain their partnership approach to coaching, listen to teacher concerns, and explain that coaches are there to help, not to evaluate.

Third, interviews enable coaches to establish rapport and one-to-one relationships with teachers. When coaches listen authentically, empathize, communicate respect, and validate the concerns of teachers they interview, they can build a vitally important connection with those teachers. LaVonne Holmgren, a Topeka, Kan., coach, has found that “after the interview, people feel like you genuinely care about them — that’s the beginning of the relationship.”

How should one-to-one interviews be conducted?

Interviews are effective when they last at least 30 minutes, and more effective when they can be longer (generally, up to one planning period per interview). Longer interviews allow more time to learn about each person’s burning issues, and provide more time to build a relationship. However, a great deal can be accomplished during 15-minute interviews.

Whenever possible, interviews should be conducted one-to-one. The experience of coaches around the country has shown that a 15-minute one-to-one interview is a more effective way to build relationships than a two-hour focus group session with a school team. This is partly because people tend to comment in ways that are consistent with the cultural norms of their group when they are speaking in a group (Schein, 1992). People talking one-to-one, on the other hand, are more candid. Since effective coaching may involve overcoming negative or even toxic cultural norms, creating a setting where teachers can step outside their culture and speak frankly is important.

Explaining the importance of one-to-one interviews, Luanne Todd, a coach from Golden, Colo., said, “When you talk with groups of teachers, the individual voice gets masked. Teachers don’t always say what they want to say, so privacy is essential.”

Scheduling interviews

One of the easiest ways to schedule interviews is to conduct them during teachers’ planning time. Usually, an administrative assistant in

the school or a department chair can set up a schedule. Sometimes, the coach is responsible for setting up the interviews. Whoever draws up the schedule must communicate two messages. First, they must ensure that the people who will be interviewed know when and where their interview will be. Second, they must communicate that the interview is simply an opportunity for the coach to learn more about everyone’s unique teaching situation so that the coach can differentiate coaching to best meet the needs of each teacher and student in the school.

Many coaches schedule interviews informally over the first few weeks of the school year. They may send a memo or newsletter informing teachers of their goal to meet and learn from everyone. Then, they can meet each teacher in the hallway, staff lounge, or classroom to schedule meetings.

An important first step for coaches is to get a copy of the school’s staffing schedule so that they will know when teachers might be free for a brief conversation and eventually for an interview.

Recording what teachers say

During the interview, coaches need to record what they hear, but do it in a way that doesn’t interfere with their ability to listen and respond to the teacher being interviewed.

Note taking is a good way to gather information, but it makes it difficult for coaches to maintain eye contact.

We have found tape-recording interviews to be an excellent strategy since it frees coaches to focus their attention on the conversation rather than note taking. Tapes also provide a way for coaches to revisit what was said, and some professional developers play their tapes in their car tape deck to stay in touch with the issues the teachers face and the feelings they experience. Most teachers accept the tape recorder as a necessary tool so long as the coach is clear that the interview is confidential. However, if a teacher doesn’t want to be recorded, the coach should put away the machine.

Sometimes, the best strategy is simply to sit and listen, and then make detailed notes after the interview.

The experience of coaches around the country has shown that a 15-minute one-to-one interview is a more effective way to build relationships than a two-hour focus group session with a school team.



MORE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions about teachers’ current realities

- Describe a typical day on the job.
- What do you really like about your job?
- What kinds of pressures are you facing?
- What challenges are you facing?
- What kinds of changes are you experiencing?

Questions about students’ current realities

- Tell me about your students.
- What are the major needs of your students?
- What would most help your students?
- What outcomes are you striving for with your students?
- How many students are you teaching each day?
- How many students with various disabilities do you teach?
- What could have a significant influence on the happiness and success of your students?

Questions about the school’s current reality

- Describe the relationship between special education teachers and general education teachers in your school.
- Describe the relationship between senior high school teachers and junior high school teachers in this district?

Questions about changes being experienced

- How has your job changed over the past five years?
- How has your philosophy changed over the past five years?

Questions about instructional practices

- Are you teaching (name of intervention) at this point?
- If yes, which (intervention) are you teaching?
- What modifications, if any, have you made in your teaching of (intervention)?

Questions about a desired future

- What changes in your school would have the greatest influence on your students’ success?
- Describe the ideal school.
- What would you like to change about your job?

Questions about professional development

- Talk about the kinds of professional development you’ve experienced in the past few years.
- What have you liked about your professional development?
- What have you not liked about your professional development?

Questions to ask

We have found four questions that are particularly effective at generating meaningful conversation between the teacher and coach:

1. What are the rewards you experience as a teacher?
2. What are your professional goals and what obstacles interfere with your ability to achieve your professional goals?
3. What are your students’ strengths and weaknesses?
4. What kinds of professional learning are most/least effective for you?

When coaches have more time to conduct interviews, they can broaden or focus the scope of their questions depending on the nature of the professional learning they offer. (See more interview questions above.)

Letting teachers have the conversation

During one-to-one interviews, coaches have a chance to make many bids for emotional connection with participants (Gottman & DeClaire, 2001). Coaches can share stories, laugh and

empathize, offer positive comments, discuss personal issues, and listen with great care. Listening authentically is especially important. As Susan Scott correctly points out (2002), “if you want to have conversations that further individuals and organizations, then ... don’t take the conversation away from the other person ... this practice of taking the conversation away from other people and making it about ourselves goes on all day, every day, and is a huge relationship killer and a waste of time. Nothing useful happens here ...” (p. 117).

To let teachers “have the conversation,” coaches would be wise to follow Marshall Goldsmith’s deceptively simple advice. Goldsmith (2007) explains that “listening is a two-part maneuver. There’s the part where we actually listen. And there’s the part where we speak. Speaking establishes how we are perceived as a listener” (p.148). When we listen, Goldsmith suggests, we should “listen with respect,” that is, “every fiber” of our being should focus on hearing what the other person is saying, and communicate that she is important and has our entire

Coaches can share stories, laugh and empathize, offer positive comments, discuss personal issues, and listen with great care.

attention. Second, Goldsmith suggests, before responding to others' comments, coaches should pause and reflect about their own response, asking "is it worth it?" Goldsmith explains that "people's opinions of our listening ability are largely shaped by the decisions we make immediately after asking, 'is it worth it?' Do we speak or shut up? Do we argue or simply say, 'Thank you?' Do we add our needless two cents or bite our tongue? Do we rate the comments or simply acknowledge them?" (p. 151). As former Topeka coach Shelly Kampschroeder has observed, "There's a certain amount of natural defensiveness on the part of any audience. We can get around much of that defensiveness when we show that we care enough to listen to their concerns."

Asking teachers to commit: Contracting

The most important outcome of the interview is for teachers to commit to coaching. Many coaches in business and education refer to this as contracting.

When explaining what they do or have to offer, coaches must avoid acting like high-pressure salespersons. The coach's goal is not to pressure someone into working with them. Rather, the coach's goal should be to collaborate with the teacher to identify teaching techniques, strategies, or other tools that might help the teacher with the most pressing challenges he is facing in the classroom. The interview questions mentioned above frequently open up this kind of discussion. For example, when a coach asks about goals and obstacles and learns that a teacher is struggling to complete plans for several courses, the coach can offer to share a powerful tool for planning lessons. Similarly, when a teacher says that she is worried about her students' poor organizational skills, a coach can propose an organizing strategy that might help students be better learners. The coach's goal is to respond to each teacher's concerns with a useful tool.

Conclusion

Like so many aspects of coaching, enrolling teachers is a complicated interpersonal challenge. To attract teachers' attention, more than anything else coaches need to communicate their deep respect for teachers. We have found that one way

to accomplish this goal is to conduct one-to-one interviews. When coaches take the time to sit, listen, empathize, and validate, their actions speak much louder than PowerPoint™ presentations, e-mails, newsletters, or the testimonies of others. To communicate respect and support, coaches need to show respect and support. Interviews are one way they can accomplish that.

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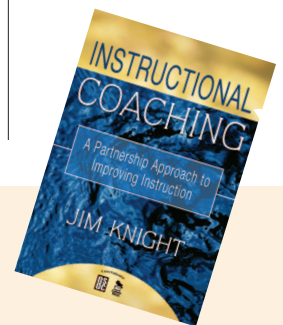
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The most important outcome of the interview is for teachers to commit to coaching. Many coaches in business and education refer to this as contracting.



Also by Jim Knight

a Plus Option membership benefit

NSDC members who have added the Plus Option to their membership package will receive *Instructional Coaching: A Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction* by Jim Knight in April.

"Inservices" rarely supply enough support for teachers to implement new, complex change initiatives. In contrast, instructional coaching is a research-based, job-embedded approach to instructional intervention that provides the assistance and encouragement necessary to implement new programs that improve learning.

Knight describes the nuts and bolts of instructional coaching and explains the essential skills that

instructional coaches need, including getting teachers on board, providing model lessons, observing teachers, and engaging in reflective conversations.

Through a partnership with Corwin Press, NSDC members can add the Plus Option to their membership at any time and receive four books a year for only \$49 annually. To receive *Instructional Coaching*, you must add the Plus Option before March 29. The book will be mailed to Plus Option members in April.

For more information about this or any membership package, call the NSDC Business Office, 800-727-7288 or e-mail NSDCoffice@nsdc.org.



Bill Ferriter is a 6th-grade social studies and language arts teacher at Salem Middle School, Apex, N.C.

Meeting agenda item: **Pull!**

As a middle school student, my favorite family vacation was a trip with our friends to Ohiopyle State Park for a whitewater rafting trip down the Lower Yough River. We'd pack up our 1977 Chevy Beauville van with coolers, clothes, and kids, hitting the road with a sense of excitement that was hard to contain.

After arriving, we'd set up camp and shuffle off to bed to suffer through a fitful night waiting for sunrise. At dawn, we'd dress in our river clothes, eat and clean up so quickly that even mom would be proud. We'd head over to the rafting company, arriving hours before they opened. Eventually, our guides would show up and we'd hit the river!



Almost instantly, waves would crash over the sides of our boat, covering us with frigid water. Hidden rocks would jump out of nowhere, bouncing us in new directions and holding us in places that we didn't want to stay. Each of us would have to paddle in a coordinated way to move forward, so sitting still was rarely allowed. "Lazy rafters are dead rafters," our guide would shout, "PULL!"

It took incredible balance to stay in the boat and inevitably someone would take an unexpected "detour" over the side — only to be pulled back on board by the rest of us.

Mentally, we'd tire, drained by the constant attention required to avoid river traps. Physically, we were exhausted, having worked harder than normal for 12-year olds. There were times during our journey that it seemed the river would never end — and yet we always groaned in disappointment as soon as it did!

Despite the effort that our trip required, there was no greater feeling than accomplishing something together. Facing challenges, working through difficult circumstances, being creative and inventive to get around barriers, and learning to rely on one another made us stronger and brought energy to our relationships that has lasted for years.

The work of my professional learning team is often just like whitewater rafting. Hidden challenges rush at us from every direction — struggling students, poor test scores, new curricular requirements — threatening to throw us overboard. Those challenges sometimes hold us up until we think inventively, identify routes around each obstacle, and begin pulling in the same direction.

Our meetings are also demanding, full of important decisions: How do we best deliver content? Which material is essential? How do we know what our students have mastered? Pressure is great because our decisions influence children and often require a delicate professional balance. Members of our team sometimes tire — both mentally and physically — of our work, resting and gaining strength while others lighten their load.

But our work is easily as exciting as any adventure on the Lower Yough. We grow stronger each time we navigate through rough waters — gaining confidence in our abilities as a group to handle any rapids that lie ahead. This trip we're on may be exhausting, but it is one we just don't want to end. ♦

Join the conversation with Bill by visiting www.nsd.org/blog/ and offering your opinion. Bill posts his provocative ideas frequently — be sure to return often.



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

How to spread the wealth of data

Today's schools have the luxury of being data-rich. School districts increasingly have data warehouses, assessment and evaluation specialists, and data from a wide variety of assessments. Unfortunately, not all available data turn into information to guide improvement efforts. The difference is stark. Data are merely numbers or words. Information is meaning made from those data.

Schools have data; principals have data; yet not all teachers have data. School-based staff developers or coaches have three primary responsibilities related to helping teachers, and principals, too, turn data into information. These responsibilities can be summarized simply as access, analyze, act on.

Access data

Because there are so many types of data from state assessments to nationally normed tests, to common benchmark, and program assessments such as DIBELS®, teachers are often overwhelmed with accessing data. Coaches can help in four ways.

First, they can help teachers know what types of data are available to them. Victoria Bernhardt, nationally recognized expert of using data for school improvement, describes four

types of data. (See table below.)

Second, coaches can demonstrate for the whole staff or for small groups of teachers how to use the school or district data management system to access data for their students. This often means helping teachers log-in, know about available data reports, and what information is included in each.

Third, coaches can assist teachers individually or in small groups with accessing specific data for an area of interest or need.

Last, coaches can also, although they will want to limit this, access data for teachers. While teachers are often grateful for this assistance, coaches want to build teacher capacity to access data independently and decrease dependency on coaches to do this.

Analyze data

Coaches can also help colleagues with data analysis. Data analysis is the process of turning numbers or words into meaning. The process involves making observations, inferences, and generalizations. Observations are the facts.

DATA

Staff development that improves the



learning of all students uses disaggregated data to determine adult learning priorities, monitor progress, and help sustain continuous improvement.

TYPE OF DATA	EXAMPLES
Achievement	State assessment tests, grades, classroom tests, benchmark assessments, etc.
Demographic	Number of siblings, number of family members, socioeconomic status, race, gender, etc.
Perception	Parent beliefs about the school's success, students' sense of safety at school, student attitudes about school, etc.
School processes	How decisions are made, assigning students to classes/teachers, student scheduling, intervention programs for students, counseling services, etc.

When analyzing data, it is important to differentiate between fact and inference. An inference is a conclusion drawn from the data or facts. (See box at right.) During data analysis, the coach assists teachers to use the data to answer several questions:

• **What patterns exist across multiple data sets?**

Investigating this question gives teachers information about whether the pattern is a strong one, meaning that the same observation appears in multiple data sets or whether it is a weak one, meaning that it appears in only one instance. Before deciding to intervene, it is helpful to know if there is a need for intervention or if the area is an anomaly, appearing only in one particular data set or in one year's data set. Identify strong patterns that can be supported with multiple years of data and across multiple types of data.

• **Which skill or knowledge areas are contributing to students' performance?**

You must know more than "math is low" in order to do something about it. If coaches help teachers probe the data so they discover that problem solving is the lowest area, then teachers can act on that information by designing appropriate interventions for problem solving in math.

• **Which students?**

When teachers can determine which students have particular needs, they can address those needs through appropriate instructional interventions. If female students who are non-English speakers are underperforming in algebraic reasoning, then teachers can identify appropriate, laser-like instructional interventions to target this need rather than revisit algebraic reasoning with every student.

• **What might be causing this problem?**

Part of the analysis process is hypothesizing about possible causes for the patterns. Coaches help teachers explore possible causes and use data to determine which are probable, those that may significantly contribute to student performance. With this information, design interventions. For example, if female non-English-speaking students are underperforming in math, then it might be probable that language is a significant contributing factor. A viable cause is something that

educational systems can change. A condition is something that exists, such as the students' gender, that can't be changed.

Teachers can change instructional methods and use non-linguistic representation. There are several broad categories of causes teachers can explore: instructional methodology, curriculum, professional knowledge and skill, assessment, and instructional resources.

While teachers are analyzing student data, coaches, too, are analyzing the same data to help them with professional development decisions.

Coaches identify target areas for their small group and individual interactions with teachers and which ones might merit a whole-school focus. Coaches might want to identify teachers who could help other teachers. Like teachers, they will want to know if there are strong patterns.

Act on data

Once teachers have analyzed data, then coaches can help them act on the data. This involves identifying a plan of action either for the school, a department, course, or grade, and/or for individuals to determine what actions to address the target areas.

Knowing the students and their learning characteristics makes it easier to locate or create interventions that have greater potential for success. Coaches and teachers pinpoint evidence-based, classroom interventions to address specific target areas. For example, non-English-speaking students may benefit from using more non-linguistic representations, such as manipulatives, diagrams, organizers, etc. rather than linguistic representations that depend on language fluency. In this step, coaches need access to research, resources, or content and instructional specialists who can provide information. When coaches know the research on teaching and learning and

FACTS	INFERENCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 43% of 8th graders are proficient in math. • 62% of the students who are proficient are <u>males</u>. <p>That 43% proficient may be double the percentage of students who were proficient last year. Perhaps only girls in 8th grade were underperforming male students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our students are not doing well. • Males are better in <u>math than females</u>. <p>These inferences may be true; however, based on only the data in the first column, they are inferences until supported with additional data.</p>

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

can assist teachers in creating action research processes to test proposed interventions, acting on data will be more efficient.

Coaches also act on data by choosing interventions for teachers that are more appropriate for their particular grade, subject, department, students, career history, etc. Coaches have a variety of interventions available including providing

resources, conducting demonstration lessons, conducting classroom observations and giving feedback, co-teaching, or a vast array of professional learning designs to engage teachers in collaborative work and learning.

If data are accessed, analyzed, and acted on, students and teachers benefit. ♦

Once teachers have analyzed data, then coaches can help them act on the data.

New book from NSDC for coaches

Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches

By Joellen Killion and Cindy Harrison

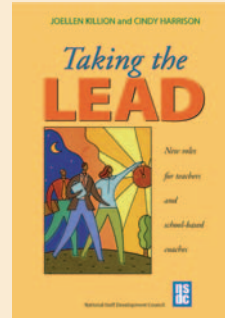
This guide to school-based coaching is written by two educators who have developed coaching models and worked closely with dozens of coaches. They explore the complex, multifaceted roles played by teacher leaders and school-based coaches, as well as examining district and school expectations, hiring practices, and deployment of these educators.

A companion CD-ROM includes dozens of tools that teacher leaders and school-based coaches can use in their work. One of those tools is a new set of Innovation Configurations for school-based coaches.

NSDC, 2006. Item B352.

Price: \$36, members; \$45, nonmembers

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Counseling and achievement are tied

By **Carla Thomas McClure**

Results of a quasi-experimental study published in *Professional School Counseling* show that students who received structured, counselor-led group instruction in “essential skills for school success” scored higher on the reading and math sections of the state assessment than students who did not.

Is this the first research to link school counselors and student achievement?

No. Other studies have shown that school counselors can have a positive influence on social and academic outcomes for students. But earlier research was often marked by “weak designs that evaluate poorly documented and nonreplicable interventions,” according to John Carey, director of the Center for School Counseling Outcome Research.

What counseling intervention was studied?

Researchers examined the Student Success Skills program, which emphasizes skills identified in the research literature as essential for academic and social success.

These skills fall into three categories — cognitive/metacognitive, social, and self-management. Beginning in September, the counselor conducts eight weekly 45-minute classroom sessions. Beginning in January, the counselor delivers four monthly “booster sessions.”

Who participated in the study?

The study involved 25 school counselors and 418 5th- and 6th-grade students from 14 schools in Florida. About 45% of these students qualified for free or reduced-price meals; 85% were white, 4% black, and 9% Hispanic. All were categorized as mid- to low-performing.

How was the study conducted?

Researchers randomly assigned participating

students to either the treatment or comparison group. To measure outcomes, they compared students’ March 2002 and March 2003 reading and math scores on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). Teachers in the treatment group also completed a behavior rating scale (the School Social Behavior Scales) before and after the intervention.

What were the study results?

A comparison of pretest and posttest FCAT scores showed that students who received the intervention scored significantly higher in math than students in the comparison group. In reading, students who received the intervention also scored higher than students in the comparison group, although the difference was not statistically significant. Teacher ratings of treatment student behavior related to school success indicated an average improvement of 19 percentile points between September 2002 and April 2003.

These findings are consistent with those of three earlier studies of the Student Success Skills program. This study’s replication of earlier findings increases the likelihood that the improvements are due to the intervention, rather than to other factors. All four studies, combined, have involved 50 school counselors, 36 schools, two school districts, and more than 1,100 students in Grades 5, 6, 8, and 9.

Message for coaches. Consider enlisting school counselors to support learning goals by boosting students’ cognitive, social, and self-management skills. Including school counselors on the improvement team may require coaches to educate teachers and administrators about potential benefits, say researchers.

It’s also important to tie the counselors’ work to the school’s mission and goals and to write it into the school improvement plan. Make sure counselors use research-supported programs and practices that have been linked to positive student outcomes. ♦

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EDVANTIA™

Carla Thomas McClure is a staff writer at Edvantia (www.edvantia.org), a nonprofit research and development organization that works with federal, state, and local education agencies to improve student achievement.

Technology without tears

Coach guides a technology integration effort that is more about the professional learning than the computers

By Tracy Crow

Fear among teachers was the first obstacle that Diane Bennett encountered in her role as a technology coach. They were fearful because technology is a different beast than the content that high school teachers normally embrace.

“I had a good friend who was so fearful [about learning technology skills] that she would cry. Teachers didn’t want to admit that they didn’t know how to use these tools. They knew that their students already knew how to use them,” said Bennett, a technology coach at Mt. Juliet High School in Mt. Juliet, Tenn. “High school teachers generally know their content so well and they have a fear of not being proficient in front of their students.”

So Bennett started with basics but found even that was a battle. “You can’t limit the students to just what the teachers know,” Bennett said.

She had to help teachers realize that this journey wasn’t about them. “That’s a danger in staff development, that you’re trying to meet the needs of teachers and you’re being blind to the needs of students,” Bennett said.

Bennett crafted a schoolwide coaching plan six years ago after her principal told her about a grant opportunity, the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund program. The program required that 100% of the school faculty integrate technology into their teaching. That couldn’t happen without a school-based coach to guide them. At the time, Bennett was a business education



teacher with 24 years of experience at Mt. Juliet High School. She employed technology tools back in the days of the IBM Selectric and was already leading after school technology workshops for teachers who were craving the tools.

The program specified that the school had to spend 50% of their funds on professional development. “This program was not about the ‘stuff,’ it was about the professional development,” said Bennett. In terms of the professional development, only 5% of funds could be spent on external consultants; the professional learning became strongly school-based by design.

Photo by DIANNE JENKINS
Diane Bennett, standing, works with English teacher Lori Scott, left, and social studies teacher Samantha Davenport.

Now Bennett realizes that high schools tend to be “harder to change” than elementary schools, she said. “High school teachers are so in love with their content — they love their math, their English. For a coach, this is an advantage and a disadvantage,” Bennett said. She realized she could engage teachers with the content but then it became difficult to get teachers to practice real integration into the curriculum.

Bennett designed her work so that she would spend time with all 76 faculty members during her first year of coaching. She divided the staff into seven teams of 10 to 12 teachers. She brought teachers in “two by two, like the ark — two English teachers, two history teachers, two math teachers,” she said, in order to give them the comfort of working with a teacher of their content area and the opportunity to work with teachers from other departments.

Each team spent an intense month of learning and lesson building. During the first week of the month, two days were set aside for very basic technology skills. For example, she helped teachers learn five things each about Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel.

Then, teachers returned to their classrooms for a week, during which they reflected on what they had learned and started to think about student needs and how they might incorporate what they already knew into their teaching.

During this time, Bennett noticed that teachers would gather in the halls to talk about what they were learning. She hadn’t realized that this would happen so quickly when she structured the learning groups.

When teachers returned for two more days of work with Bennett, they learned how to build web-based classroom lessons. Many teachers partnered with someone outside of their content area. For example, the Family and Consumer Sciences teacher worked with the Latin teacher after they realized what they had in common – the FCS teacher did a unit on sauces and the Latin teacher did a unit on food and how early Romans preserved food through their sauces. Through this collaboration, teachers started to realize the power of talking across the table with other content area specialists.

In week three, the teachers taught their les-

DIANE BENNETT

Position: Technology coach

School: Mt. Juliet High School

School district: Wilson County (Tenn.) Schools

Professional history: Twenty four years as a business education teacher in Wilson County, Tenn. at Mt. Juliet High, six years at Mt. Juliet High as technology coach which includes being a regional professional development coordinator for EdTech ORBIT Grant (Orchestrating Regional Bases Integrating Technology) for Upper Cumberland Region of Tennessee (2005-06). Mentor to various schools and school districts in writing and implementing educational technology grants in Tennessee from 2001-06.

Education: Bachelor’s in business education from Middle Tennessee State University in 1974; master’s of business education with vocational education emphasis, Middle Tennessee State University, 1981.

Awards and honors: Twice named Wilson County Teacher of the Year and Mt. Juliet High School Teacher of the Year (1986 and 2002); nominated for Disney Educator of the Year, (2002), Apple for the Teacher Award (2002), Middle Tennessee Teachers Hall of Fame (1998); Vocational Teacher of the Year (1987). Received Community Celebration Award from Superintendent of Schools for Volunteer Spirit and Serious Endeavor for Personal/Professional Achievement as an educator (1986).

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sons. Bennett observed each lesson. The school had purchased laptops for teachers and also three wireless laptop labs for student use during class.

In the last week of the month, the teacher teams met after school for reflection and discussion. Teachers shared how their lessons worked, examined student work together, and talked about the challenges.

Bennett went through this cycle each month with a different team. Very quickly, she found that the design had a domino effect in the school

High schools tend to be harder to change than elementary schools, Diane Bennett believes. “High school teachers are so in love with their content — they love their math, their English. For a coach, this is an advantage and a disadvantage.”

— she saw changes throughout the school after just the first couple of cycles.

The learning opportunities continued throughout the year for all teachers through a series of 15 three-hour sessions for more professional development. Bennett said, “these were not one-shot workshops — they built on the work that the teachers had already done.” Teachers had the opportunity to attend five or more of these after-school sessions.

By the end of the year, the technology integration program had 100% participation from faculty. Bennett said, “not that it was always a happy campground.” Teachers have to release some of the control but keep a certain level of security. “With technology, there are more mountains to climb,” Bennett noted.

That first year of funding and coaching set the stage for Mt. Juliet High School to continue developing technology integration programs. If the high school raised student test scores in two out of three key content areas, then they would be granted additional money from the state of Tennessee to continue the program for a second year. Because the school raised scores in 11th grade writing and student scores on the ACT, they received the continuation funds, which they used entirely for professional development. The district picked up Bennett’s salary as a coach at that time.

Bennett said her principal has been wonderful throughout her years as a coach. “He’s not tech-savvy, but he knows that administrative support is critical to this work. I have awesome support,” she said.

Since 2001, Bennett and Mt. Juliet High School have been involved in more technology programs — serving as an anchor school in a regional technology implementation program, working as mentors to different schools, and

Related web sites

www.wcschools.com/mjhs/tlcf

As a requirement of the school’s first technology grant from the Tennessee Model Schools program, Bennett kept a weekly web-based journal. This site has more details on the school’s challenges and Bennett’s reflections on their progress. Digital photos and professional development challenges are included.

www.edtechcoach.com

Site documents other funded technology projects that Bennett oversees at Mt. Juliet High School.

www.taskstream.com/pub/reflect/

Includes information about the electronic portfolio project.

“It’s not really about the technology — that’s so embedded in what we do. The work is about the curriculum and the teaching.”

— Diane Bennett

building electronic portfolios for students as part of a national research project underwritten by TaskStream. Bennett continues to write grants and bring in funds to facilitate what the school undertakes.

Mostly, Bennett keeps on coaching. She still spends a lot of time on building technology skills. “But it’s not really about the technology — that’s so embedded in what we do. The work is about the curriculum and the teaching,” she said. Mt. Juliet’s teachers are significantly more tech-savvy now than they were six years ago — they do online book studies and build lessons that incorporate podcasts. Bennett’s job is to keep teachers as knowledgeable about technology as possible. “There will always be new technologies for teachers to learn,” she said. ♦

Two NSDC tools on technology in the classroom

- Technology integration, reflection, and collection, p. 13
- Checking the indicators of engaged learning, p. 14

Technology integration REFLECTION AND COLLECTION

Teacher: _____ **Date of lesson:** _____

Subject: _____ **Period:** _____ **Number of students:** _____

Length of class: _____ **Number of computers used in lesson:** _____

<p>Brief lesson description: _____ (See lesson plan for applied curriculum standards)</p>
<p>To what extent do you feel this technology lesson increased the depth of student understanding and learning engagement for this curriculum standard?</p>
<p>How have students been impacted by using technology for this lesson?</p> <p>How has the effort to integrate technology affected student achievement?</p> <p>___ Impacted student achievement.</p> <p>___ Had no impact.</p> <p>___ Negatively impacted student achievement.</p>
<p>What did you expect to see in your classroom that would indicate effective use of technology?</p> <p>Did it happen?</p> <p>If so, why?</p> <p>If not, why not?</p>
<p>Describe how this technology lesson has impacted your ability to teach this curriculum standard.</p> <p>Has the experience been positive or negative?</p> <p>Why?</p>
<p>Did your professional development training prepare you to implement this technology lesson?</p> <p>If so, how?</p> <p>If not, why not?</p>
<p>Check all that apply.</p> <p>In preparing and implementing this lesson, I used the following types of technology:</p> <p>___ Word ___ Excel ___ Internet ___ E-mail ___ PowerPoint</p> <p>___ Gradebook ___ Video/audio ___ CDROM ___ Access ___ Inspiration</p> <p>___ Grolier Online ___ Quia ___ TeacherWeb ___ Other</p>



How have students been impacted by using technology for this lesson?

Checking the indicators OF ENGAGED LEARNING

INDICATOR	RESPONSE YES NO		EVIDENCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did your students take responsibility for their learning with technology? • Did they meet, exceed, or not meet your expectations? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did your students develop, define, and/or modify problem-solving strategies using the technology basics you gave them? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did learning with technology energize students? • Did they remain motivated? • Did they take pride in their work? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did your students work collaboratively to understand the technology task to plan, implement, and evaluate their assignment using technology? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the technology tasks that your students accomplished resemble real problems in the home and/or workplace? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the technology tasks challenging to the students? • Did they need to stretch their thinking skills to be successful? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were skills other than those using technology required to accomplish this technology lesson? 			



Did your students work collaboratively to understand the technology task?