

13 TEACHERS TEACHING TEACHERS™

FOR A DYNAMIC COMMUNITY OF TEACHER LEADERS



ROLE: Resource provider

PURPOSE: To expand teachers' use of a variety of resources to improve instruction

By Joellen Killion and Cindy Harrison

As resource providers, coaches help teachers locate information, resources, materials, equipment, and examples of best practice, delivery of instruction, assessment of student learning, or organization, or management of the classroom.

As a resource provider, a coach:

- Offers resources requested by teachers;
- Recommends resources to teachers that relate to topics the coach and teacher have discussed; and
- Shares research, best practices, or emerging trends with the school staff.

Filling the role of resource provider helps coaches develop trust and credibili-

One in a series about the roles of the school-based coach.

ty with teachers. Being a resource provider is often the first step when a coach is trying to get a foot in the door of a teacher's classrooms. By providing requested or interesting resources, coaches convey to teachers that they are reliable, supportive, and trustworthy.

Coaches as resource providers may make it a regular practice to update school staff about current research and practices through presentations, electronic newsletters, or e-mails. Teachers may ask a coach to help them gather information about an instructional practice, identify reading materials for students who are

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NSDC tool

Help teachers reflect on their professional reading.

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Voice of a teacher leader

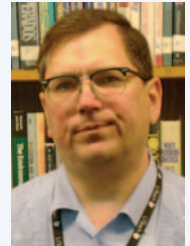
Microscopic life applies to work.

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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.

SCENARIO:

Resource provider at work

Teachers of American history want to incorporate more literature into their classes. They have easily compiled a reading list of novels by American authors, but have difficulty identifying titles to include by authors who represent diverse perspectives about American history. They meet with Marla Jepson*, the school’s instructional coach, to talk about their desire to compile a reading list of literature that reflects the history of the United States, presents diverse perspectives, and spans a wide range of students’ reading ability. They explain to Jepson that students will use the reading list for several projects throughout the year and that teachers will use it to design and differentiate learning experiences,

assignments, and instructional units for students.

Jepson meets with the school librarian to identify what is available in the school library. With the librarian’s help, Jepson adds to her list what is available in other school libraries in the district and in public libraries in their city. Jepson begins the long process of determining the reading level of books in the school library because she anticipates they will be the ones students access most often. She consults with English teachers and learns that they have already started a list for their core literature courses, including American literature. They are excited when Jepson agrees to share her work with them. In her annotations, Jepson adds notes to help teachers understand the reading level and the unique perspective each book presents.

** Fictitious person and school*

reading well above or below grade level, find alternative teaching materials to provide additional practice with particular skills, identify web sites or software to support teacher planning or student work, or recommend alternative assessment strategies for students who may not perform at their best on more traditional paper-and-pencil tests.

Coaches often work with other resource providers such as media specialists and technology coaches as well as district resource people to provide information and resources to classroom teachers.

Coaches spend a great deal of time accessing the appropriate resources for sharing with appropriate staff members. Doing so takes time, expertise, and persistence to find, synthesize, and communicate information.

Knowledge and skills

Resource providers need to know what resources are available in the school and district and how to locate information and resources. This includes knowing the formal and informal networks for accessing information. Creating and using networks of colleagues and peers to learn and share strategies that work is an important

skill for effectiveness.

Coaches must have sound research and information location skills. They need to know how to sift through research to identify necessary conditions and critical characteristics of effective practices. Using Internet search engines and finding the appropriate information efficiently are essential skills.

Coaches may coordinate teachers reading professional journals. Teachers rarely have time for professional reading, yet if their efforts are coordinated so that they can access information in an efficient way, they can all benefit from the reading. (See NSDC Tool on p. 4 for a template that coaches can use to help teachers reflect on their professional reading.)

Possessing critical analysis skills to assess the quality and appropriateness of identified resources is a must for coaches. Making the match between the resource and the teacher and his/her students is essential if teachers are to use the information generated by the coach.

Coaches must be able to summarize research findings and then identify practical applications of this information for classroom practice if teachers are to use the important information. In addition, coaches use synthesis skills to consider

Roles of the school-based coach

- Catalyst for change
- Classroom supporter
- Curriculum specialist
- Data coach
- Instructional specialist
- Learner
- Learning facilitator
- Mentor
- Resource provider
- School leader

Read about the other roles in the 2005-06 issues of this newsletter. Full archives are available online at www.nsd.org/t3/

how to integrate new information and research into current practices at school.

As resource providers, coaches help teachers share best practices. Teachers may conduct formal action research projects or less formally monitor their own practices. Coaches can facilitate sharing by using a research sharing protocol.

Coaches often employ a variety of communication and dissemination skills to share information and resources. They sometimes produce regular research summaries for staff.

Challenges

Coaches in the role of resource provider face a number of challenges. The first one and often the one that is hardest to overcome is spending too much time in this role and becoming more of a gofer than a coach. Teachers can easily become dependent on coaches who play this non-intrusive role. Teachers may find it easier to request resources from the coach than to search for themselves. Coaches, in an attempt to be supportive, may not know when to move from the resource provider role to another role that would increase the likelihood that classroom practice changes. If coaches stay in this role too long, teachers often see that this is the only thing the coach can do and may begin to treat the coach like a support person rather than an equal. As coaches try to move out of this role, teachers may become frustrated that they no longer have a person to access resources for them. Maintaining the parts of this role that impact classroom thinking about teaching and learning are essential to impacting the culture of the school.

Keeping abreast of numerous changes and resources in education is another challenge to coaches. The constant stream of new information, strategies, resources, ideas, and research make it difficult for the coach to focus his or her research on the information that aligns most closely with the identified needs within the schools. Connecting with others who do this same work often saves individual coaches hours and recreat-

YOU'VE READ THE EXCERPT, NOW READ THE BOOK

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

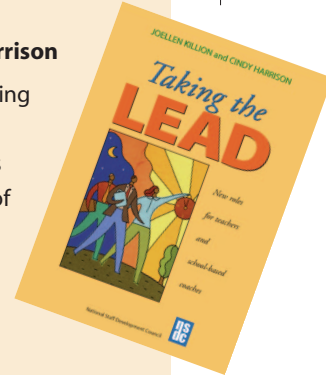
By Joellen Killian and Cindy Harrison

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 (including the one here on p. 4) 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

Order through NSDC's Online Bookstore, store.nsd.org



ing the wheel. Creating forums and opportunities for resource personnel to come together and share what each has created so that others can use the same resources is important so that coaches are not burned out.

Another challenge is coupling resource providing with helping teachers learn how to access their own resources. Working with an individual teacher and helping him or her think through a unit or need and then assisting the teacher in figuring out where to go to get the necessary information is a way to build capacity in others. Implementing the principle of gradual release is an important skill in this role. ♦

Chief among challenges of the resource provider is getting caught in this role and becoming more gofer than coach.

COACHES CAN HELP TEACHERS PROCESS THEIR PROFESSIONAL READING. SEE NSDC TOOL ON P. 4.