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ARE YOU COACHING **HEAVY** OR LIGHT?

By Joellen Killion

If the primary goal of a coaching program is to improve student learning, then coaches focus their work on strengthening the quality of teaching and learning. If any of the providers of coaching — the school, the district, or the coach — is unclear about the goal of the coaching, then coaches will struggle to keep a laser-like focus on doing what matters.

I have been experimenting with how

I talk with coaches about the importance of their decisions related to how they allocate their time and services. I've come to believe that there are two kinds of coaching — coaching *light* and coaching *heavy*. The difference between them is essentially in the results produced. Aspects of a coach's belief system, the roles, and the context matter, too.

Coaching *light* results in coaches being accepted, appreciated, and even liked by their peers. When coaches' work is driven by the goal of being appreciated, coaches tend to say "yes" to services they believe will ingratiate them with staff members, particularly those who may exhibit some reluctance to working with a coach. Coaching *light* occurs when coaches want to build and maintain relationships more than they want to improve teaching and learning. From this perspective, coaches may act to increase their perceived value to teachers by providing resources *and* avoiding challenging conversations. They may provide demonstration lessons, share curriculum materials, or facilitate learning without holding an expectation that teachers apply the learning in their classrooms. While each service has value and contributes to improving teaching and learning, they can also be acts of avoidance.

From the perspective of the teacher,

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coaching light feels supportive. Teachers appreciate the resources and ideas, yet they simultaneously wonder if it wouldn't be better if the coach were working directly with students. Teachers feel as if they have an advocate in the coach, someone who understands the complexity of their work and who will empathize with them. They may request the same kind of resources or support from the coach that they might ask from a classroom aide, if they had one. Teachers acknowledge that they have received strategies and ideas from the coach that are useful and that they may even try some in their classrooms. Coaches who lack confidence and courage may tread lightly in their interactions with teachers and limit the focus of their interactions to praise or to questions that merely ask teachers to recall or describe their actions.

Light coaching examples

Examples of coaching *light* include testing students, gathering leveled books for teachers to use, doing repeated demonstration lessons, finding web sites for students to use, or sharing professional publications or information about workshops or conferences. Coaching *light* can even include feedback to teachers that describes teacher behaviors rather than student learning. Sometimes, in order to build relationships and establish their credibility, coaches may compromise their influence by engaging in tasks that have limited potential for impact on teaching and learning. This is coaching light.

Coaches may be saying, “Yes, but the services you describe as coaching *light* have the potential to build trusting relationships and establish my credibility and convey to teachers that we are serious when we say, ‘We are here to help you.’” I agree that coaching *light* achieves these goals, however, there are other ways to build trusting, professionally respectful relationships and establish credibility that are grounded in tackling the difficult issues and being willing to address what has previously been “undiscussable” in schools. “How well are my students doing and how can I improve my teaching so their learning improves?” These questions are crucial in ALL schools, not just the low-achieving schools in which many coaches work.

Heavy coaching examples

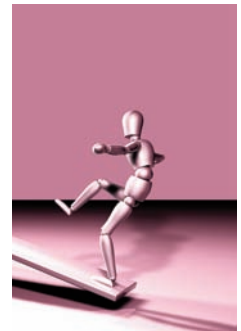
Coaching *heavy*, on the other hand, includes curriculum analysis, data analysis, instructional changes, and conversations about beliefs and how they influence practice.

Coaching *heavy*:

- Is driven by a coach’s deep commitment to improve teaching and learning, even if it means not being liked;
- Is focused on planning powerful instruction; implementing and analyzing frequent formative assessments; holding high expectations for teacher performance; and delivering a rigorous curriculum;
- Requires coaches to say “no” to trivial requests for support and to turn their attention to high-leverage services with the greatest potential for improving teaching and learning;
- Requires coaches to work with all teachers in a school, not just those who invite them to provide services; and
- Requires coaches to seek and use data about their work and regularly analyze decisions about time allocation, services, and impact.

When coaching *heavy*, coaches work outside their comfort zone and stretch their coaching skills, content knowledge, leadership skills, relationship skills, and instructional skills. They are increasingly aware of the beliefs that drive their actions and reexamine them frequently.

From a teacher’s perspective, coaching *heavy* feels heavy — in the sense of the weight of collective responsibility and commitment each teacher devotes to the success of every student. Teachers may spend more time working with teams of colleagues rather than alone to plan instruction, analyze assessment data, examine student work, conduct action research, and deprivatize their professional practices. To teachers, coaching *heavy* causes them to feel on edge, questioning their actions and decisions. This does not mean that teachers feel fear, anxiety, or dread. Rather, teachers feel a heightened sense of professionalism, excitement, increased efficacy, and satisfaction with teaching. Coaching *heavy* holds all adults responsible for student success and engages them as members of collaborative learning teams to learn, plan, reflect, analyze, and



Coaching heavy holds all adults responsible for student success and engages them as members of collaborative learning teams to learn, plan, reflect, analyze, and revise their daily teaching practices based on student learning results.

BELIEFS THAT MAY INTERFERE WITH ONE’S ABILITY TO COACH HEAVY AND POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

Belief	Side effects
1. Being accepted gives me more leverage to work with teachers.	Working on being accepted may delay conversations on what matters most — teaching and learning.
2. Being viewed as credible is essential to being a coach.	Credibility emerges from the alignment between one’s actions and one’s words. Acting on what matters immediately builds credibility.
3. The work of coaches is to support teachers.	Saying that a coach’s role is to support teachers misleads teachers. A coach’s primary responsibility is to improve student learning.
4. Teachers resist change.	As professionals, teachers seek continuous improvement. Teachers are motivated to change when they see proven results in terms of student success. When that success becomes evident in their own classrooms, they become change enthusiasts.
5. Coaches can’t impose on teachers since they have no supervisory responsibilities.	Coaches can’t afford not to impose on what teachers believe and how that impacts their actions. Their work is too important and without conversations about beliefs, deep change is unlikely.
6. Helping teachers know about or learn how to implement new instructional strategies is a coach’s primary responsibility.	Coaches’ primary responsibility is student learning often mediated by teachers’ application of effective practices rather than knowing about or knowing how to use those practices.
7. Coaches are not responsible for what teachers do.	Coaches are responsible for helping teachers explore the beliefs that drive their actions. In dialogue, through reflective questioning, and by presenting data, coaches can influence what teachers think and do.

revise their daily teaching practices based on student learning results.

Coaching *heavy* occurs when coaches ask thought-provoking questions, uncover assumptions, and engage teachers in dialogue about their beliefs and goals rather than focusing only on teacher knowledge and skills. For example, rather than talking about what a teacher decided to do in a lesson, the coach asks the teacher to describe his or her belief about teaching, student learning, and student capacity to learn. These differences are not just subtle shifts in the way questions are worded, but rather tied directly to the coach’s desire to engage teachers in examining their mental models and how those beliefs drive their decisions and resulting behaviors. For example, rather than asking, “What did you think about when the students were unable to respond to your questions?” the coach asks, “What do you believe is the role of teacher questions in the learning process? What intentions do you hold

when asking questions in your lessons?” The purpose of interaction at the belief and goal level rather than at knowledge and skills level is to facilitate teachers’ exploration of who they are as teachers as much or more than what they do as teachers. At this level, deep reform can occur.

Refining the concept

I presented the concept of coaching *heavy* and coaching *light* to coaches in Walla Walla (Wash.) Public Schools. Where I have visualized coaching *heavy* and *light* as two ends of a seesaw with the light end in the air and the heavy end on the ground, they see an image that is more of a spiral with each revolution focusing more finitely on the target. Coaches, they said, use a blend of coaching *heavy* and *light* and with each turn they narrow their focus.

My perspective shifted as a result of listening to their thinking. Coaches may use both coaching *heavy* and coaching *light* in their repertoire of

strategies. But, beyond a few introductory weeks of coaching *light*, coaches must shift to coaching *heavy* and stay there. In this way, coaches increase the potential to significantly impact teaching practices and student learning. I will grant coaches a short period of time at the beginning of a new coaching program — when they are new to a school or when coaching is new to the school — to coach *light*. During this time, coaches assess the culture, context, and conditions in which they work. However, the shift to coaching *heavy* cannot wait long because students cannot wait for the best teaching possible.

When I talked with a team of coaches in Fairfax County (Va.) Public Schools about coaching *heavy* and coaching *light*, I expressed my uncertainty about using the words *heavy* and *light*. I told them that I worry that coaching *heavy* connotes that coaching is focused on corrective action or conveys a supervisory or evaluative orientation to coaching. This is not my intention with coaching *heavy*. Rather, the orientation is one of laser-like focus on the work of improving teaching and student learning. Like a laser, a coach focuses intense energy into a small space. That small space is the interaction that occurs between teachers and students.

These insightful coaches suggested another way to describe coaching *heavy* and coaching *light* — coaching shallow and coaching deep. I share their metaphor with my own embellishments. In shallow water, both the coach and teacher feel safe. They can touch bottom. They have a limited perspective of what it means to swim because they can still stand. In deep water, however, both the coach and the teacher, unless they are competent swimmers, are out of a comfort zone since they must depend on their swimming skills to be safe. Depending on their skills, they may experience anxiety or even fear. Coaches can provide flotation devices to reduce anxiety if necessary, yet coaches must be competent swimmers and stand ready to rescue a teacher who does not swim well. Coaches and teachers together can work on improving the strength and accuracy of their strokes so they grow as competent and confident in deep water as they are in shallow water. Eventually, non-swimmers develop a view of themselves as mas-

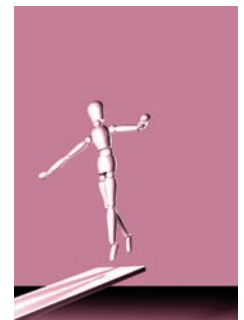
ter of both elementary and advanced swim strokes and, when they demonstrate that they have become swimmers, they navigate easily and eagerly and even for distances.

What I am asking of coaches demands that they shift from being liked and appreciated to making a difference. Coaches may need to examine their beliefs about who they are as a coach, the role of coaching in the school, and about change. These beliefs drive who they are as coaches. Coaching heavy requires that coaches move to the edge of or beyond their comfort zone and even their competence to encourage teachers to move beyond theirs as well. For some coaches, the thought of this produces tremendous anxiety. When coaches opt to stay in their own or in teachers' comfort zone too long, they limit the impact of their work and even waste their precious time and the resource of coaching. Coaches' decision to stay in their comfort zone, I believe, is based on their beliefs about the role of a coach or about how to improve teaching and student learning. (See chart on p. 3.)

Conclusion

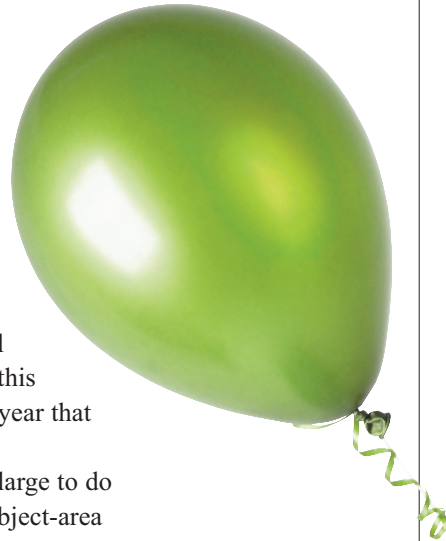
The work of coaching is complex and challenging. What coaches do each day influences what teachers do and that, in turn, influences what students know and do. When coaches allocate time to services with the greatest potential for deep change in teaching and learning within their schools, students, teachers, and principals benefit. Every student succeeds as a result of high-quality teaching. Every teacher succeeds as a result of coaching *heavy*. No teacher faces an instructional challenge alone again. Every school community engages in ongoing, ruthless analysis of data, and continuous cycles of improvement that allow educators to measure results in a matter of weeks, not months or years. Coaches support teachers as they work together to resolve problems of practice and to make smarter, collaborative decisions enriched by the shared practice of the community. When coaches choose roles that have the greatest potential for impacting teaching and student learning, the perceived value of coaching and coaches will be unquestioned, even when budgets are tight and other competing priorities emerge. ♦

I am asking coaches to shift from being liked and appreciated to making a difference.



Adapted from Joellen Killion's chapter on Coaches' Roles, Responsibilities, and Reach in Knight, J. (Ed.), *Coaching: Approaches and perspectives* (2009). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. Copyright © 2009 by Corwin Press, www.corwinpress.com. All rights reserved.

CELEBRATE A YEAR OF LEARNING



No matter what has happened at your school this year, the teachers in your building have learned something that will impact their work next year. Use some time at the end of this school year to reflect on the work and the learning of the year that is ending and to prepare teachers for the coming school year.

Set aside about an hour for this activity. If the school staff is too large to do this comfortably in an hour, then organize a similar celebration for subject-area groups or for groups of grade-level teams.

Begin by asking teachers to pair up with another teacher who is not on their grade-level team.

- **Invite each of them to share** with the other teacher one success or one challenge of the school year. The teacher who is listening should not comment but listen silently while the other teacher speaks. The facilitator should keep time and advise the group when the second teacher should begin speaking. *Time: 3 minutes per speaker*
- Still working with the same partner, **ask each teacher to reflect** on what they learned from the success or the challenge that they described. The teacher who is listening should not comment but listen silently while the other teacher speaks. The facilitator should keep time and advise the group when the second teacher should begin speaking. *Time: 3 minutes per speaker*
- Still working with the same partner, **ask each teacher to propose** what they will do differently during the next school year as a result of what they learned from the success or challenge they described. The teacher who is listening should not comment but listen silently while the other teacher speaks. The facilitator should keep time and advise the group when the second teacher should begin speaking. *Time: 3 minutes per speaker*
- Bring the entire group together. **Facilitate a group sharing** built out of these exchanges. The facilitator could either invite each teacher to describe his or her own success/challenge, learning, and anticipated change or invite each teacher to describe the success/challenge, learning, and anticipated change of his or her partner teacher. *Time: 3 minutes per speaker*

On a chart paper, the facilitator should note any themes that emerge from the teachers in preparation for a closing discussion. Were there any surprises in the successes or the challenges? Is there anything common among the successes or the challenges? Do those commonalities suggest actions for the upcoming school year?

Need more ideas for end-of-the-year celebrations? See the May 2008 issue of *The Learning Principal* in the members-only area of the NSDC web site, www.nsd.org.



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

Trailblazers stand at the edge

I've been thinking about mentoring lately — primarily because I'm just not the mentoring type! I'm rough around the edges and impatient, which is a quick two strikes against me. On top of that, I often get lost in my own thoughts and overlook others easily.

Definitely strike three.

Feeling a bit like an outsider (shouldn't every accomplished teacher support novice peers?), I've been struggling to redefine mentoring. "I support mid-career teachers," I explain. "They need advice and guidance too! And what about all the writing I do. Doesn't that count as mentoring? Someone out there has to be learning from me!"

After fumbling around for a few weeks, I turned to my Teacher Leaders Network colleagues for help in determining whether I could call myself a mentor. David Cohen — a peer in California — answered first:

"No, Bill, I don't see you as one of my mentors ... yet. When I start coming to you with my problems and challenges and we get personal, then you're a mentor. When you know what's happening in my teaching and you start proactively guiding, supporting, questioning, then you're a mentor. Likewise, I don't think you're mentoring any non-teachers unless you're supporting them in overall practice and improvement.

"Are you a leader? Yes."

David left me thinking because I've never seen "leading" and "mentoring" as unique forms of professional expression before. I've always been trapped by the idea that mentoring and leadership are synonymous.

The line between leading and mentoring seems to be delineated by relationships. The best

mentors value shared experiences with protégés as a tangible product and a source of satisfaction. Most of my leadership, on the other hand, stands independent of relationships. I'm driven by ideas — and willing to make my thinking transparent to others — but I'm not concerned about whether people follow me.

So which role is more important?

According to noted educational leader Phil Schlechty, neither!

To Schlechty (1993), I'm a "trailblazer," standing on the cutting edge of education and willing to move forward despite the lack of convincing evidence that I will succeed.

Trailblazers operate on personal convictions. Their passion and purpose creates cognitive dissonance in a schoolhouse, forcing others to rethink what works best for students.

But trailblazers are often isolated individuals disconnected from the group. The work of trailblazers, Schlechty argues, must be supported

by pioneers. Pioneers are teachers who recognize a need to move forward, but remain motivated by supporting peers. A willingness to invest in others and a belief that the progress of the group is the greatest determinant of success make pioneers natural mentors.

I'd guess that most people drawn to teaching are pioneers. After all, mentoring is a part of what we do with students each day. But it's equally important for a school to celebrate the work of trailblazers. To do otherwise is to undervalue the work of motivated — yet often isolated — agents of change.

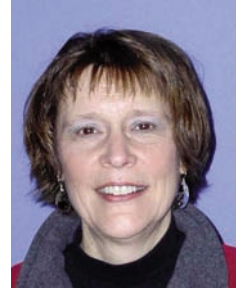
Who are the pioneers and trailblazers in your building? ♦



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.

Reference

Slechty, P.C. (1993). On the frontier of school reform with trailblazers, pioneers, and settlers. *Journal of Staff Development*, Fall 1993.



Linda Sutphin is a science curriculum leader for the Mason City Schools in Mason, Ohio.

Coaches are the machine oil

Q How do you approach coaching differently at the secondary level?

When I first started (coaching) 10 years ago, people were pretty much teaching whatever they enjoyed teaching or personally felt necessary. There was little collaboration. Nobody knew what anybody else was doing.

The curriculum coordinators became that link.

We model and mentor; we observe all the teachers at least once during the year. We're not evaluative at all. We offer help and try to convince teachers that we're their resource if they have any problems or concerns. We get into classrooms, meet with the department chairs and administration. Teachers have asked to sit and plan with us. We work on assessments. We like to tell teachers at the beginning of each year, "We're your new best friends" and hope they take us up on that. We're advocates for teachers. We're still on a teacher contract; we're not administrators, and we make every effort to stay out of that role.

At the high school level, developing trust was the first step. After that, the teachers had to see a real benefit to being more collegial. At a large high school, teachers may teach the same subject but never see each other. By providing them time to sit down with a focus, we were able to bring that about. We went to the administration and asked for time for teachers to get together.

As a result of being given the time to sit down together and start talking — and the standardized tests gave us a focus on how we are teaching to the standards — then everybody had a goal in mind.

We (coaches) are like the oil for that well-oiled machine. We have a great district, great teachers and really great kids, and I don't know how much our results can be attributed to our positions. What I can say is that by perhaps the third year, we started to see how important these positions are to that machine. We were able to see the teachers starting to work together to achieve a common goal and see them value collaboration and continuity. It was making a difference to them. ♦

23 super strategies

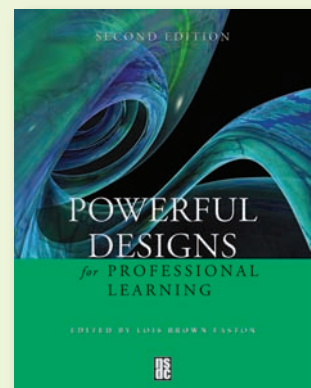
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Coaches lead in many ways

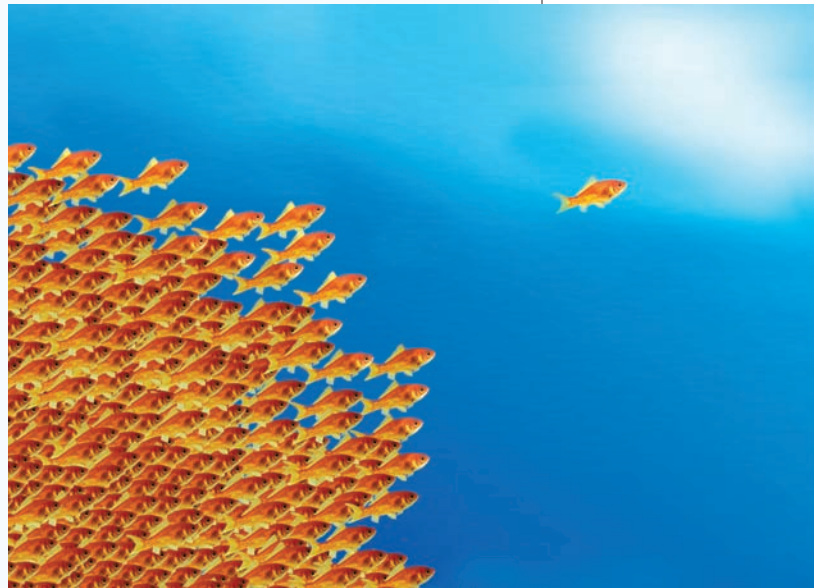
Coaches are leaders among their peers. As leaders, coaches have several key responsibilities. These responsibilities include:

- Clearly articulating the link between school and district goals for student achievement and the professional development support they provide teachers;
- Vigilantly monitoring the quality of the professional development available to teachers within the school;
- Continuously striving for improvement in curriculum, assessment, and instruction;
- Rigorously monitoring their own work to ensure that their work focuses exclusively on supporting teachers to deepen their content knowledge and improve their professional practice; and
- Constantly modeling the values and beliefs of the school through their attitudes and actions.

As leaders of learning among their peers, coaches provide explanations to teachers, the principal, parents, and other community members about the importance of professional learning and how it links to quality teaching and improved student achievement. They communicate how teachers' learning experiences directly support teachers' practice. They may be called on to demonstrate how professional learning helps a school or district reach its student achievement goals. They may write articles for staff or parent newsletters explaining the link between professional learning and student achievement and offer a theory of change, a road map that explains the sequence of actions that lead to the desired goals and the underlying assumptions that support the choice of this set of actions. They are ready to help all stakeholders understand how their work as coaches helps both teachers and the school

LEADERSHIP

Staff development that improves the learning of all students requires skillful school and district leaders who guide continuous instructional improvement.



meet student achievement goals.

As advocates for high-quality professional learning, coaches help teachers and the principal understand NSDC's Standards for Staff Development and use those standards to ensure that the professional development available in their schools is of the highest quality. They recommend that the school annually evaluate the quality of its professional development using instruments such as NSDC's Standards Assessment Inventory (www.nsd.org/standards/



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

about/selfassessment.cfm) or the Innovation Configuration maps for the standards (Roy & Hord, 2003; Killion & Harrison, 2006). By assessing the quality of professional development annually, a school has data to determine how to improve the quality of its professional development, and the coach has information to guide his or her work with individuals or teams. Coaches are spokespersons for high-quality professional development, the kind that improves the learning of all students, and aligns his or her work with the standards.

Coaches focus the professional development they provide teachers either individually, in teams, or as a whole school, on the specific goals for student achievement set at the classroom, school, and district levels. To achieve these goals, coaches help teachers ensure that their classroom curriculum aligns with adopted district curriculum, that they frequently assess student learning to ensure that instruction targets student learning needs and preferences, that they choose teaching practices that are research- or evidence-based and frequently adjust those practices to meet student learning needs; and that they create classroom routines and structures that minimize disruptions and maximize student engagement. To accomplish these responsibilities, coaches might engage teachers in opportunities to learn new instructional and assessment practices, facilitate peer-review processes, such as the Collaborative Assessment Conferences or Tuning Protocols, provide demonstration lessons, co-teach, or observe teachers and offer feedback to help them refine their use of a particular instructional practice. Coaches might also facilitate teams of teachers in collaborative planning and lesson studies or analyses. Coaches may also coach, train, or support department, team, or grade-level chairs as they facilitate collaborative professional work.

Coaches rigorously monitor their own work to ensure that it focuses on improving student achievement rather than only improving teacher practice. Shifting the focus from teaching to learning keeps the coach's work targeted on the desired outcome. Coaches want to help teachers think about how what they know and do impacts what students know and do. Coaches make critical decisions about how they spend their time.

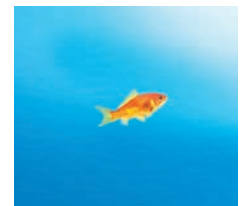
For example, they may spend more time early in the school year helping teachers access resources, yet leave behind that work to focus on actions that more directly impact teaching and learning. Some of these actions include facilitating learning experiences for teachers, engaging in collaborative team planning, developing and scoring common assessments, using data to plan instruction, observing and providing feedback to teachers. When coaches align their work with classroom, school, and district student achievement goals and engage in those interactions and support of teachers that is most closely linked with teaching and learning, they are more likely to realize greater results of their work.

Coaches constantly model the values and beliefs of the school through their attitudes and actions. They know that they are carriers of the culture and that others will look to them to be standard setters of normative practices. When coaches are positive and respectful of students, teachers, administrators, and parents, others may follow their example. When coaches demonstrate that they go out of their way to be helpful, others may notice. When coaches go above and beyond the expected, others might also. When coaches persist in solving complex problems, others will join in. Coaches lead through their actions and attitudes and model salient behaviors that support a collaborative professional culture.

Coaches practice leadership in all aspects of their work. As leaders, they have several key responsibilities in their schools and districts including supporting teacher professional development particularly in curriculum, assessment, instruction, and classroom environment; helping the school and its community understand the value of teacher professional learning and how it contributes to improvements in student achievement; using standards to assess and improve the quality of professional development within a school and district; and ensuring that they model actions, attitudes, values, and beliefs that support teacher professionalism and continuous improvement in student achievement. ♦

All NSDC books can be ordered through NSDC's Online Bookstore, store.nsd.org.

For more information about NSDC's package of standards-related materials, visit the web site at www.nsd.org/standards/about/index.cfm.



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Teaching and learning for all

By **Carla Thomas McClure**

Researchers at the University of California-Berkeley recently examined the effects of research-based standards for effective pedagogy on student achievement gains. Earlier studies had found teachers' use of the Five Standards for Effective Pedagogy, developed by the Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE), to be associated with student achievement gains on standardized tests in elementary schools serving primarily low-income Latino families. Results of the present study confirmed earlier findings that use of the Five Standards can benefit all students. But, as usual, there's more to the story.

What are the Five Standards for Effective Pedagogy?

The Five Standards are guidelines for effectively educating K-16 students of various cultural, language, and economic backgrounds. The standards do not embrace a specific curriculum but establish principles for instruction and classroom organization across subject areas. The Five Standards were distilled from education research involving students at risk of academic failure. They were developed and refined over time by researchers at CREDE.

Collaboration and dialogue among teacher and students are at the heart of the Five Standards, which call for (1) teachers and students working together; (2) developing language and literacy skills across the curriculum; (3) connecting lessons to students' lives; (4) engaging students with challenging lessons; and (5) emphasizing dialogue over lectures.

What do the Five Standards look like in action?

The five standards for effective pedagogy

- **Teachers and students working together.** Use instructional group activities in which students and teacher work together to create a product or idea.
- **Developing language and literacy skills across all curricula.** Apply literacy strategies and develop language competencies in all subject areas.
- **Connecting lessons to students' lives.** Contextualize teaching and curriculum in students' existing experiences in home, community, and school.
- **Engaging students with challenging lessons.** Maintain challenging standards for student performance; design activities to advance understanding to more complex levels.
- **Emphasizing dialogue over lectures.** Instruct through teacher-student dialogue, especially academic, goal-directed, small-group conversations (known as instructional conversations), rather than lecture.

Classrooms that incorporate the Five Standards model might be described, in simple terms, as having a teacher center and several activity centers connected by a common learning objective. As the teacher holds an academic, goal-directed instructional conversation with a small group of students, other small groups engage in purposeful, student-led activities.

What was the design of the recent Five Standards study?

The researchers used a quasi-experimental design that involved 3rd-, 4th- and 5th-grade students in two public schools in California. Researchers matched the two study schools as closely as possible by ensuring that they were similar in demographics, academic performance, and location (the schools were less than a mile apart). The teachers in the experimental school had been working informally with the Five Standards for several years, although they had received no systematic professional development in their use. By contrast, teachers in the control

Research-based standards for effective pedagogy have the potential for improving learning outcomes for all students, especially those with cultural, linguistic, or economic challenges.

EDVANTIA™

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school had received no exposure to the Five Standards. Across the two sites, 23 teachers and 394 students participated in the study.

What did the researchers hope to learn?

The researchers wanted to know two things: (1) whether teachers' use of the standards would reliably predict student achievement and (2) whether achievement would be highest for students whose teachers had demonstrated extensive use of the standards. During multiple classroom observations, trained researchers rated the degree to which the Five Standards guided instructional decisions. At the end of the school year, they analyzed students' standardized achievement test (SAT-9) scores for comprehension, language, reading, spelling, and vocabulary — and the relationship between these scores and the degree to which teachers implemented elements of the Five Standards model.

What were the findings?

The study showed that teachers' use of the standards accounted for a small but significant proportion of students' achievement gains. Achievement gains were greatest among students

whose teachers organized their classrooms according to the Five Standards model. Low-English-proficient students benefited the most, but the model was effective for other students as well. According to researchers, their study does not prove a causal relationship between the model and student achievement, but it does provide additional evidence for the relationship between the Five Standards model and student outcomes.

What's the rest of the story?

The findings of this study illustrate that “translating research into practice” is not as easy as some might wish. As the researchers themselves admit, fully implementing the research-based Five Standards model requires teachers to transform their practice, which takes a great deal of effort.

Reference

Doherty, R.W. & Hilberg, R.S. (2007). Standards for effective pedagogy, classroom organization, English proficiency, and student achievement. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 101(1), 24-34.

See the standards in action

Learn more about the Five Standards for Effective Pedagogy and watch video clips of the standards in action at <http://crede.berkeley.edu/standards/standards.html>

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