

3 steps to great coaching:

A simple but powerful instructional coaching cycle nets results.

By Jim Knight, Marti Elford, Michael Hock, Devona Dunekack, Barbara Bradley, Donald D. Deshler, and David Knight

While working with coaches from Oregon and Washington, researchers developed a simple but powerful way to conduct instructional coaching. First, coach and teacher collaborate to set a goal and select a learning strategy. Next, the teacher learns how to implement the strategy. For the coach, this means explaining and modeling teaching strategies. Finally, instructional coaches monitor how teachers implement the chosen strategy and whether students meet the goal.

Problem solvers:

Teacher leader teams with content specialist to strengthen math instruction.

By Sara Zrike and Christine Connolly

A math content specialist for Boston Public Schools and a teacher leader at a dual-language school worked together to improve math instruction in the school. Their process began with classroom observations to pinpoint strengths and challenges, followed by common planning time sessions that focused professional learning around the results of the observations. By the end of the school year, follow-up observations showed improvements in teacher practice and the results of state assessments showed improvements in student's math performance.

Talking points:

Data displays are an effective way to engage teachers.

By Alyson Adams, Dorene Ross, Jamey Burns, and Lauren Gibbs

A program created by the Lastinger Center at the University of Florida is helping instructional coaches become effective change agents in their schools by using a professional learning design that includes creating high-quality data displays to engage teachers in conversation about instruction. While a data display is a powerful professional learning tool, creating effective data displays has been problematic for teachers.

What we learned from a tomato:

Partnering with a content expert plants new ideas for instruction.

By Bradley A. Ermeling

Researchers from the Pearson Research and Innovation Network investigating partnerships between teacher teams and outside content experts got a close-up look at how these relationships impact teachers' instructional practice. A case study of an urban high school in Maryland reveals how instructional plans evolved during interactions between teachers and a research fellow from the National Institutes of Health.

feature

A step in the right direction:

Learning walks build a bridge between central office and schools.

By Barbara Deane-Williams, Shaun Nelms, and Sheila B. Robinson

What does an effective classroom look and sound like? What does it mean to have students engaged in learning? What is high-quality instruction? To answer these questions, the Greece Central School District in New York created teaching and learning teams to conduct learning walks through schools. During the walks, teams review student data, troubleshoot intervention systems and strategies, and talk with staff, collecting data to build a learner-centered partnership with the principal and school leaders.

coming up

In April 2015 *JSD*: Tech tools, tips, and time-savers

columns

Lessons from research:

Fidelity of implementation proves key to achieving student results.

By Joellen Killion

A professional learning intervention that has positive effects on student achievement in reading and math shows the importance of fidelity of implementation.

From the director:

Make coaching's purpose clear, and make its results known.

By Stephanie Hirsh

Effective coaching includes clarity of purpose, effective implementation, and a strong coaching methodology.

Clear goals, clear results:

Content-focused routines support learning for everyone — including coaches.

By Donna DiPrima Bickel, Tabettha Bernstein-Danis, and Lindsay Clare Matsumura

Content-focused coaching sets clear expectations about outcomes for applying new pedagogical practices in the classroom, uses routines that support everyone as learners, and relies on cognitive tools to guide conversation and provide substantive feedback. Using this method allows coaches to be effective without resorting to feedback that challenges the teacher’s practice and may cause professional discomfort.

Power tools for talking:

Custom protocols enrich coaching conversations.

By Francesca Pomerantz and Jacy Ippolito

While protocols can be powerful tools for professional learning, education leaders and teachers need to strategically select and tailor protocols to fit their purposes and context. When a group of reading specialists partnered with a suburban school district, the authors led a series of workshops to build the reading specialists’ capacity for designing and using protocols to lead instructional data meetings.

Check your gauges:

Calibrating conversations assist teachers in fine-tuning instruction.

By Arthur L. Costa and Robert J. Garmston

Teachers maintain a capacity for learning throughout

their careers, but experience is not enough to promote learning. Growth occurs when teachers reflect on that experience and use higher-order thinking processes to plan, monitor, evaluate, and modify educational tasks. Calibrating conversations, which help teachers measure their progress against agreed-upon standards, foster this type of career-long development and growth.

Principals boost coaching’s impact:

School leaders’ support is critical to collaboration.

By Les Foltos

Successful coaches know their success in collaborating with peers to improve teaching and learning hinges on the support of principals who control the budget and other key resources. Many coaches also understand that the leadership they provide plays an important role in creating the support needed to sustain coaching. Their accomplishments, and their abilities to communicate them to their principal and colleagues, are essential to support and expand coaching in a school.

The character of a coach:

Success depends on trustworthiness.

By Kay Psencik

The coach’s role is to help leaders develop and model the character traits that lead to trusting relationships. A coach’s success in doing so depends on the coach’s own trustworthiness. Developing trust requires coaches to take on moral leadership and develop bonds with those they coach in order to model trust throughout the school.

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