

THE LEARNING PROFESSIONAL

THE LEARNING FORWARD JOURNAL

EXPERTS SHARE
HOW TO MAKE
THE MOST
OF COACHING

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COACHING



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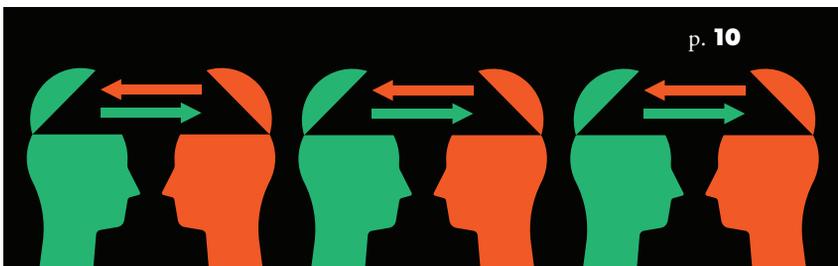
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Paul Katnik

Assistant commissioner,
Missouri Department of
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Education



Learning Forward Capitol Hill Briefing: Addressing Equity in Teaching Through Professional Learning, October 10, 2019, Washington, D.C.

“ [In the past] we figured that, because the principal has a license, we’re good to go. It doesn’t work that way. In order to keep up with the changing things that are happening in our school communities, you have to continue to update the people who run those school systems. “How many of you would be comfortable with your doctor prepared to work on you with what they knew two decades ago?”

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HERE WE GO

Suzanne Bouffard

You shared with us a wealth of knowledge and insight that reinforced our belief in the excellent learning happening in schools and organizations, for educators as well as, and in the service of, students.

TO PUT IT SIMPLY, COACHING WORKS

The benefits of instructional coaching have been obvious to educators for decades, but research data now make those benefits measurably clear (Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2018). The impact is particularly striking when you zoom in on districts and schools that have made a real investment in coaching.

For example, Norman (Oklahoma) Public Schools nearly doubled its investment in coaching over a two-year period and saw a marked reduction in the need to hire new teachers, from 225 in 2017 to 168 in 2019 (Norman Public Schools, 2019).

Reducing teacher attrition saves costs for districts, and it saves a different kind of cost for students, who tend to learn more from experienced teachers than novices (Kini & Podolsky, 2016).

Norman's story is just one of many we heard at a recent event Learning Forward sponsored on Capitol Hill and that we hear on a regular basis from Learning Forward members and clients. This issue of *The Learning Professional* is dedicated to sharing those stories and data about coaching strategies, impact, and methods for continuous improvement.

Our readers' interest and expertise in coaching were more evident than ever in the large number of article submissions we received for this issue. You shared with us a wealth of knowledge and insight that reinforced our belief in the excellent learning happening in schools and organizations, for educators as well as, and in the service of, students.

In this issue, we have included a mix of topics that apply not only to coaches themselves but to those who lead, support, and benefit from coaches. In these pages, you'll read about compelling evidence on the impact of coaching from summaries of national research (p. 33) and new empirical data (pp. 41 and 50). You'll hear from

experts who encourage us to think about coaching with an equity lens (pp. 10 and 45), examining mental models in coaching (p. 24), and attending to student engagement (p. 28).

Other articles share practical suggestions, like technologies and techniques for making coaching accessible and feasible (pp. 58 and 66), interview questions to use when hiring coaches (p. 12), and a tool to guide coaches' demonstration lessons (p. 75).

Plus, check out this issue's online exclusives, which include articles on modeling versus co-teaching, peer visits across classrooms, and a statewide effort in Vermont to increase alignment between instructional coaching and school improvement plans.

Looking forward to 2020, we hope you'll join us in January for a webinar and a Twitter chat related to the coaching theme of this issue.

In the meantime, we hope this season brings you time to reflect, rest, rejuvenate — and read!



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THE LEARNING PROFESSIONAL

THE LEARNING FORWARD JOURNAL

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HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

The Learning Professional is published six times a year to promote improvement in the quality of professional learning as a means to improve student learning in K-12 schools. Contributions from members and nonmembers of Learning Forward are welcome.

Manuscripts: Manuscripts and editorial mail should be sent to Christy Colclasure (christy.colclasure@learningforward.org). Learning Forward prefers to receive manuscripts by email. Notes to assist authors in preparing a manuscript are provided at learningforward.org/the-learning-professional/write-for-us. Themes for upcoming issues of *The Learning Professional* are available at learningforward.org/the-learning-professional/write-for-us.

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Telephone: 800-727-7288.

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THE LEARNING PROFESSIONAL
ISSN 2476-194X

The Learning Professional is a benefit of membership in Learning Forward. \$89 of annual membership covers a year's subscription to *The Learning Professional*. *The Learning Professional* is published bimonthly at the known office of publication at Learning Forward, 17330 Preston Road, Suite 106-D, Dallas, TX 75252. Periodicals postage paid at Dallas, TX 75260 and additional offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *The Learning Professional*, 17330 Preston Road, Suite 106-D, Dallas, TX 75252.

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Equity and excellence in teaching and learning.

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VOICES

INCLUDE EQUITY IN EVERY COACHING CONVERSATION

“Because equity issues are present in every situation, I am coaching for equity in every coaching conversation. We live in a society that is deeply inequitable, in which systems of oppression (including racism, patriarchy, and classism) are embedded in our mindsets, behaviors, and institutions, but we often don’t recognize the prevalence of this systemic oppression.

“This is why we, as coaches and leaders, must make it visible. To coach for equity, you must see inequities, understand how they were constructed, and know why they perpetuate.”

— “You can coach for equity anywhere, with anyone,” p. **10**



Denise Glyn Borders is president/CEO of Learning Forward.

CALL TO ACTION

Denise Glyn Borders

ASSESS AND DOCUMENT PROFESSIONAL LEARNING'S IMPACT

As I write this, we're all digesting the latest National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results, and they are a disappointment.

An assessment of 4th- and 8th-grade reading and mathematics across the U.S., NAEP is administered biannually. Since 2017, most states have seen declines in students' reading performance and a mixed picture in math, with 4th graders showing a slight increase and 8th graders a slight decrease.

Perhaps most troubling, the lowest-achieving students showed the largest declines in performance. Although patterns vary by state, only one — Mississippi — gained ground at the 4th-grade level and only Washington, D.C., improved at the 8th-grade level (NAEP, 2019).

It is notable that Mississippi State Superintendent Carey Wright attributed that state's growth to a sharp focus on literacy, including increased professional learning for teachers (Jacobson, 2019).

For Learning Forward, such results underscore the importance of ongoing, sustained investment in high-quality professional learning to advance teaching and leadership in schools. We can't provide all students with rich opportunities to learn and thrive without doing all we can to strengthen teaching and leadership.

Interestingly, a report published the same week as the NAEP results found that districts that invest in proven professional learning, such as the New Teacher Center induction model, reap benefits in higher teacher retention rates and increased student learning and earning potential (New Teacher Center, 2019).

As champions for professional learning, Learning Forward urges readers to take several critical lessons from the latest news.

First and foremost, assess and document the impact of the professional learning your educators experience. When professional learning has an impact, tell your stakeholders what works and how students benefit.

When professional learning doesn't achieve its goals, investigate why and make changes. Investment in ineffective professional learning is doubly harmful. Educators and communities suffer from a waste of resources and opportunity to improve, and the field is again placed in a position to justify why professional learning matters.

Second, keep in mind that documenting professional learning's impact happens as part of an ongoing process of careful research, planning, data collection, and implementation. Help your peers and educators stay abreast of the latest information about professional learning, and use the Standards for Professional Learning consistently to guide your learning system and processes.

Finally, keep the big picture in mind as you strategize how building educators' capacity fits into your district's overall vision for teaching and learning. Professional learning is not optional or an add-on. It will always be a foundational pillar to schooling and must be treated as such.

Our colleagues internationally take these lessons to heart. As an OECD report on teacher policies found, professional learning is a "fundamental element for the success of any major educational reform" and professional learning strategies are a "key attribute of high-achieving

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BEING FORWARD

Leigh Wall

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CAN CHART A COURSE FOR EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

As I reflect on the past year of serving the Learning Forward community as president of the board of trustees, I am encouraged and inspired by all we are doing together to build strong schools and systems. I am proud of how our members and staff are sharing our collective stories of evidence and impact and how we can change the course of equity and excellence through high-quality, job-embedded professional learning.

Nowhere has this message been clearer than at the recent event Learning Forward hosted on Capitol Hill to raise awareness about the importance of Title IIA funds. A panel of educators from across the country representing school districts in Norman, Oklahoma, South Brunswick, New Jersey, and Suffolk, Virginia, as well as the state of Missouri, shared powerful stories of professional learning impact that appeared to resonate with the members of the policy and education communities in attendance.

These personal stories of accomplishment, supported by data outlining evidence of impact, exemplify that professional learning is not a one-size-fits-all model. It is a universal strength that all of us can use to address our specific goals and problems of practice.

The stories the panelists shared reflect challenges educators struggle with in several contexts. Examples include the impact of professional learning on improved teacher retention, improving organizational culture, leadership development, and the power of effective professional learning communities. Stories and examples similar to these are likely to resonate with individuals and organizations nationwide.

In sharing the experience of my district in Santa Fe, Texas, I emphasized the valuable role of coaching, which can be supported by Title IIA funds and is the theme of this issue of *The Learning Professional*. Coaching exemplifies the ongoing, embedded type of professional learning recommended in the Standards for Professional Learning and makes a real difference for educators and students. Strong coaches combine knowledge of core content with practical teaching strategies, actionable feedback, and modeling tools.

Coaching can be beneficial in assisting all of us in teaching and leadership roles to understand content and pedagogy at deeper levels to make a meaningful impact on teaching and learning. In fact, in some districts, a coaching model is blended into all aspects of the organization, including operations, technology, and school safety, to realize continuous improvements in all areas that support student learning.

Districts and organizations all over the U.S. and the world can share their own stories of impact about coaching and other types of high-quality professional learning. Policymakers need to hear more of these real-life stories of evidence directly from educators about how professional learning systems can shape excellence and equity in teaching and learning. Learning Forward plays a key role in supporting educators in developing capacity, from students to teachers to everyone throughout the system.

Learning Forward will continue to build the evidence base for professional learning, prioritize illuminating research, and provide the information and support that educators need at all levels. I am excited about the evolution of Learning Forward, including a revision of the Standards for Professional Learning that is on the horizon.

Together, our work can build capacity and the awareness that professional learning is the most important factor in our quest for continued improvement for every student and staff in our schools. ■



Policymakers need to hear more of these real-life stories of evidence directly from educators about how professional learning systems can shape excellence and equity in teaching and learning.

Leigh Wall is president of the Learning Forward board of trustees.



To coach for equity, you must see inequities, understand how they were constructed, and know why they perpetuate.

Elena Aguilar
(elena@brightmorningteam.com) is president of **Bright Morning Consulting.**

WHAT I'VE LEARNED

Elena Aguilar

YOU CAN COACH FOR EQUITY ANYWHERE, WITH ANYONE

To create the schools children deserve, we must coach educators and leaders for equity. It isn't an option for coaches to be neutral on issues of justice — and there are injustices occurring in almost every school, every day. It's our moral and professional obligation to lead and coach in a way that surfaces and interrupts these inequities.

Every conversation I have in and about schools is a conversation about equity. Always looking through an equity lens, I notice who is sitting where, who is raising his, her, or their hand, who is being yelled at, who is reading what, who is playing with whom, who is in the front office waiting for the principal.

I think about how teachers explain concepts and check for understanding, what they assign for reading, whom they praise and why, what they are doing during professional learning time. I process what I see through my understandings of race, institutional racism, implicit bias, stereotype threat, white supremacy, and other frameworks to make sense of what I see — and, perhaps most important, to figure out how to interrupt the inequities.

Because equity issues are present in every situation, I am coaching for equity in every coaching conversation. We live in a society that is deeply inequitable, in which systems of oppression (including racism, patriarchy, and classism) are embedded in our mindsets, behaviors, and institutions, but we often don't recognize the prevalence of this systemic oppression.

This is why we, as coaches and leaders, must make it visible. To coach for equity, you must see inequities, understand how they were constructed, and know why they perpetuate.

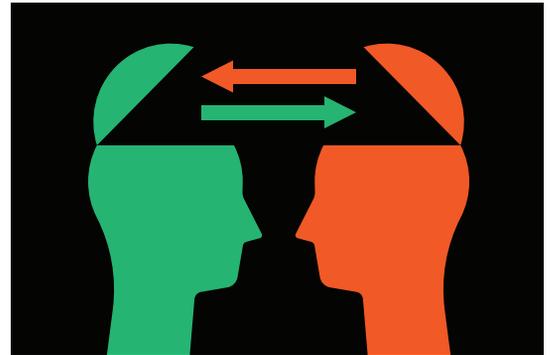
While it's helpful to be in a system or around leaders who hold equity at the center, these conditions aren't essential if you want to coach for equity. Ultimately, you can coach for equity anywhere, with anyone. It's about what you pay attention to and what you say about what you see and hear.

WHAT IS EQUITY?

Educational equity means that all students receive whatever they need every day to develop to their full academic and social potential and thrive. By thrive, I mean academically as well as socially and emotionally. Every child has a right to feel loved and cared for and to feel that they belong to a community. Emotional well-being is as important as academic success in my definition of educational equity.

Achieving educational equity would mean that there is no predictability of success or failure based on social or cultural factors like race, ethnicity, linguistic background, economic class, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and physical and cognitive ability. Here are some examples of educational equity:

- A Latinx child who enters kindergarten speaking only Spanish performs as well on reading assessments in 3rd grade as her native English-speaking counterparts.
- An African American teen is just as likely as his white or Asian classmates to enroll



and thrive in an engineering program in high school.

- Girls are equally represented in advanced math courses — and are equally as successful as their male classmates.
- There's proportionality in the demographics of kids sent to the office: If a district's African American population is 20%, then at most 20% of office referrals are for African American students.

Educational equity also means that all children are seen for who they are and schools surface and cultivate their unique interests and gifts. For this to happen, children need access to an extensive range of learning opportunities, activities, and materials as vehicles to self-realization and freedom.

HOW CAN I COACH FOR EQUITY?

Coaching for equity requires a robust tool set. First, you need to know what equity and inequity look and sound like. The ability to recognize these patterns is affected by your personal identity markers, so before and during any work around educational equity, you need to reflect on and cultivate deep awareness of your sociopolitical identity markers, including your own racial identity. This is meaningful work in and of itself.

You also need foundational coaching skills — a refined ability to listen, a variety of frameworks through which you can make sense of what you hear, and a repertoire of question stems that cultivate dialogue.

Coaching for equity requires professional learning and ongoing practice and feedback from trusted colleagues.

5 TIPS ON COACHING FOR EQUITY

I'm writing my next book, *Coaching for Equity* (Jossey-Bass, in press), and so I have many suggestions for how to have coaching conversations about equity. Here are five of my top tips.

Attend to emotions. Conversations about equity will raise emotions in you and in your coachees. Learning about emotions — how to respond productively and how to support someone else to recognize and engage with them — will make all the difference in coaching for equity. It's very likely that you and your coachee will feel angry, sad, nervous, impatient, confused, and a whole lot more. I've seen many coaching conversations derailed by an inadequate tool set for responding to emotions.

Build trust. A high degree of trust between you and your coachee is critical for you to coach effectively, especially if you're committed to coaching for equity. There are many ways to build trust. We feel trust when people keep their word and honor their commitments, are transparent and don't harbor a hidden agenda, and when we can see that someone can and will do what they say they're going to do.

Know how to respond to the question, "Do you think I'm racist?" As a coach, I'm often asked some form of this question. To engage with this question, you need to know what racism is. You also need to know what implicit bias is and how white supremacy manifests in our schools and a whole lot more — and so you need to be prepared. As you do that learning, here are some ways to respond to this question:

- Tell me more about where that question is coming from.
- Let's unpack that concept first.

What is a racist? What do you think racists think, feel, and do?

- Maybe. Am I understanding that this is something you want to explore? What might you have to gain, or how would you benefit, from digging into this question?
- What would it mean to you if you are racist?
- What do you really want to know about yourself? What are you curious to discover?
- Yes, you probably are. To some degree, we all are.

As you read some of these, you might have thought, *I could never say that!* I want to challenge you to try some of them. You might be surprised at how effective they are at opening up conversation.

Gather data. If you want to help a coachee interrupt inequitable practices, you'll likely need to gather the data that illustrate these inequities. There are many kinds of data that can reveal inequities, from video to surveys to teacher-to-student interaction data to disaggregated office referral data. Knowing what to gather and how to facilitate a meaningful discussion of this data with a client is essential.

Hone your coach dispositions. Who you are as a coach — your way of being — has a tremendous impact on the quality of your coaching conversations. Fortunately, who you are is firmly within your sphere of control. I have identified six essential dispositions for coaches that lead to transformational conversations and are essential for equity conversations: compassion, curiosity, trust in the coaching process, humility and

Continued on p. 14



There are two things that are unique to interviewing potential coaches: Be clear about the position, and ask questions appropriate to the work.

Cathy Toll is director of Partnering to Learn.

ASK

Cathy Toll

EFFECTIVE COACHING BEGINS WITH THE HIRING PROCESS

Coaching is a powerful professional learning strategy, but the process is only as effective as the coaches who lead it. It's worth investing time in hiring the right coaches because they can have an impact on the whole school. We asked Cathy Toll, director of Partnering to Learn and an expert on coaching, what school and district leaders need to know when hiring.

Q: How do you find and hire great instructional coaches?

A: Finding the right person to do the job is a commonsense goal, but it isn't always easy. Not only do coaches need to have successful teaching experience, there are additional demands of coaching that not all good teachers possess. To make sure you get the right person, three components are essential to the hiring process: the job description, enumeration of the qualities of effective coaches, and an effective interview.

THE JOB DESCRIPTION

A first step is to have a clear understanding of the job and a written job description. Most job descriptions provide a list of duties, but you should also include how those duties will be met, in terms of time and process. For instance, if one of the duties is to support teachers in implementing effective instruction, indicate what percent of the coach's time would be allocated to that duty and how — for example, by demonstrating effective instruction, working with small teams to study effective instruction, or meeting with teachers in coaching conversations.

I am surprised by how many coaches work without a job description. I find that many leaders lack information necessary to develop an accurate job description for coaches. I encourage leaders to work with others in developing the description, especially coaches themselves. Additional help could come from curricular leads, professional organizations, and faculty at nearby universities.

Be sure to articulate how the coach will be evaluated. In many schools, coaches are considered teachers and therefore are evaluated using the teacher evaluation system. This is frequently awkward and sometimes unfair to coaches because their jobs are so different from classroom teachers. If at all possible, use evaluation methods tailored to coaches. If you are required to use the teachers' evaluation form, adjust some items or collect additional evidence of coaching success.

ESSENTIAL QUALITIES

In my work with thousands of coaches in the U.S. and beyond, I have noticed that those who



succeed have three personal qualities that you can remember with the acronym CAT:

- **Connectedness:** They want to connect with others.
- **Acceptance:** They turn off their judging mind, assume good intentions, and accept the people they work with.
- **Trustworthiness:** They make teachers feel comfortable and will keep teachers' information confidential.

Hiring a coach who already seems to have these qualities optimizes the chances for coaching success. But sometimes principals will need to help develop the qualities.

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Principles of good interviewing apply to hiring educational coaches: Interview with a team to get input from multiple stakeholders, ask open-ended questions, allow time to answer the candidate's questions. But there are two things that are unique to interviewing potential coaches: Be clear about the position, and ask questions appropriate to the work.

Hiring a coach reflects a considerable investment, but it is worthwhile.

A coach who is not ready for the work will not only be ineffective but can damage teachers' understanding of coaching and have long-term consequences for their work with other coaches.

When the right coach is selected, there is potential for a big difference in the school. Effective coaches support teachers in ways that make a difference for students — and that's what we all want.

10 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO ASK POTENTIAL COACHES

The following questions form the basis for a helpful hiring conversation. They should be supplemented with additional questions about the specific content expertise sought (for example, for a math coach, an additional question would be "What is the goal of high-quality math instruction?") and about the specific needs of your school, staff, and students.

1 **ASK: Describe your understanding of effective coaching: What is it and how does it look in practice?**

LISTEN FOR: Coach as partner; focus on problem-solving; goal of enhancing teacher success.

BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT: Coach tells teachers what to do; coach determines how teachers need to grow; coach spends time with students unless providing demonstration.

2 **ASK: What qualities do you have that would make you an effective coach?**

LISTEN FOR: Trustworthy; listener; effective questioner; collaborator; relationship builder.

BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT: Candidate seems to think she knows more than others or knows what teachers need; plans to evaluate teachers; focuses only on her teaching skill and not coaching attributes.

3 **ASK: Please give an example of a time when you connected well with a professional colleague. How do you know you connected well?**

LISTEN FOR: Colleague opened up to the candidate; colleague

expressed appreciation of the interaction; colleague returned another time to talk further.

BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT: Top-down interactions in which the candidate was in charge; superficial interactions; focus on goal or product of a shared task rather than interpersonal connections.

4 **ASK: What do you expect your schedule would look like on a typical day as a coach?**

LISTEN FOR: Time to meet with teachers; coaching conversations; collaborating with teams; demonstration lessons; support of new teachers.

BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT: Time mainly spent in classrooms providing demonstration lessons; time mainly spent working with students; focus on observation in classrooms.

5 **ASK: What would you do if a teacher told you he or she didn't want to work with you?**

LISTEN FOR: Learning more; listening carefully; patience; getting to know the teacher; collaboration outside of coaching — e.g. study groups or teaming.

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Continued from p. 13

BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT: Reporting to principal; determining teacher is uncoachable; pointing out teacher's weaknesses as evidence that they need coaching.

6 ASK: What would you do if a teacher had a different approach to instruction or a different class management style than you?

LISTEN FOR: Listen to understand; recognize there is more than one approach; accept teacher where he or she is; collaborate for growth.

BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT: Desire to get teacher to see things the coach's way; avoid working with the teacher; get into the classroom and fix things.

7 ASK: What would you do if a teacher told you she wanted you to come into her classroom and work with a small group of students?

LISTEN FOR: Graceful explanation of why that is not the coach's role; coach's inquiry into why additional

help is requested; listening to teacher's needs; distinction between coaching role and other duties, such as intervention, during which small-group instruction would be appropriate.

BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT: Eager acceptance of daily duties that involve teaching a small group.

8 ASK: Tell me about your own professional learning. How do you learn best? What have you learned recently? What would you like to learn about as a coach?

LISTEN FOR: Understanding of self as learner; eagerness to continue learning; learning related to coaching — e.g. adult learning theory, coaching practice, collaboration, professional teaming — and not just related to teaching.

BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT: Focus on teaching rather than coaching; inability to describe self as learner; lack of understanding of areas for future learning.

9 ASK: How would you know you are effective as a coach?

LISTEN FOR: Inquiring of colleagues and principal; collecting evidence based upon clear outcomes; observable (looks like/sounds like) evidence.

BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT: Formal teacher evaluation; "I just know"; vague feelings of success.

10 ASK: How would you advocate for equity as a coach?

LISTEN FOR: Collaborative inquiry; working toward school vision/mission; demonstrating own practices; looking closely at student data/evidence; creating possibility — visits to other schools, viewing video, etc.; creating equitable learning environment; tools/resources such as Teaching Tolerance, Rethinking Schools.

BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT: Assuming that equitable beliefs/practices can be demanded by coach; seeking superficial changes; statement that the school "has no diversity." ■

CALL TO ACTION / Denise Glyn Borders

Continued from p. 8

systems" across the globe (OECD, 2019, p. 153).

As your champion, Learning Forward commits to deepen its engagement in research and evidence so we all become stronger partners in professional learning. I welcome your input and feedback.

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WHAT I'VE LEARNED / Elena Aguilar

Continued from p. 11

mutuality, appreciation, and learner orientation. Regular and intentional practice strengthens these dispositions.

To do this essential work of coaching for equity, we all have a great deal to learn. These aren't skills most

of us have acquired yet, but we can develop them. In schools where coaches work effectively within an equity lens, children and adults thrive and inequities decrease. This is perhaps what we need to know most: We *can* coach for equity and create equitable schools.

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Examine. Study. Understand.

RESEARCH



BENEFITS OF MENTOR SUPPORT

The New Teacher Center received a federal grant to provide high-intensity mentor support to new teachers in a large urban school district from 2013 to 2017. An independent study found evidence of financial return on investment for districts and the city and state funds that support them. The study's four key findings:

- Educators stay in their jobs longer.
- Students learn more in math and English language arts, which can translate into higher adult earnings.
- Districts spend less on teacher recruitment and training so they can invest in other areas.
- Communities benefit from long-term student success.

READ MORE about the study on p. **18**.



RESEARCH REVIEW

Elizabeth Foster

STUDY PINPOINTS SUCCESS FACTORS WHEN TEACHERS LEARN FROM PEERS

► THE STUDY

Lotan, R.A. & Burns, D. (2019). *The Instructional Leadership Corps: Teachers leading sustainable professional learning in their communities.* Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute. Available at learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/instructional-leadership-corps-teachers-leading.

Elizabeth Foster (elizabeth.foster@learningforward.org) is vice president, research & standards at Learning Forward. In each issue of *The Learning Professional*, Foster explores recent research to help practitioners understand the impact of particular learning practices on student outcomes.

California's Instructional Leadership Corps (ILC), a peer-led, ongoing professional learning initiative operating since 2014, has served more than 32,000 educators in 2,000 schools and 495 districts across California. An additional 30,000 educators participated in ILC-related conferences and presentations, and 38,000 more trained as instructional coaches.

ILC is focused on developing the collective capacity and knowledge of teachers, principals, and superintendents to lead ongoing professional learning to implement effectively the Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards. ILC's peer-to-peer design and large scale make it unique and an important area for study.

Researchers Rachel Lotan and Dion Burns from the Learning Policy Institute recently published a study about ILC's impact and the factors that have contributed to it. This study, which focused on four schools, was part of a larger study, which found that the initiative led to changes in instructional practice and improvements in student engagement in learning.

The four-site case study looked at how ILC teams were established and operated in different settings and sought to learn what factors enabled this practitioner-led professional learning to take hold, grow, and become successful in these varied settings.

The authors' research adds to our understanding of how to support teacher-led professional learning, which can be challenging for schools and districts to embed and sustain. Their study is of interest to Learning Forward because it supports our continuing efforts to highlight what professional learning aspects and conditions have a positive impact on teacher practice and student outcomes and what we can learn about specific initiatives that are generalizable to other contexts.

METHODOLOGY

The authors chose the sites for the four case studies based on reports that the ILC process had taken root, the ILC team reached an above-average number of teachers, teachers gave positive feedback about ILC participation, and the sites varied in demographics, geographic distribution, and engagement with local organizations. The four selected schools shared the common goal of addressing a chronic problem of practice, often inequities in students' access to high-quality instruction.

The four sites were:

- **Madera Unified School District**, a rural district serving largely Latinx students with varying levels of English proficiency, many of whom are from low-income families. ILC teacher leaders focused their efforts on language and literacy development through workshops, a train-the-trainer program, and induction supports for new teachers.
- **East Side Alliance**, a formal partnership between a high school and seven feeder districts in a moderate- to low-income community. Two ILC teams focused on math instruction, including new approaches to instruction, lesson study, and cross-grade alignment workshops.
- **Conejo Valley Unified School District**, a high-achieving and well-resourced district.



Two ILC middle and high school teams focused on Next Generation Science Standards implementation via webinars, workshops, co-planning, and co-teaching.

- **North Orange County**, a partnership between a professional learning network of ILC teacher leaders and a higher education institution's center for teaching careers. This site offered conferences focused on the instructional shifts required by new content standards and mentoring programs for new and prospective teachers.

The study examined how these sites implemented ILC strategies and connected them to broader efforts of the districts and counties. The research team also examined the perceived impacts on teachers' practice.

Researchers visited the sites, where they administered teacher surveys and conducted interviews of 28 teachers and 12 district and school administrators, adding follow-up phone interviews as needed. They also observed two ILC regional conferences, seven ILC team meetings, and classrooms of four participating teachers. Additional data included artifacts such as videos and video transcripts, presentations from ILC workshops, planning documents, and project reports.

FINDINGS

The researchers grouped their findings about success factors into five central lessons:

Teachers value professional learning led by their colleagues, in contrast to professional development from outside consultants. They

appreciated the accessibility of their colleagues and their familiarity with students and the setting.

ILC membership enhances teacher leaders' professionalism and sense of efficacy. They spoke of their experience as "empowering the profession."

The ILC supported structures that foster instructional change. The ILC ensured protected time and opportunity for professional collaboration, and this added legitimacy and institutionalized schools' commitment to professional learning on the new standards and curricula. The researchers recommended that future work prioritize engaging administrators with the authority to make these structural adjustments.

Systematic follow-up contributes to implementation of instructional shifts. Changes in pedagogy were more likely with sustained and consistent reflection and dialogue, both verbal and written, among colleagues. The researchers recommended building in additional strategies for such follow-up.

Strategic relationships support deep, widespread professional learning. Teacher leaders who built relationships with stakeholders such as district leaders, teacher associations, universities, philanthropic organizations, and policymakers were more able to align efforts, marshal resources, and share expertise, and they also reported the work was valued more by others.

This last finding speaks directly to Learning Forward's focus on moving away from sit-and-get workshops toward more comprehensive, embedded, ongoing professional learning. It is a reminder that understanding and undertaking this shift is still a struggle for many

educators and one that we need to continue to support.

The **Standards for Professional Learning** are evident and supported throughout the ILC approach and the research findings and recommendations. The **Leadership standard** is underscored by the fact that sites did particularly well when leaders were engaged and informed about the work, as well as the study's findings about supportive structural arrangements and teacher leaders developing professional efficacy through leadership.

The fact that this professional learning is teacher- and student-centered underscores the importance of the **Learning Communities standard**, which emphasizes that relationships are at the core and must be supported by a culture of collective responsibility and continuous improvement.

This study and the ILC program itself also support the comprehensive approach of the Standards for Professional Learning. Just as there is no single standard or element that alone makes professional learning systems succeed, it is the multipronged approach of capacity building, content expertise development, leadership, and supports that leads to positive outcomes in the ILC sites.

Studies like this one illuminate not just the impact of professional learning on teachers and students but also the factors that contribute to successful and sustained implementation that leads to impact. These learnings are valuable for everyone because the needs they target affect almost all schools and districts. ■

ESSENTIALS

\$1 million

A recent follow-up to a study of new teacher mentoring in Chicago Public Schools found a sizable return on investment. The independent evaluation of New Teacher Project's mentoring effort documented an 11% increase in teacher retention, resulting in a financial return on investment of 22%, which the researchers project would translate into almost \$1 million over a five-year investment in mentoring.

They also estimated, based on students' improved test scores, a long-term benefit of an average \$38,000 increase in students' future lifetime earnings. The report points out that these findings have important equity implications, because African American and Latino students are more likely to be taught by new teachers.

bit.ly/2Jz5fEH

6 out of 45

Elementary school principals are responsible for the instructional leadership of their schools, and more and more of those schools include prekindergarten classrooms. Yet many principals have no background in early childhood education, and, in 2017, only six out of 45 states surveyed by New America required principals-in-training to take coursework in the subject.

The state of Illinois has worked to address this gap as part of its efforts to revamp principal preparation, starting with legislation in 2010 that required early childhood coursework and related questions on the licensing exam. This report from New America details successes and challenges in this work, along with lessons for other states.

bit.ly/2BI2NHi

15 hours

In a study published in the October issue of the *American Educational Research Journal*, researchers dove into the black box of teacher professional learning to examine which elements make a difference. They analyzed all materials and tasks from 21 mathematics professional development programs and categorized them according to content focus and learning strategy (e.g. presentations, implementation planning).

The only significant content predictor of improvements in teachers' math knowledge was curricular content knowledge — that is, professional development focused on understanding the specific math curricula teachers' schools use, learning standards, or how math concepts are sequenced. Examining student work was the only significant professional development strategy. Planning classroom implementation was not associated with increased knowledge, despite being the most common strategy.

The researchers write, "These findings indicate that 15 hours of examining student work would be associated with a 0.39 SD increase in teachers' [math knowledge] gain scores, whereas 15 hours of PD in curricular content knowledge would be associated with a standard deviation increase of approximately 0.15."

bit.ly/2MlzUB4

85%

Low salaries have long been a concern for teachers and prospective teachers, but with the growing cost of housing in many parts of the country, those concerns are becoming particularly acute. This study examined the impact of these trends on teachers in San Francisco,

one of the hottest housing markets in the U.S.

Researchers found that teachers there "are considerably more likely to experience economic anxiety" than average Americans, with "a full 85% experiencing economic anxiety frequently or sometimes." For example, "Fewer than 5% of employed Americans find it very difficult to cover their housing costs, whereas 13% to 27% of SFUSD teachers (owners and renters, respectively)" do.

Furthermore, the findings suggest this could have a negative impact on students, as teachers with high economic anxiety had a lower regard for the teaching profession, missed more days of school, and were more likely to plan to resign in the coming year.

bit.ly/2MKainr

Null effect

Cooperating teachers, who supervise teacher candidates' field placements, play a big role in preservice teacher education. But leaders of preservice programs sometimes struggle to recruit cooperating teachers, especially highly effective ones, in part because those teachers worry their own teaching evaluations will suffer.

This study examined whether there is empirical evidence for that fear and came to a reassuring conclusion. Looking at the evaluations of 4,500 cooperating teachers during the years they did and did not supervise candidates, researchers found no decrease in evaluation scores. In fact, during the years these teachers served as supervisors, "teachers had significantly better observation ratings and somewhat better achievement gains, though not always at significant levels."

bit.ly/2WbaQWA

Inform. Engage. Immerse.

FOCUS

COACHING

COACHING MAKES A DIFFERENCE

“Our estimates of the effect of coaching on teachers’ instructional practice (0.49 SD) are larger than differences in measures of instructional quality between novice and veteran teachers. ... Effects on students’ academic performance (0.18 SD) are of similar or larger magnitude than estimates of the degree to which teachers improve their ability to raise student achievement during the first five to 10 years of their careers.”

Source: Kraft, M.A., Blazar, D., & Hogan, D. (2018). The effect of teacher coaching on instruction and achievement: A meta-analysis of the causal evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 88(4), 547-588.

the formula $k=2(t+3)$
 $2)=2(t+3)$ $(t-2)$
 $5k=2(t+6)$
 $2t-3k$
 $73k$
 $2t-3k$
 $(k-2)=$





HOW COACHING TAKES ROOT

3 KEY FACTORS LEAD TO SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

BY JENNIFER D. PIERCE, MELISSA IRBY, AND MELISSA WEBER-MAYRER

Nearly 60,000 educators serve as instructional coaches in schools today (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017), and other models of coaching, like leadership coaching and systems coaching, are taking hold as well (Freeman, Sugai, Simonsen, & Everett, 2017; Goff, Guthrie, Goldring, & Bickman, 2014).

The decades-long push to use coaching as a means to support teachers and leaders to improve student learning and close achievement gaps is driven in large part by research that shows coaching can lead to improved teaching and student learning (Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2018), leadership skills (Goff

et al., 2017), and school infrastructure, such as effective allocation of resources (Freeman et al., 2017).

But simply hiring and funding coaches isn't sufficient to reach these positive outcomes.

The implementation of coaching, including the practices coaches use and the amount of time they allocate to sessions, matters. If coaching practices and dosage miss the mark, then teaching, leadership, and school infrastructure likely won't improve. Neither will student learning (Pierce, 2019).

And coaching that is not aligned with systemwide goals and infrastructure is hamstrung from the beginning. We can't expect coaching

to lead to desired outcomes if it is used in a less than systematic way (Pierce & Ferguson, n.d.).

The three of us have led and studied coaching across diverse settings and with educators at multiple levels, from classroom teachers to district and state leaders, and have observed that the need for a more strategic approach is a common theme. We draw on implementation science research to describe how to improve coaching across educational systems and share examples of how such a strategic approach is improving coaching, teaching, and learning.

IMPLEMENTING COACHING

Implementation science has

unraveled the numerous factors that shape successful uptake of practices, indicating that the successful implementation of *anything*, whether a math program or a coaching initiative, is fairly predictable (Nilson, 2015). At least three key drivers shape implementation success or failure (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005), and here we explain them as applied to coaching:

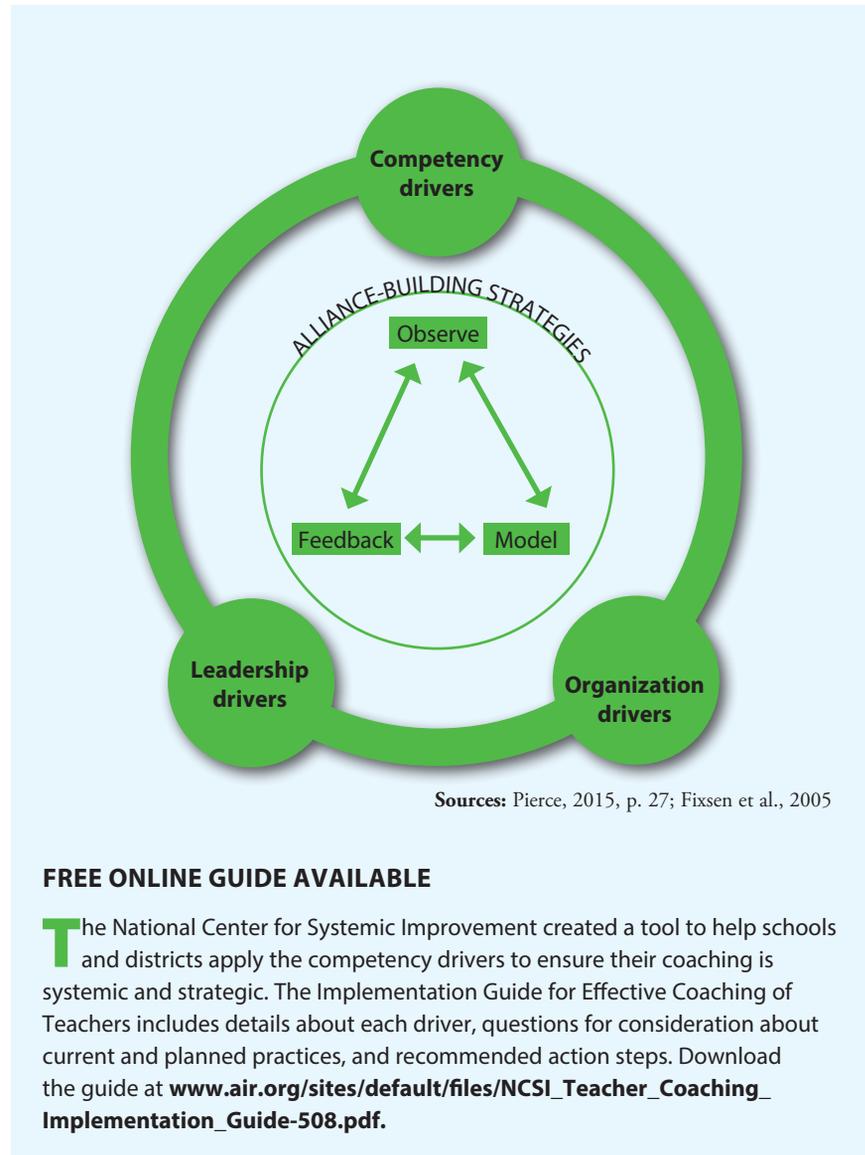
- **Competency:** the knowledge and skills coaches need;
- **Organization:** the infrastructure needed for coaching success; and,
- **Leadership:** the active role leaders play in supporting coaching (Pierce & Ferguson, n.d.).

Taking a strategic approach to implementing coaching means methodically addressing the three drivers so that coaching becomes deeply rooted into the system and leads to the desired outcomes (Pierce & Ferguson, n.d.).

To learn how two teams took a strategic approach to implementing coaching, we highlight two stories. In the first, state education leaders in Ohio applied the three implementation drivers (competency, organization, and leadership) to support improved student literacy outcomes. In the second, leaders working at the district level in the Navajo Nation in Arizona drew on the same three drivers to create a coordinated coaching program for principals.

THE OHIO STORY

In 2015, a team of general and special education leaders working at the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) outlined a State Systemic Improvement



Sources: Pierce, 2015, p. 27; Fixsen et al., 2005

FREE ONLINE GUIDE AVAILABLE

The National Center for Systemic Improvement created a tool to help schools and districts apply the competency drivers to ensure their coaching is systemic and strategic. The Implementation Guide for Effective Coaching of Teachers includes details about each driver, questions for consideration about current and planned practices, and recommended action steps. Download the guide at www.air.org/sites/default/files/NCSI_Teacher_Coaching_Implementation_Guide-508.pdf.

Plan aimed at bolstering literacy instruction in preschool through grade 3, with a focus on improving outcomes among children with disabilities.

To support the plan's implementation, ODE leaders partnered with several districts to hire a cadre of coaches who were employed

as systems-level coaches, teacher-level coaches, or both.

Systems-level coaches helped school-level teams (e.g. a principal or team of lead teachers) develop a strong school infrastructure to sustain the use of the new literacy practices. Teacher-level coaches supported teachers in

participating schools. The ODE team wanted to take a methodical approach to using both types.

ENSURING COACH CAPACITY

ODE's first step was to provide capacity-building opportunities for those serving in the role. Coaches participated in two types of professional learning: one focused on literacy to enhance content knowledge and the other focused on developing expertise in conducting and supporting coaching cycles.

Coaches needed to hold clear expertise in literacy and have the skills to conduct powerful coaching sessions with teachers and school teams. In addition, ODE leaders also conducted monthly meetings so that coaches could collaboratively reflect on their work and identify remaining professional learning needs.

DATA COLLECTION

ODE quickly recognized the need to formally track what practices coaches were enacting with teachers and school teams to establish links between coaching and changes in school infrastructure, teacher practice, and student outcomes.

They needed a data collection system to inform and guide a continuous improvement cycle. ODE leaders shifted their attention to organizational drivers to coordinate coaching across the schools, focusing on two areas.

Installing a data dashboard. The data dashboard housed the coaching data where coaches entered data into the system, including: dose, duration, and frequency of coaching for each teacher and each school team; amount of time the coach allocated to the breadth of job responsibilities; the specific practices employed by the coach; and the topic covered during the coaching session.

Using data for continuous improvement. The ODE team and coaches then held monthly meetings to analyze the data and used information

WHAT MATTERS NOW NETWORK

Through participation in Learning Forward's What Matters Now Network, Ohio coaches and district leaders recently began to support several teacher-based teams and building leadership teams in three areas: identifying evidence-based strategies for at-risk students; using a targeted decision tool to plan for instruction; and using Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles to determine how students respond to instruction.

Here's how ODE leaders, in partnership with network facilitators, ensured strategic implementation of this new stream of coaching work:

- **Competency:** Coaches and district leaders need to have the capacity to support teacher-based teams and building leadership teams in identifying evidence-based strategies, using the decision tool, and conducting Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles. The What Matters Now Network offers professional learning in these three areas to coaches, district leaders, teacher-based teams, and building leadership teams.
- **Organization:** ODE leaders meet regularly with coaches, district leaders, teacher-based teams, and building leadership teams participating in the What Matters Now Network to build critical connections across all parts of the Ohio education system.
- **Leadership:** The What Matters Now Network requires shared leadership between coaches and district leaders. Therefore, both coaches and district leaders drive conversations at the teacher-team and building-team levels.

to reflect on essential questions: How do coaches use their time with teachers? What transpires in systems coaching sessions with teams? They also used this time to identify coaching successes, areas for improvement, and factors (e.g. policies and cultural norms) that influenced coaches' work.

Developing their organization for more systematic use of coaching proved beneficial. The ODE team had real-time data from every coach working at a participating school and were situated to better understand the overall impact of coaching on teaching and learning. The data identified successes and challenges and informed the continuous improvement cycle.

The ODE team also used the data to establish coaching goals, including short- and long-term objectives. All in all, the data system and the resulting data-based problem-solving created a more coordinated implementation of coaching across participating schools.

ENHANCING LEADERSHIP

ODE's effort to strategically implement coaching was not yet complete. The team acknowledged that participating schools held different expectations for coaching. Some teachers expected coaches to conduct literacy trainings only. Others expected systems coaches to work with teachers, not school teams.

The ODE team realized the need to communicate a common vision of coaching. Without a consistent expectation for what coaches would do, the work of coaches might not remain focused.

In collaboration with coaches, the ODE team drafted a definition of coaching using the tool Support Models: Matrix and Discussion Guide for K-12th Grade Systems (Pierce, 2018). The team shared the definition with teachers and principals, and it became rooted into the everyday work of coaches across participating schools.

THE CHINLE STORY

Chinle (Ch'inilí) Unified School District is in the heart of the Navajo Nation in Arizona. There are seven schools and more than 3,647 students in the Chinle school district, making it the largest district in the Navajo Nation in student enrollment and geographic area.

In 2017, frequent principal leadership turnover at nearly all its schools posed a significant challenge for Chinle. Understanding the critical role leaders play in strong student achievement, Chinle leaders prioritized coaching for their principals.

ENSURING COACH CAPACITY

To implement coaching strategically, district leaders hired an external expert to serve as the coach. Hiring an external expert was imperative given that Chinle staff members were already stretched thin. Adding coaching to current job responsibilities seemed unreasonable.

District leaders also acknowledged that principals may be more comfortable working with a coach external to the Chinle system. As noted by a Chinle principal, coaching from an outside expert helped him develop new ways of working with teachers: "The system I have developed in consultation with [my leadership coach] to regularly monitor teacher performance on key indicators and encourage teachers to strive for higher student performance has been invaluable. Having a solid structure ... seems to be moving us into new levels of discussion, motivation, and staff engagement that didn't exist previously."

ESTABLISHING SUPPORT

Chinle district leaders next shifted their attention to developing the overall system's support for principal coaching. Their work focused on two areas.

Cultivating a professional learning culture for leaders. In partnership with the coach, Chinle district leaders created a comprehensive professional learning approach in

which principals could learn and practice effective leadership habits with their coach. This included monthly professional learning, on-site principal coaching, and bimonthly coaching.

This approach established a new organizational norm: Principals, not just teachers, engage in ongoing professional learning linked to the overall district goal for improving student outcomes.

Aligning coaching sessions around research-based leadership habits. Research points to the critical role four leadership habits play in principal effectiveness: driving for results; influencing for results; problem-solving; and showing confidence to lead (Steiner, Hassel, & Hassel, 2008).

With the coach, principals engaged in self-assessment of these habits each quarter using formative assessment, attendance and discipline data, classroom walk-through data, and climate surveys from teachers. Coaching sessions allowed principals to reflect on their current practices and identify areas for growth.

Aligning principal coaching around the evidence-based leader habits provided school and district leaders with a common language, consistent approaches to problem-solving, and ongoing self-reflection and assessment.

COACHING PRINCIPALS

Chinle's intentional implementation of coaching then shifted to leadership drivers. Here, district leaders stressed that the primary purpose of principal coaching was to continuously improve leadership, not to evaluate.

District leaders and the external coach explicitly communicated to principals that all coaching conversations would remain between the coach and coachee. Setting the expectation that coaching was not linked to evaluation resulted in strong support among principals for participating in sessions.

Moreover, establishing coaching as nonevaluative freed principals to

focus on continuously developing their leadership skills.

IMPACT

From 2017 to 2019, district proficiency rates in 8th-grade English language arts nearly doubled, from 10% in 2017 to 19% in 2019, while 8th-grade math proficiency rates nearly tripled, from 10% to 28% in the same time span.

In Ohio, the percentage of students with disabilities at participating sites achieving proficiency on the state's English language arts achievement test increased by 6.5% from 2015 to 2019. In addition, the percentage of all K-3rd-grade students at participating sites scoring proficient on state-approved reading assessments also increased by at least 3% in that same time frame.

While multiple variables may have influenced student achievement and we cannot directly link outcomes to coaching, achieving growth among typically marginalized student groups is a significant accomplishment that warrants attention.

Whether coaches engage with individual teachers, school teams, or school leaders, coaching can be a critical lever for improving a host of outcomes: teacher practice, leader practice, school infrastructure, and, most importantly, student learning. To achieve these goals, take the time to use coaching the right way: with methodical attention to implementation drivers. Achieving desired goals may very well depend on it.

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Continued on p. 40



ON THE PATH TO 'BECOMING'

AWARENESS OF THEIR OWN MENTAL MODELS CAN HELP COACHES STRETCH AND GROW

BY JOELLEN KILLION

Coaches make hundreds, if not thousands, of decisions that affect the daily work of teaching and learning. These decisions are not arbitrary; they are guided by the mental models coaches hold.

Mental models comprise our assumptions, beliefs, and generalizations, and they shape how we see the world and act in it. The concept of mental models, popularized by Donald Schon in his study of how professionals learn (Schon, 1987) and Peter Senge in his work on

organizational learning (Senge, 1990), has been described in multiple academic fields since the late 19th century.

Coaches' mental models are powerful factors in determining how they see and understand their clients' classrooms, the school context and culture, and the work that needs to be done. This is one reason that different coaches often respond differently to the same situation.

It is important for coaches to analyze their mental model, understand how it influences their work, and ultimately learn to expand it to best

meet clients' diverse needs and contexts. By becoming increasingly cognizant about the influence of their mental models, coaches can stretch and grow.

They can engage in an essential and ongoing process of "becoming" rather than getting stuck in the act of "being" who they are today. Too often, though, coaches with frenzied daily schedules lack the time and sometimes even awareness to examine their mental models.

This article explores three predominant mental models of coaches and proposes how coaches can overcome



SUMMARY OF PREDOMINANT COACH MENTAL MODELS

Mental model	HEART	HEAD	HAND
PRIMARY DRIVERS OF COACHING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings • Relationships • Positive emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rational and analytic cognition • Clarity of vision, purpose, and goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity-building • Removing barriers to action
CORE BELIEFS	Minimizing resistance and frustration increases teachers' appreciation of coaching and facilitates change.	Understanding "why" and engaging in deliberate, step-by-step planning facilitate change.	Jumping in and getting things done facilitates change, when coupled with developing skills and capacity.
MAIN CHALLENGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on practice • Having difficult conversations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow pace of change • Letting go of being the "expert" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saying no • Focusing work for impact

their limitations. As a business school professor and consultant who specializes in personal mastery, Srikumar Rao writes, "All transformation begins and ends with mental models ... when you change the model, you change your life" (Rao, 2006).

THREE MENTAL MODELS: HEART, HEAD, AND HAND

From interactions with and observations of thousands of coaches around the world, I have developed a theory that coaches operate from three predominant mental models. Each mental model has unique strengths and challenges, and each results in different ways of working.

To describe the three models, let me take you on a journey with three coaches preparing for a challenging

hike to the top of a mountain summit at the end of a school day. Before they begin the climb toward the summit, they examine what they packed in their backpacks that morning.

JAMES MIDDLE SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL COACH

James coaches through a mental model of the heart. He believes that relationships are the bedrock of coaching, and, in interactions with teachers, he focuses on relationships, motivation, and emotional support. He maintains laser-like effort on building and maintaining a culture of safety in coaching. He prefers to wait patiently for teachers to exhibit willingness for coaching rather than initiating interactions directly.

In a journal, he records notes about his work with teams of teachers so he can ensure all voices are heard. He has a manual of processes for building a sense of team within professional learning communities.

In his pack are a book of humor and snacks as antidotes to conflict, frustration, and stress. He also carries a plaque that says, "When teachers feel good about themselves, they are doing what is best for students." Near the top of his pack is a treasured thank-you note from a team of teachers expressing their appreciation for listening to their frustration.

James' own frustration is piqued by the strict accountability placed on students, teachers, coaches, and principals. He complains that there isn't a culture of continuous

improvement in the district and records notes of the many times he has talked with administrators, encouraging them to be more proactive in creating a coaching culture.

His greatest challenges are the lack of substance in coaching conversations and an unwillingness to have the difficult conversations to create dissonance essential for change.

JUSTINE

HIGH-SCHOOL TECH COACH

Justine holds a mental model of the head — one driven by cognition and vision and by logical, rational approaches to change. To her, telling is coaching. Advising, guiding, and problem-solving, she believes, are necessary to motivate teachers to act.

She packs her tablet and details of SAMR, a model of technology integration. She carries electronic files of research on the effects of technology integration on personalization of student learning, achievement, and teacher efficiency because she believes that data are crucial for convincing people to change.

She has a collection of the best apps for students and a curated collection of online resources for teachers. She has a digital archive of emails and tweets from colleagues who acknowledge how resourceful she is. They mention how she plans lessons for them that integrate technology and how quick she is to fix pesky technology glitches.

Justine has a healthy dose of impatience with teachers who avoid working with her. She continually seeks strategies to work with resistant teachers, and she worries that the same small group of teachers are the only ones who work with her.

Her biggest complaint is that the principal fails to advocate technology integration or her coaching services to teachers more actively. If the principal would require teachers to integrate technology and work with her, she believes, she would have entrée to more classrooms.

She is frustrated that data show

little change across the school in technology use. Her biggest challenges are being patient with the pace of change and letting go of the desire to be perceived as the expert to engage teachers in discovery.

JASMINE

ELEMENTARY MATH COACH

Jasmine coaches from a mental model of the hand. She believes that the more she does for teachers and the school, the more staff will value coaching and the higher results will be. By filling her day, she feels fulfilled. She is always busy, never a moment in a day to take a breath, eat lunch, or plan for upcoming coaching conversations.

She moves through the school like a whirlwind sharing resources, conducting demonstration lessons, answering questions, generating assessments for teachers, facilitating unit and lesson planning meetings, and filling in wherever needed.

“I can’t get into classrooms,” she tells her coach champion, “because I am so busy with teacher and principal requests,” and she missed the last district coach meeting because she was stepping in for her principal at the kindergarten parent meeting.

Her pack is filled with tools, skills, strategies, protocols, and maps. Her planning book and calendar are heavy and full. She also carries teachers’ notes that express appreciation for helping them with time-consuming tasks and for always saying yes to their requests.

Her greatest challenges are saying no to the insignificant requests that have little impact and reconstituting her current work to focus on what will have the deepest impact on teaching quality and student learning. The chief complaint she has about her work is that if she doesn’t do it — whatever that “it” is at the moment — it won’t get done or won’t be done well.

All of these mental models and approaches have benefits. Yet, no one of them alone is the best fit for every situation. Transformative learning, the kind that coaching seeks to achieve,

requires coaches to move away from a single mental model toward a broader one that supports fluidity and flexibility across multiple mental models.

Decades of research reveal that transformative learning, the kind that changes how people think and act, weaves together the heart, head, and hand, or as researchers would call them, relational knowing, metacognitive analysis of practice, and deep engagement. James’ relational mental model, Justine’s growth-oriented head model, and Jasmine’s action-oriented model can coexist. For this to happen, these coaches must first examine and understand the models they currently hold.

GROWING COACHES BY ‘BECOMING’

When coaches experience coaching or self-coach, they can pair a growing awareness and deepening understanding of their current mental model with a commitment to expand and extend their mental model to increase the effectiveness and impact of their coaching practice and better meet client needs. They are open to who they can become — and who the teachers they coach have the potential to become.

It takes courage, confidence, and capacity for coaches to examine their own mental models. Coaches grow by embracing the challenge and dissonance of the journey to undergo their own transformative learning. They acknowledge and discover blind spots, seek deeper understanding of their current mental models, and upgrade practices.

James, Justine, and Jasmine, the coaches ready to start the climb to the summit, have filled their packs with artifacts of their best current selves. Yet, to face and overcome the challenges the journey presents, they ensure they leave space in their packs for what they inevitably will learn along the way. Their packs will shift as they travel upwards — if they are open to becoming more than they are now.

Writer Maria Popova notes that

“becoming” is a conundrum most people grapple with —awareness that growth, either personal or professional, means transcending one’s current mental model to discover a more dimensional, intelligent, and enlightened one (Popova, 2014a). She describes “the excruciating growing pains of evolving or completely abandoning our former, more inferior beliefs as we integrate new knowledge and insight into our comprehension of how life works.

“That discomfort, in fact, can be so intolerable,” she emphasizes, “that we often go to great lengths to disguise or deny our changing beliefs by paying less attention to information that contradicts our present convictions and more to that which confirms them.”

Describing the origins of this behavior, she explains, “Once forced to figure out who we want to be in life, most of us are so anxious about planting that stake of being that we bury the alive, active process of our becoming” (Popova, 2014b).

Or, as Daniel Gilbert, a Harvard psychologist, in his 2014 TEDTalk *The Future of Your Current Self* says, “Human beings are works in progress that mistakenly think they’re finished.” At this very moment, he proposes, no one is what he has the potential to become.

Many teachers who step into coaching cease to become. This makes sense temporarily. They may experience dissonance when they move into the role of coach and grieve the loss of their own classroom, students, and identity as a teacher. To cope with dissonance, they double down on their comfortable mental models.

Alternatively, coaches may struggle with becoming because they are so enthusiastic about having “arrived” at their new role. Causing further entrenchment of mental models, coach preparation programs often inadequately address the necessary transition in mental models, preferring skill development over cultivation of a coaching mental model.

REACHING THE SUMMIT

James, Justine, and Jasmine have reached a turning point in their careers. They have decided to journey to the summit, to embrace a transformative approach to coaching, one that embodies the heart, head, and hand. What’s in their packs — and what will be in their packs — will determine how challenging the trek toward the summit will be and whether they make it to the top.

Often coaches’ packs are so full of their existing mental models, they have little room to adjust the contents. Along the way, though, the successful ones will offload unnecessary or outdated mental models and expand and add newly adapted or acquired mental models.

To do this, they answer these questions:

- Who am I as a coach?
- What is implicit and explicit in my decisions, actions, and words?
- What am I learning about myself, my practice, and my impact on my clients and the environment in which I work?
- How much available space is in my pack to add what I learn as I climb?
- How can I move beyond being once I reach the summit and keep searching for my next becoming?

To become and transform, coaches commit to the heart work of being vulnerable, appreciating dissonance that occurs with the change, and providing emotional support for one another. They engage in the head work of critical analysis and reflection to make sense of each experience. And they welcome the hand work, the labor of moving learning into practice in multiple short experiments that lead to more sustained practices.

To climb onward, coaches acknowledge the internal or external dangers that lie along the way — for example, when a school board asks if results realized from coaching are worth the investment or when teacher or

student performance slips in the process of change — and muster the courage to journey onward by seeking to clarify, learn from, and adapt their current mental model.

What lies at the summit of their successful climb is the joy of becoming more than they were at the start of the journey and shedding or adapting the mental models that limit their growth and impact.

Reaching the summit empowers coaches not only to experience their own transformative learning, but also to facilitate for others transformative learning that prompts and sustains permanent change in how they think, act, and speak.

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STUDENTS ON THE MARGINS

HOW INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING CAN INCREASE ENGAGEMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

BY JIM KNIGHT

My friend and mentor Don Deshler has directed more than 200 studies in his career and, in the process, significantly shaped how we understand and respond to students who are at risk for failure.

One study in particular changed the way Deshler thought about his research. To see the school experience through students' eyes, he and his fellow researchers at the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning each observed one student for a full school day.

"The results," Deshler told me, "were gut-wrenching. Students who were at risk lived on the margins, even in the hallways and cafeteria. I saw the loneliness in the kids' eyes. It made me question how much I had missed about the experiences kids have in school. I wondered if we'd had blinders on about what students needed because we didn't really see that school was such a lonely experience for far too many students."

What Deshler learned by observing students is similar to what I have learned as I have been studying instructional coaching for more than 20 years. If we are to help teachers

move students away from the margins and into the heart of schools, coaching needs to address student engagement, in addition to and as part of student achievement. Both are important, and both should be central to any effective instructional coaching program.

WHY ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

Engagement is an essential part of a meaningful life, no less so for students than for adults. Students who are in healthy relationships are engaged by their friends and family. Students who are productive learners engage in learning activities. Most important,

COACHING FOR ENGAGEMENT		
Kind	Measures	Teaching strategies
Behavioral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time on task • Instructional time • Responses to questions • Disruptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavioral expectations • Positive reinforcements • Corrections
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience sampling • Interviews • Responses to questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Correct - Quality - Level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking prompts • Effective questions • Authentic learning • Student voice • Guiding questions • Formative assessment
Social-Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly exit tickets • Interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding emotional connection • Student voice • Listening • Compassion • Collaborative power vs. coercive power • One-to-one interactions with students
<p>For more information on measures, see Knight (2018). For more information on teaching strategies, see Knight (2013).</p>		

students who stay in school do so because they are engaged, as research clearly shows (CDC, 2009; Finn, 1993; Finn & Rock, 1997; Knesting, 2008). Therefore, all of us who work to improve schools must make sure that students are engaged.

Coaches should play a role in building student engagement because they influence what teachers do and therefore what students experience. Indeed, one peer-reviewed study we conducted found that instructional coaching had a significant impact on student engagement, with an effect size of 1.02 (Knight, Hock, Skrtic, Bradley, & Knight, 2018).

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

Instructional coaches partner with teachers to improve teaching

to have a positive impact on student learning and student well-being (Knight, 2018). Effective instructional coaches see coaching as a partnership or professional conversation between equals within which collaborating teachers make the decisions about what happens in their classroom.

Coaching, according to van Nieuwerburgh (2017), is “a managed conversation between two people” (p. 5) during which coaches artfully use specific skills, such as purposeful listening, powerful questions, paraphrasing, and summarizing to empower people to “unlock ... [their] potential to maximize their own performance” (Whitmore, 2017, pp.12-13).

Effective instructional coaching involves not only strategic knowledge, but an intentional process. Research

by my colleagues and me (e.g. Knight, 2018) suggests that effective coaches use a coaching cycle process that involves three stages: identify, learn, and improve.

During the identify stage, instructional coaches partner with teachers to identify a clear picture of the current reality in the classroom (including how engaged students are), a goal, and a strategy that teachers can use to try and hit the goal.

To help teachers get a clear picture of their practice, coaches often video record lessons and share the video with teachers. This is especially helpful for engagement because it allows teachers to examine students’ actions and reactions.

Coaches and teachers then create goals that we refer to as PEERS goals: powerful, easy to implement, emotionally compelling for teachers, reachable (involving a measurable outcome and an identified strategy teachers can use to attempt to hit their goal), and student-focused.

During the learn stage, coaches get teachers ready to implement a new strategy by describing the strategy precisely but provisionally. That is, coaches explain the strategy while also encouraging teachers to make adjustments to meet the unique needs of their students.

Coaches also often provide some kind of model so that teachers can see the strategy being implemented, either by the coach, another teacher, or on video.

Finally, during the improve stage, teachers try out the strategies and coaches and teachers make adaptations together until the original goal, or a modified goal, is met.

MEASURING ENGAGEMENT

Instructional coaches who partner with teachers to set student engagement goals and monitor progress toward those goals must be able to describe and measure engagement and be familiar with strategies to improve it.

Researchers have identified three major categories of engagement: behavioral, cognitive, and social-emotional. (See the table on p. 29.) Here are ways to measure each category and provide teaching strategies teachers can use as they strive to empower students to hit engagement goals.

BEHAVIORAL ENGAGEMENT:

On-task behavior

When students are behaviorally engaged, they are doing what they are supposed to be doing — that is, they are on task. The advantage of behavioral engagement is that it is objective and measurable. For example, you can see if students are doing the think, pair, share collaboration you asked them to do.

Unfortunately, it doesn't measure whether students are actually learning. However, that does not mean that behavioral engagement is a useless measure. When many students are off task, getting them on task is often a necessary starting point.

Measuring behavioral engagement. Coaches can use at least four simple measures to assess behavioral engagement and obtain information they can share with teachers:

- Time on task: Measure whether students appear to be doing the task that is set before them;
- Instructional time: Subtract transition time from the total length of a lesson;
- Student disruptions: Count the number of times students interrupt the teacher's instruction or other students' learning; and
- Number of questions: Count the number of student responses and the number of different students responding to

EXPERIENCE SAMPLING FORM

Date: _____

Instructions: Each time you hear the bell, please rate how engaging the learning activity is in which you are involved. You are only to rate whether or not the learning activity is engaging for you.

Noncompliant			Compliant			Engaged
○	○	○	○	○	○	○
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
○	○	○	○	○	○	○
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Source: Knight, 2013. Copyright 2013 by Corwin. All rights reserved.

the teacher's questions.

Improving behavioral

engagement. Three strategies are most frequently mentioned in the literature for increasing behavioral engagement: expectations, reinforcement, and corrections.

Expectations clarify how students are expected to behave during all activities and transitions. Reinforcements — teachers communicating that they see students acting appropriately — are essential since teacher attention is an important motivator for student behavior.

Finally, fluent corrections are essential because when inappropriate behavior is not corrected, it frequently grows and spreads in a classroom. Coaches may choose to work with teachers on using one or more of these strategy types to address off-task behavior.

COGNITIVE ENGAGEMENT:

Authentic engagement

When students are cognitively engaged, they are experiencing the thinking their teacher intended them to experience from an activity. Schlecty (2011) makes a useful distinction between what he refers to as authentic engagement and strategic compliance.

When students are strategically compliant, they are doing something for a strategic reason rather than to learn. In contrast, when students are authentically engaged, they find meaning and value in learning tasks and are attentive, committed, and persistent to complete them.

Measuring cognitive engagement.

Since cognitive engagement mostly occurs "inside" the student rather than outside, we have found that the best data come from asking students to communicate their opinion about their engagement in learning activities.

This may involve the coach interviewing students, asking students to respond to exit tickets, or using what we refer to as experience sampling, which prompts students to report their level of engagement at different times during a lesson on a form such as the one above.

TO LEARN MORE

For more information on the research supporting the claims in this article, visit instructionalcoaching.com/research.

ASSESSING HOPE: ELEMENTARY

Date: _____

How sure are you that you will learn in class this week?
(circle one of the following emojis)



What can I do to help you learn?

Source: Knight, 2013. Copyright 2013 by Corwin. All rights reserved.

An example of a simple survey for elementary students is shown in the assessment form at left. (More detailed questions are appropriate for older students and can be found in Knight (2013).)

Also, coaches can interview students about their experiences in school and share the results with teachers. Formal surveys, such as the Gallup student success survey, may provide a more global understanding of student engagement or establish benchmarks. Teachers can assess students' emotional engagement through interactive journals in which students and teachers write back and forth to each other each week.

Improving emotional engagement. All of the strategies to increase behavioral and cognitive engagement should also have a positive impact on emotional engagement. In addition, coaches can help teachers enhance their relationships with students.

For example, teachers can video record their lessons and review them with the coach to reflect on whether they demonstrate empathy and how they manage such variables as power in the classroom. Collaborative power is more likely to build connections than coercive power.

Teachers can demonstrate collaborative power by giving students their full attention, avoiding sarcasm or power tripping, affirming all students, communicating respect, and so forth. Additionally, teachers can increase the number of positive interactions they initiate with students and monitor how they connect emotionally with their students.

Other strategies coaches can work on with teachers include: building connections by learning about students' unique interests and activities through surveys and informal conversations; conflict resolution approaches such as restorative justice or collaborative problem-solving; and involving students more directly in decisions about what and how they learn.

Improving cognitive engagement. When students are learning, they are likely to be cognitively engaged. Increasing cognitive engagement, like increasing achievement, usually involves at least three teaching strategies that coaches can support teachers to use: a clear description of learning outcomes, formative assessment, and feedback. Other strategies include thinking prompts, effective questions, authentic learning, and student voice.

EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT: Connectedness, belonging, and physical and psychological safety

When students are emotionally engaged, they feel they belong in their school, they are physically and psychologically safe, their experiences in school are positive and meaningful, they have friends, and they have hope. According to many of the educators my colleagues and I meet, emotional

engagement is a prerequisite for all learning. That is, if a student feels alone, afraid, or hopeless, we need to address those challenges before he or she can engage deeply in academic learning.

Measuring emotional engagement. As with cognitive engagement, we need to ask students about their emotions to understand them. One way to do this is to have students complete a weekly informal assessment about their emotional state and ask what could be done to make their experiences more positive.

Coaches and teachers can work together to use these informal assessments of students' positive emotions, relationships, safety, or hopes to establish and monitor progress toward a goal. For example, using surveys, coach-teacher pairs can set goals such as "at least 90% of my students will report each week that they feel able to learn in my classroom."

Simply listening to students' voices has been shown to significantly increase student success (Quaglia & Corso, 2014) but this is more complicated than it sounds and is an area ripe for coaching support.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

The impact cycle provides the structure for coaching conversations and the engagement definitions, measures, and teaching strategies provide tools for cycles that dramatically increase student engagement.

Identify

After the coach and teacher identify a clear picture of reality, they can set goals based on the measures of engagement described in this article. Following this, they can discuss which strategies to use to lead students to hit their goal.

For most coaches, creating an instructional playbook prepares them to support teachers and communicate their explanations more clearly. An instructional playbook contains checklists and other tools coaches create to help them understand and describe the high-impact teaching strategies they most frequently share with teachers (Knight, Hoffman, Harris, & Thomas, in press).

Learn

During the learn stage, the coach and teacher collaborate to identify how the teacher will implement the new strategy. Coaches usually provide an opportunity for teachers to see the practices in use by modeling them in the teacher's classroom, sharing a video, or covering a class so the teacher can visit another teacher who uses the strategy to be learned.

Improve

When teachers implement a strategy, they usually don't get the results they were hoping for immediately. The coach and teacher usually have to explore various

To meet all the needs of all students and bring all students in from the margins, coaches need to partner with teachers to address engagement because engagement and achievement go hand in hand.

adaptations, including changing the goal, the way a goal is measured, the way a strategy is taught, or the strategy itself.

For example, teachers may start measuring authentic engagement by assessing how many students are correctly answering questions and then switch to experience sampling to gain a better understanding of whether students are engaged during a lesson.

Throughout the three stages, it is important to understand that each cycle is different. The best coaches, like artists, use the right tools at the right times.

Engagement and achievement

A focus on engagement should not turn us away from the importance of coaching to increase achievement. Everyone wants students to flourish academically, and coaching has to have an unmistakably positive impact on student learning.

However, to meet all the needs of all students and bring all students in from the margins, coaches need to partner with teachers to address engagement because engagement and achievement go hand in hand.

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Robert Pianta is dean of the Curry School of Education, founding director of the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning, and professor of psychology at the University of Virginia.

In March 2019, Learning Forward's Stephanie Hirsh interviewed Robert Pianta, who developed the evidence-based MyTeachingPartner 1:1 Video Coaching program (MTP). MTP is one of the few coaching models that meets the evidence requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), based on studies of its effectiveness and efficacy. Rigorous research included in the What Works Clearinghouse with teachers in grades pre-K-12 has shown that MTP improves teacher practice and increases student engagement, peer relationships, and achievement.

Here are excerpts from that interview. Questions and answers have been edited for clarity and brevity.

A WINDOW INTO TEACHING

WITH EVIDENCE-BASED COACHING, TEACHERS OBSERVE AND REFLECT ON STUDENT INTERACTIONS

BY ELIZABETH FOSTER

Stephanie Hirsh: Your coaching work is based on a framework called the Classroom Assessment Scoring System, or CLASS. What is CLASS, and what should we know about it?

Robert Pianta: CLASS is simply a method we developed for an observer to spend time in a teacher's classroom to capture and record the elements of

his or her interactions with students. These are clustered in three broad kinds of supports students need. First, the emotional supports: Do teachers create a safe and comfortable place for learning, and are teachers attentive to individual children's emotional needs? Second, how do teachers organize the classroom: Does it run like a pretty well-oiled machine, and are kids

engaged and busy? Third, what are teachers doing to extend children's thinking and learning: Are they paying attention to concepts and providing kids with rich feedback on their learning?

These three big-bucket areas are described further in detailed dimensions that an observer will assign a rating to from 1 to 7. So if I was in a classroom, I'd watch for 15 or 20 minutes, I'd take notes, and then I'd assign a rating from 1 to 7 on each dimension based on what I saw in the teacher's behavior.

People who use CLASS are trained to use CLASS. This is important. If you and I are both in a classroom, we should both be able to use CLASS consistently and reliably.

CLASS is used in pre-K and with high school teachers and everyone in between. The system is modified based on where you are working, but the overall approach doesn't change at all. We take the approach that good teaching is good teaching is good teaching.

Hirsh: Research has documented the impact of the CLASS system on improved teacher practice and student outcomes. What does the research say?

Pianta: We could see and describe interactions all day long, but it's really important to demonstrate that what we are seeing when we improve these interactions actually matters for student learning. We now have over 300 studies in which we've done CLASS observations throughout the year, and students have been assessed on their learning at the beginning of the year and at the end of the year. In the majority of those studies, the results demonstrate that there is an association between teachers who score higher on the quality of their interactions in classrooms and students who are learning more than students in classrooms with teachers who scored lower. This tells us that what we're paying attention to what matters for student learning.

TO LEARN MORE

More information about the coaching model is available at teachstone.com/k12-video-coaching.

Hirsh: Can you talk about MyTeachingPartner, the video coaching program that is based on CLASS and has enough evidence to be listed in the What Works Clearinghouse?

Pianta: MyTeachingPartner is a structured coaching model designed to improve interactions in the classroom, using CLASS as the language and lens for those interactions. The coach is trained to observe those interactions effectively, and then the coach and the teacher engage in a series of about 10 coaching cycles over the course of the year.

If I am a coach and you are the teacher, we will agree on what features of interactions to work on — maybe qualities of emotional engagement or your instruction. Then you will send the video to me via the MTP website. I will pull out three short clips. Each clip is going to be 30 to 60 seconds long and gets posted to an internal website. The first clip is going to be an example of you effectively interacting with kids on that particular dimension we want to look at. We think that this first clip is really important because teachers need to see themselves and feel themselves being effective. The second clip is one where you're a little less effective, and the third clip is one where we talk about how the dimension connects to instruction and student learning, attention, or engagement. You'll examine and comment on your behaviors as well.

These experiences over the year result in direct feedback about your interactions with students. You are also learning a language and a lexicon for interactions and developing your

own observation and analytic skills. As a teacher, you learn how to describe your practice while also acquiring a set of tools to identify circumstances under which you're doing a pretty good job or not such a good job. And at the end of the day, it all rolls together to help teachers build a compass to help them navigate through a daily set of thousands and thousands of interactions with kids.

Hirsh: What you are describing aligns with Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning, and I'd like to hear more about how you think this is different than a lot of the professional learning that teachers experience.

Pianta: I think it's different for a couple of reasons. First, it's very focused, targeted directly and individually on a teacher's classroom and practices in that classroom. It is connected to the ways in which teachers get professional meaning, which is in their interactions with students. Teachers want to feel more effective and know that they're being more effective.

Teachers access the website at a time that's convenient. It is all handled through the internet so the teacher doesn't have to leave their classroom. You are not sitting in a generic 45-minute workshop that is not relevant to you as an individual teacher nor to your practice in your classroom. It's embedded and ongoing over the course of the year so not only will you have the opportunity to develop these skills but you're going to develop a relationship with the coach. We find that that relationship with the coach is a pretty important component. Imagine all the things we learn as adults. We connect with coaches, and it usually is individual, ongoing, targeted, and includes feedback that is meaningful.

Hirsh: That means that federal Title II dollars can be used to pay for this program because MTP meets the federal definition for professional

learning and it is recognized in the What Works Clearinghouse.

Pianta: We have research that looks at the coaching model as well as a college course that we've developed. We randomize groups of teachers to receive the coaching or not receive the coaching, or receive the course or not. We then compare them and compare the outcomes of the students they teach. We now have more than half a dozen randomized control trials — some fairly large with several hundred teachers across the country — demonstrating that teachers who received any one of those professional development supports are actually teaching more effectively at the end of the year than the teachers who did not receive those supports.

Hirsh: How do you get teachers comfortable with watching themselves on video?

Pianta: That's a little bit of a trick. We have now run more than 2,000 teachers through this experience, and very few of them will say I'm too uncomfortable watching myself to continue. And some of those videos are not the easiest videos for a teacher to watch, so great credit to those teachers.

A couple of things are important here. First, the coach and the teacher connect and engage beforehand so they can ease their way into the relationship as we provide the teacher with all sorts of information about MTP. It is also the case that the coach does not have a supervisory relationship with the teacher. This is not that kind of connection. All of the information in and related to the videos stays within the coaching relationship. And it is really important that the video clips always start with a section that we call "Nice Work," where the teacher is hearing and seeing herself lauded for the appropriate interaction and the effective interactions with a student.

Hirsh: We know all too well that

teachers don't always have the opportunity for meaningful feedback conversations, but that when they do, coaches are critical to that dialogue. Can you talk about how you develop coaches to foster this kind of relationship?

Pianta: I'm really glad you brought that up because we have learned a lot about coaches. As a field, we see all sorts of coaching, but when I ask what specific model is being employed, rarely do people describe more than a generic approach. So I think it's significant that our coaches are trained in this structured model to support the teacher and implement the model with a high degree of fidelity. We approach coaching in a focused and organized way so that we know we can replicate that coaching experience for teachers anywhere.

We didn't know this at first. We invented this initially to provide a support platform through the internet so coaches wouldn't have to travel. But what that did was enable the coaches' supervisors to be able to look at the prompts and the way that they were clipping video, so they could actually see the coach implement the intervention. (All of our coaches have their own coach who is looking at the kind of feedback that that coach is providing teachers and monitors for a high degree of fidelity.)

Hirsh: This is an evidence-based model that more leaders and teachers would surely be interested in if they knew about it. What do you want them to know?

Pianta: School district leaders need to know this works and that it works in places that look like your district with kids that look like your kids. I think we have stronger evidence than almost any other coaching model. We know this works for showing results on state standards tests as well as assessments of student engagement or motivation.

They should know that there is a

system that is organized for training teachers and coaches, so this is feasible and everyone knows what to expect.

We also need to be frank with districts about cost. This does take some effort and expense in training up front, but if you do invest, the likelihood of that investment translating into increased teacher effectiveness and increased student effectiveness is much higher.

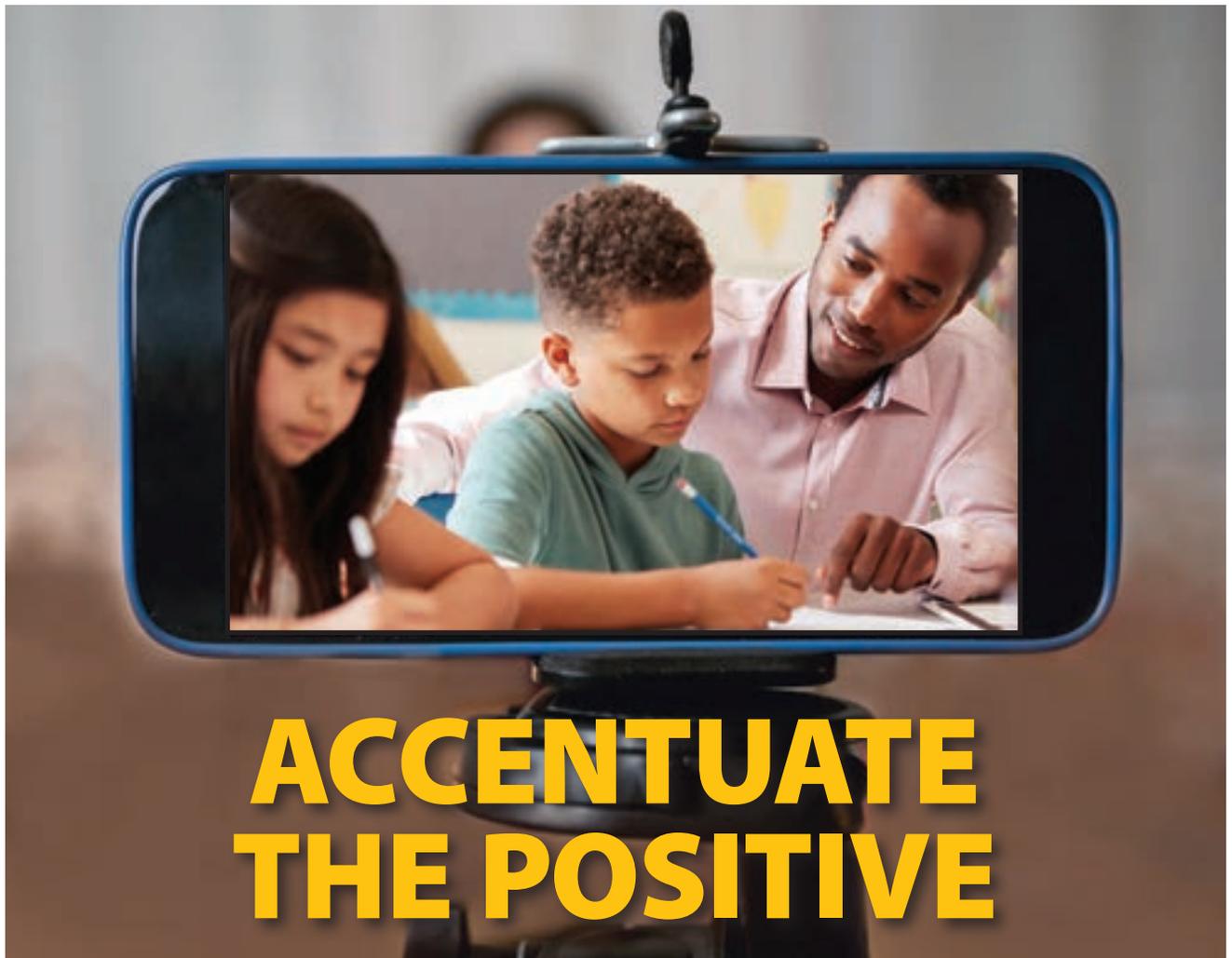
It is also important to spread the word to teachers. I think the best resource we have is the teachers who have already participated and their stories. Over and over again, teachers who have participated say that this was the most meaningful, the most effective, and the most engaging professional development they have had. Teachers are professionals, and they care that the time and energy they spend on professional development has merit.

Hirsh: We know it is important that teachers have access to high-quality instructional materials so that they continue to develop their own content knowledge. Can you talk a little bit about how MTP can help address that challenge?

Pianta: There is no question that teachers, in particular secondary teachers, need to be content experts. If you are teaching chemistry, you've got to know the chemistry. But if you ask kids about their experience, they typically will tell you that their attention, motivation to learn, and effort is far more predicated on how you're teaching the chemistry than on the chemistry itself.

We have good evidence that if you work on how teachers are teaching the content, you can activate the classroom environment for better content learning. We did a study a couple of years ago of MyTeachingPartner across four content areas, middle and high school. What we found was that students were more engaged

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ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE

VIDEO CAN MOTIVATE TEACHERS TO IMPROVE THEIR SKILLS

BY JODY A. FLOWERS

For many of us, the role of a coach is ubiquitous throughout our childhood into our adolescent years.

From the time we participated in youth soccer, Little League, dance classes, or music lessons, coaches were there to guide us. Coaches build relationships, encourage us, demonstrate techniques, provide motivation — all to heighten our efforts and expand our skills. Many times, it is these special people who inspire us to teach.

Yet when educators enter the classroom, this kind of guidance and support often vanishes. Or worse,

the term coach takes on a pejorative connotation because only struggling teachers are assigned a coach. But when done right, coaching improves teaching and students' achievement by leading teachers to focus on the skills that address social, behavioral, and academic needs.

One of the benefits of coaching is the opportunity to see oneself through another's eyes and reflect. A growing trend enables this process by leveraging one of today's most popular forms of communication: digital videos and on-demand video training. But when you mention video observation, fear

often spreads across teachers' faces as if they just woke up from a recurring nightmare.

Why are we hesitant to capture our professional interactions with students on video? Outside of the classroom, we willingly have our personal interactions videoed, watched, and rewatched. We turn to YouTube to post and watch step-by-step tutorials on repairing a heating element in the dryer; we post our marriage proposals and our child's game-winning hit on Facebook; we Skype with grandchildren.

Professionals in other fields frequently analyze themselves on

video. Professional athletes spend hours honing their skills through video analysis; attorneys video themselves practicing opening arguments or coaching clients; plumbers, mechanics, and electricians video their craft to demonstrate their work. It could be argued that teachers' interactions have more long-term impact than any other professional skill, yet video observation and reflection is not yet the norm in schools.

When we do video coaching correctly, reflection becomes the driving factor and continuous improvement becomes second nature. As a result, teacher-student interactions become more intentional, and the quality of teaching and learning improves (Gregory, Ruzek, Hafen, Mikami, Allen, & Pianta, 2017).

I have witnessed this as a district coach in a research project on scaling up effective video coaching. The lessons my colleagues and I are learning are beneficial not only for our teachers and their students, but hopefully for others beyond our districts.

THE VIDEO COACHING MODEL

My work with video coaching began when my school district, Waco ISD in central Texas, qualified for a grant funded by the U.S. Department of Education to study a research-based coaching model called MyTeachingPartner-Secondary 1:1 Video Coaching (MTP-S).

The model is based on the CLASS instructional framework developed by Robert C. Pianta, Bridget K. Hamre, and colleagues at the University of Virginia. CLASS focuses on interactions between teachers and students in three areas — emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support — and rigorous studies have shown that teachers' ratings on these dimensions are strong predictors of students' academic and



social success (Allen et al., 2013; Hamre, Piana, Mashburn, & Downer, 2007; Mashburn et al., 2008).

Teachstone Training, which trains educators to use the MyTeachingPartner coaching model, teamed up with Learning Forward and the American Institutes for Research to support a cohort of secondary English language arts and math teachers in using the coaching model in secondary schools. They are researching what it takes to scale the coaching model, which has been shown to be effective in other contexts (Allen, Pianta, Gregory, Mikami, & Lun, 2011; Gregory et al., 2017; Hamre et al., 2010).

Because of the emphasis in the MyTeachingPartner coaching model (and in the CLASS framework on which it is based) on interactions between teachers and students, the use

of video is essential to the purpose and practice of coaching. As educators, we can't really know what our interactions with students look like until we actually see them.

MTP-S is a strengths-based coaching model. Coaches focus on what teachers are doing well and how they can build on it. This builds trust and buy-in to the coaching process. As teachers view themselves in positive moments, it ignites the fire for teachers to stay motivated, reflect deeply, and, most importantly, become self-reliant observers of their work.

THE VIDEO COACHING PROCESS

Waco ISD is one of three districts participating in the first cohort of the research project, along with Lansing Public Schools in Michigan and Louisa County Public Schools in central

Virginia. Once our district joined the study, teachers volunteered to participate.

By random selection, half were placed in a control group, in which they videoed themselves during one class in the fall and one in the spring but received no coaching through the MTP-S model. The other half were placed in the treatment group and participated in 1:1 coaching throughout the year, kicked off by professional learning sessions introducing the CLASS language and MyTeachingPartner coaching model. As the coach for our district, I also engaged in regular professional learning and coaching with staff from Teachstone.

To begin each program year, teachers set goals they would like to achieve during the professional learning process. In keeping with the Implementation standard in the Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011), the coach and teacher commit to continuous improvement based on constructive feedback and reflection. Each teacher engages in eight to 10 coaching cycles. Each cycle consists of five steps and takes place over a two-week period.

STEP 1: Teacher videos a lesson.

The teacher chooses a class on which he or she will focus throughout the year, and videos and uploads a lesson of his or her choosing every two weeks, with the intention of discussing with the coach whether and how his or her interactions with students embody the interactions captured by the the CLASS framework.

STEP 2: Coach observes.

The teacher and coach decide which CLASS dimensions to focus on, and the MTP-S coach watches the full video, selecting three one-minute clips that best capture the teacher's observable interactions with the dimensions chosen for that cycle. The coach writes a summary of the dimension observed in the clip, a brief description of the

observed interactions, and a prompt that directs the teacher to reflect on the actions and dialogue within the clip. The coach sends these to the teacher within two days of the videoed lesson.

STEP 3: Teacher responds.

After viewing the one-minute clips, the teacher submits a written response to the prompts, and the coach plans a conference with the teacher.

STEP 4: Teacher and coach meet.

During a 30-minute conference that can take place in person or through video chat, the teacher and coach review the clips and the teacher's responses to the reflection prompts, discuss an approach to maintaining and duplicating these positive interactions in a sustainable way, and plan the focus of the next cycle.

STEP 5: Coach develops an action plan.

The coach writes a summary of the conference and produces an action plan that includes viewing exemplar videos, a short reading assignment, and specific actions to practice before videoing again.

This 2 week cycle of teacher-coach interactions repeats itself throughout the school year. During the first year of the grant, most treatment teachers completed nine to 10 two-week feedback cycles with their MTP coach.

OVERCOMING THE BLINKING LIGHT

To make setup easy and comfortable, teachers receive an iPad to video the class and access to a Teachstone app to upload the video to a private Teachstone dashboard used by the teacher and the coach. As with any digital device and process, technological issues can arise, but they are usually easy to deal with.

The main challenge with video coaching is overcoming the coach's and teacher's discomfort with hearing and seeing themselves on video. When we first approached teachers about

participating, their initial concern was not about having coaches observe their practice, but about having to hear their own voices.

One teacher said after his first cycle, "That's what my students have to listen to each day? Oh my." But after the third cycle, that same teacher reflected on how critical it was to see and hear what his students are seeing each day so he could better understand how peer dialoging and back-and-forth exchanges play a vital role in the effective pacing of his lessons.

On average, it takes three to four cycles for the camera to "disappear" for the teachers and students. It helps that teachers focus on three very short (one-minute) clips and that coaches help them view the clips through a carefully crafted lens focused on the CLASS dimensions. As one teacher said, "It's watching yourself so you can plan through the eyes of your students."

STRENGTH-BASED OBSERVATIONS

Another challenge is that it can be difficult for teachers to understand a strengths-based approach to coaching. These types of coaching interactions and their effectiveness float in the wake of many teachers' previous experiences with observations.

Many observations teachers have received come from a place rooted in check marks, required walk-throughs, and supervisory requirements. Many of these interactions typically end with "what could you have done differently" paralysis, causing them to become numb to any strengths that may be observed. The process can be demotivating.

In contrast, the video component allows coaches to highlight positive examples of teacher-student interactions. Trust develops as the teachers see a trend in the clips and reflective prompts created by their coach. When teachers reflect on their specific words and actions that result in favorable student reactions, the process becomes easier to duplicate.

Since each cycle is specific to research-based CLASS dimensions, the results quickly increase the buy-in from teachers and the students. By the third cycle, teachers in our district had become comfortable with the framework and confident that no surprises or evaluative “buts” were lurking behind the coach’s feedback.

During end-of-year cycle conferences, treatment teachers made comments about the strengths-based approach and how it solidified their commitment to the coaching process. For example, one said, “I knew each time we reflected on the videos, I was going to hear positive feedback, not advice.” Another said, “The questions from my coach were open-ended, and I felt like I could reflect without judgment or correction.”

PREPARATION AND SUPPORT FOR COACHES

To ensure the coaching process is effective and smooth, each coach works closely with a Teachstone expert, engaging in biweekly video chats with the expert and other coaches. Designed to mimic the same processes used in the coach-teacher relationship — what psychologists sometimes call parallel process — coaches see and practice the skill sets needed to successfully maintain fidelity of the framework in a safe, nonthreatening atmosphere. This includes building trust, listening actively, encouraging teachers to problem solve, and providing feedback, not advice.

Professional learning for the coach begins with becoming grounded in the CLASS framework, reading relevant literature on the many facets of instructional coaching, and viewing and reflecting on video clips that demonstrate the cycle steps of focus. The coaches reflect together, developing and sharing their ideas and building capacity to duplicate collaboration with teachers.

During regular calls, coaches read and act out scenarios so they can practice the arc of conversations and

OVERVIEW OF CLASS DOMAINS AND DIMENSIONS			
	Emotional support	Classroom organization	Instructional support
Dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive climate Teacher sensitivity Regard for student perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavior management Productivity Negative climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructional learning formats Content understanding Analysis and inquiry Quality of feedback Instructional dialogue
	Student engagement		

feedback within a teacher conference. Role-play helps expose and reshape poor habits of phrase to avoid mimicking evaluative conferences. Phrases like “What would you have done differently?” become “What is something new you want to try next time?”

Positive, generic compliments like “good job” or “way to go” become more specific with relevant details like “I noticed that you ask students to prove their answers to get students to return to the text,” highlighting strategies that went well and can be duplicated easily.

In addition, coaches begin to hear the balance of talk between coach and teacher. Conversations involve active listening that results in feedback loops — there’s equity in the discussion. These practices spill over to the teacher conferences, then into the classroom with students.

Another parallel process used throughout the coaching model is videoing and discussing clips. MyTeachingPartner coaches video and share their work with their Teachstone coach specialist just as teachers do with their coaches. This not only improves coaches’ skills but models the process they are using with teachers.

The impact of parallel processes spreads as the cycles continue. Coaches find themselves talking less and listening more. Teachers reflect and discover wisdom and answers on their own, instead of passively waiting for advice.

Authenticity becomes the signpost of conferences. Acceptance permeates the relationships among coaches and teachers and teachers and students.

CHANGING CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES

The results of this video coaching model scale-up study will be available in two to three years. In the meantime, our anecdotal experience is that video coaching allows teachers to become more aware of the factors that impact relationships, safety, and learning that should take place in a classroom.

The MyTeachingPartner coaching model allows coaches and teachers to work together to change experiences in the classroom. Those experiences, even small ones, can change a student’s trajectory. Think of the student who is afraid to ask a question because her teacher doesn’t realize his tone of voice is harsh, or the one who disengages from school and drops out because he thinks none of the adults care about what he’s interested in. With video coaching, we can see those unintentional messages we send and change them so that we can change students’ futures.

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How coaching takes root

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A window into teaching

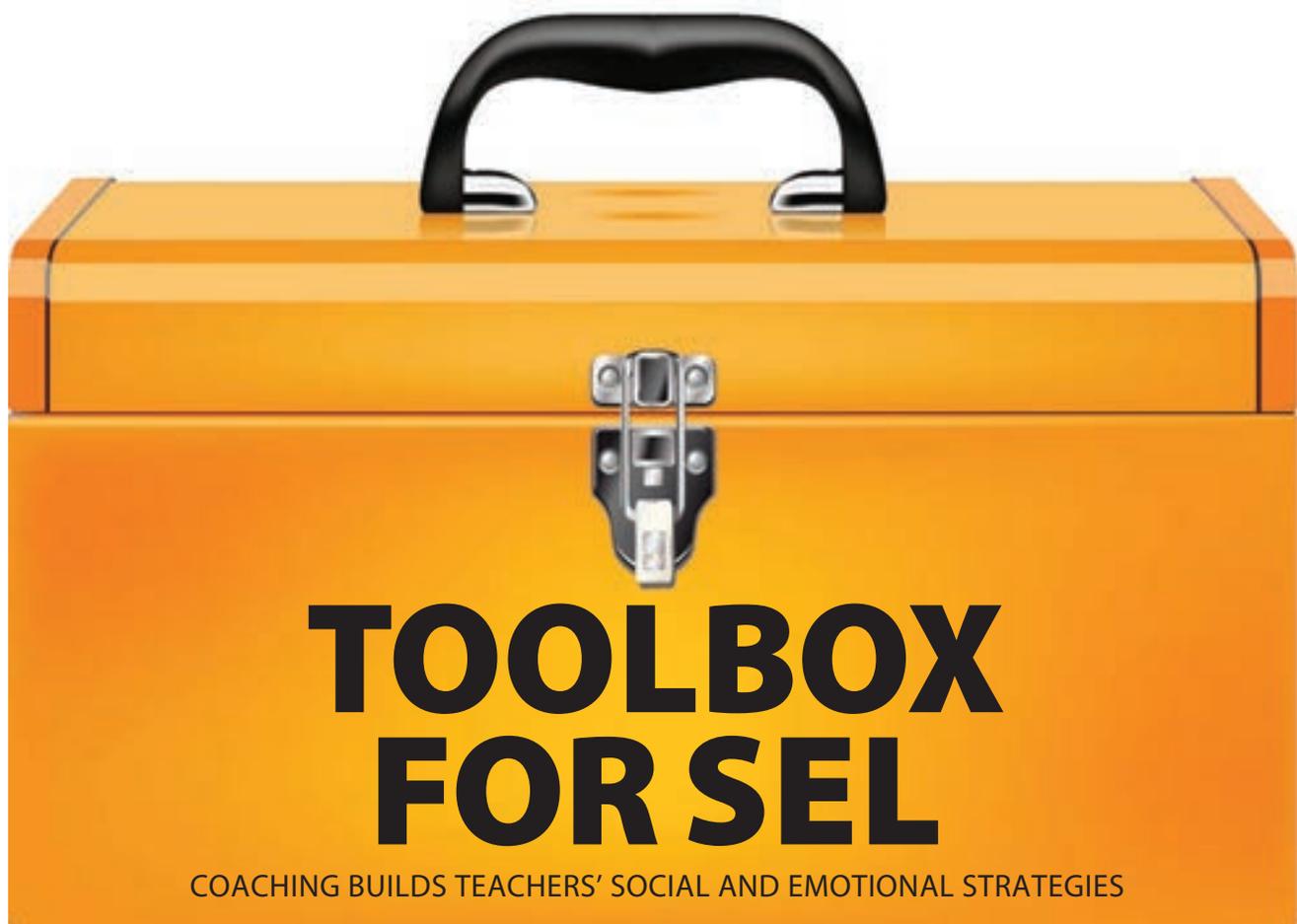
Continued from p. 35
and motivated, the quality of teacher interactions increased considerably, and the students' scores on state tests went up by 10 percentile points. And we didn't do anything with teachers' content, we just helped them learn how to engage students in ways that made the content more meaningful — make the content more conceptual, create a more active classroom, and attend to student perspectives.

Hirsh: What else do you want people to know about this work?

Pianta: We have a lot of examples of ways in which these tools have helped create life-changing teachers. We can all think of a teacher who empowered us and affected us. We need to think about all the children who haven't had those kind of teachers in their lives, and what could happen if they all had the opportunity to experience those

kinds of teachers. To do that, we want more teachers to have the opportunity to experience the kind of improvement and growth that MyTeachingPartner can support so that they in turn can support every student.

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BY LAURA STICKLE, REBECCA BAILEY, GRETCHEN BRION-MEISELS, AND STEPHANIE M. JONES

As research on the benefits of social and emotional learning (SEL) continues to grow, schools across the country are using formal SEL curricula to boost students' skills. Such curricula have benefits for students' social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes, and the effects can last for up to three years post-intervention (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Mahoney, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2018; Sklad, Diekstra, Ritter, Ben, & Gravesteyn, 2012).

Yet, as with any type of instructional intervention, SEL materials and lessons are only part of the equation. Fully realizing robust SEL implementation and optimizing students' social and emotional development require that school leaders support teachers to understand, model, and implement high-quality SEL practices in an ongoing way.

Unfortunately, however, professional learning related to both children's and teachers' SEL skills is often not given enough time, care, or attention (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2016).

Teachers report limited training and confidence in supporting students' social and emotional development (Reinke, Stormont, Herman, Puri, & Goel, 2011; Walter, Gouze, & Lim, 2006), with 82% of teachers saying they need additional professional learning on the topic (Bridgeland, Bruce, & Hariharan, 2013).

In a nationally representative survey, half of pre-K-12 principals agreed with this desire for additional teacher professional learning on SEL (DePaoli, Atwell, & Bridgeland, 2017). But school leaders' capacity to provide

professional learning on the topic is understandably limited.

Coaching is a promising approach to filling this gap. Building on a growing number of coaching approaches, the EASEL Lab at the Harvard Graduate School of Education recently developed an SEL coaching model and partnered with an urban elementary school on the East Coast to pilot it as one component of a schoolwide approach to SEL.

This pilot study found that participating teachers increased their use of SEL practices and found the strategies effective. It also underscored the need for school policies and structures to enable coaching.

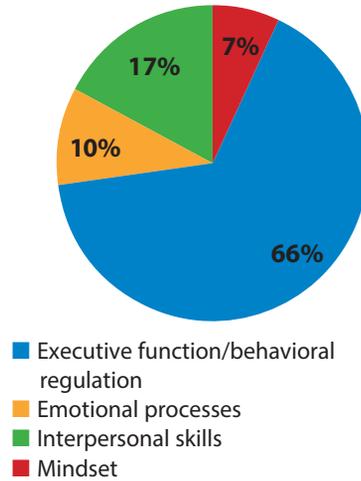
OUR SEL COACHING APPROACH

The coaching approach we developed was a hybrid of two categories of SEL coaching available in schools today: models that support the delivery of formal SEL programming and models that provide coaching to support teachers' own social-emotional competence. Although we have long known about the benefits of instructional coaching, research on SEL coaching is scant. Here is an overview of what is known about each approach.

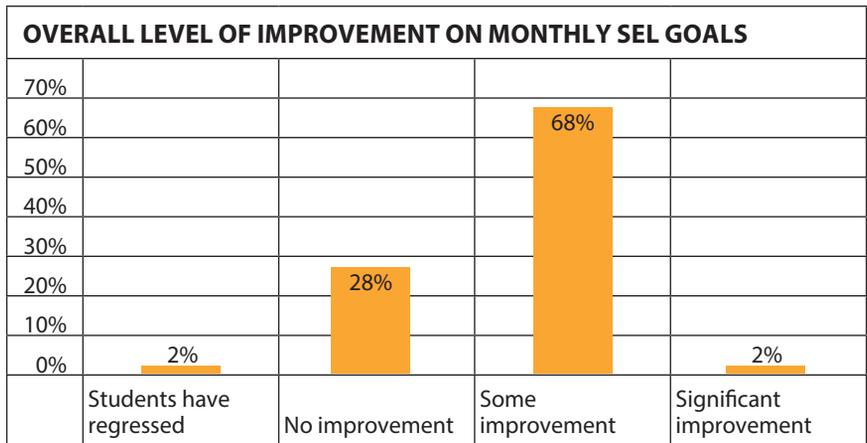
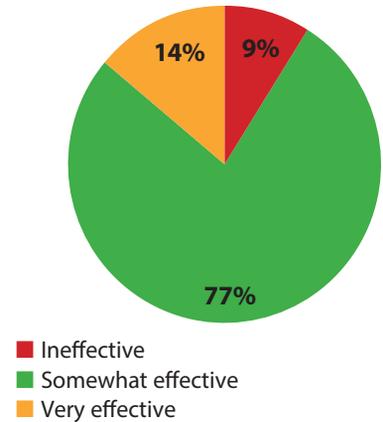
Several SEL programs offer coaching or consultation from their staff as part of their teacher training package. A recent report looking at 25 leading elementary school SEL programs found that many offer this type of support (Jones et al., 2017). Characteristics of the coaching vary (e.g. number and length of sessions, face-to-face vs. remote coaching, cost), but the models share a goal of providing teachers with support to implement student-focused SEL lessons and curricula with fidelity.

Although not much is known about the efficacy of supports these programs offer, some preliminary research has emerged. One study found that a high-quality coaching relationship can contribute to teachers' fidelity of program implementation (Wehby, Maggin, Partin, & Robertson, 2011),

TEACHERS' SEL GOALS FOR STUDENTS BY SEL DOMAIN



OVERALL PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF SEL KERNELS



and others have found that teachers who are coached have higher confidence and increased motivation to use the program (Ashworth, Demkowicz, Lendrum, & Frearson, 2018).

Coaching models focused on teachers' own social and emotional development offer general support — unrelated to specific SEL curricula — to boost teachers' social and emotional skills and overall well-being. A recent study of a train-the-trainer model grounded in emotional intelligence theory suggested that coaches helped teachers become more aware of their emotions, understand the connections between emotions and behaviors, and apply this learning to the classroom (Patti, Holzer, Brackett, & Stern, 2015).

Emotional intelligence training also appears to improve teacher well-being and reduce work-related stress (Vasely, Saklofske, & Nortstokke, 2014). Teachers who engaged in phone coaching through a mindfulness program called Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education reported an increased use of mindful practices and more resilient attitudes toward stressors (DeWeese et al., 2017).

Working closely with our pilot school's counselor and social worker, we designed the coaching model to incorporate both of these aspects: building teachers' social-emotional competence and providing support to implement short, targeted SEL strategies we refer to as SEL kernels of practice (Jones, Bailey, Brush, & Kahn,

2017). Kernels are practices teachers can use flexibly throughout the school day, typically in 10 minutes or less, so that SEL is implemented in a deeper, more ongoing way than with a once-a-week curricular program.

The principal, school counselor, and social worker selected five teachers to take part in our SEL coaching, and all teachers agreed to participate. Every month between November 2016 and March 2017, an SEL coach from the EASEL Lab conducted one classroom visit and observation.

Observations took place during academic instructional blocks. The coach focused primarily on understanding the classroom environment and observing interactions between teachers and students. Each month, the coach met with teachers before and after the observations to discuss progress, reflect on their social and emotional skills, help teachers identify SEL goals, and select SEL kernels to use over the course of the next month.

After each visit, the coach sent a follow-up email to the teachers, school counselor, and social worker with observation notes, as well as any SEL kernels selected by teachers during the visit.

Throughout this period, the EASEL Lab collected data to document the process and teachers' progress from month to month. Specifically, we documented teachers' SEL goals and classroom challenges, teachers' use of SEL kernels and perceptions of their effectiveness, and the coach's observations.

In addition, the EASEL Lab conducted interviews with all coaching participants and the school's counselor and social worker in April 2017 to better understand their experiences with the SEL coaching model.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Our data indicate that teachers found SEL coaching beneficial for both their students' and their own social and emotional growth.

Each month, teachers set one or two SEL goals for either themselves or their students. Teachers selected student-focused SEL goals 71% of the time and teacher-focused goals 29% of the time.

As shown in the pie chart "Teachers' SEL goals for students by SEL domain" on p. 42, student-focused SEL goals targeted executive function/behavioral regulation skills 66% of the time. Within this domain, teachers chose goals focused on helping students pay attention, follow classroom rules, and exhibit appropriate classroom behavior.

Teachers chose goals targeting interpersonal skills, such as prosocial behavior and teamwork, 17% of the time, while identifying goals focusing on emotional processes, including emotional regulation and empathy/perspective-taking, 10% of the time. Teachers selected goals targeting mindset 7% of the time.

There was less variation in teacher-focused goals. The most frequently identified teacher-focused goal was "trying to be positive," followed by "limiting frustration" and "moving with efficiency."

When asked about students' overall level of improvement on monthly SEL goals (see the bar chart "Overall level of improvement on monthly SEL goals" on p. 42), teachers reported that 70% of the time, they saw either significant improvement or some improvement, with the majority of these reports indicating some improvement.

Throughout the coaching period, teachers were asked to rate the SEL kernels as ineffective, somewhat effective, or very effective (see the pie chart "Overall perceived effectiveness of SEL kernels" on p. 42). Teachers reported that kernels were very effective 14% of the time, somewhat effective 77% of the time, and ineffective 9% of the time.

The data also revealed that teachers who consistently used kernels and actively worked on reaching their SEL goals reported higher rates of perceived

effectiveness than teachers who used the strategies only sporadically or forgot to use them.

End-of-year interview data revealed a set of consistent themes about the impact of coaching on teachers' work with students. Teachers said that the most impactful goals were those linked to creating a positive classroom environment, such as maintaining and exhibiting a positive mindset, positively narrating students' behaviors when they were on-task and demonstrating exemplary behavior, and using positive reinforcement strategies, such as celebrations, to acknowledge student success.

They also acknowledged how their students' SEL skills had grown over the year. Teachers commented that students began to adopt SEL language and use SEL strategies independently, such as using nonverbal signals to help their friends refocus, taking deep breaths to focus and regroup, treating each other with kindness, and using additional focus strategies when needed. Teachers also commented that conversations with the coach were beneficial and provided them with an SEL toolbox.

A HOLISTIC APPROACH

Data from our study underscore that SEL coaching cannot succeed in a vacuum. Teachers reported a set of schoolwide factors, policies, and practices that must be in place to optimize it.

First, teachers said that the academic pressures at school often felt in conflict with the school's stated approach to SEL. One symptom of this may have been that teachers overwhelmingly selected strategies targeting executive functioning/behavioral regulation skills.

Although these skills are important, at times we found teachers using SEL strategies in service of developmentally inappropriate goals (e.g. ensuring all students were completely silent with their hands folded for extended periods of time or focusing on self-control

exclusively to help students prepare for end-of-year testing).

In these cases, school leaders' insistence on strict codes of behavior prevented teachers from establishing positive and consistent SEL practices. If organizational priorities do not shift to include social and emotional well-being — a process that requires dismantling some of the more compliance-based rituals — then trying to add an SEL approach may be challenging for teachers and could send damaging mixed messages to students.

Second, teachers indicated that they could have benefitted from more comprehensive professional learning on SEL in addition to coaching. Some of the newer teachers said they didn't realize that SEL skills needed to be explicitly taught and that they needed to talk with students about these skills. One teacher initially believed SEL skills would naturally transfer to students as a result of her modeling.

Veteran teachers also talked about struggles to incorporate SEL strategies effectively. One teacher said she created a desk for students to calm down, but acknowledged that she sent students there as a punishment when they misbehaved, thus sending the message that the desk was functionally a time-out chair and undermining its purpose to support the development of students' self-regulation skills.

This lack of consistency — sometimes using SEL strategies as designed, other times using them in ways that contradict or undermine social and emotional development — was a common thread in our data. It highlights the importance of systemic professional learning on SEL for teachers and administrators.

On the positive side, teachers appreciated the in-house support from the school counselor and social worker. While the external coach visited the school each month, the counselor and social worker visited more often, participated in team meetings, created SEL lesson plans for teachers to use every morning, and featured exemplar

SEL strategies they saw in classrooms through text groups and weekly email.

Teachers reported that this support improved their SEL implementation and helped school staff be more mindful of how they interacted with one another. This internal capacity is important because schools do not always have the time or resources to implement an SEL coaching model.

School and district leaders play an essential role in building capacity through policies, structures, and support. Ultimately, SEL functions through building strong relationships among all adults and employing ongoing support and feedback. We encourage school leaders to create and prioritize policies and practices that support coaching as one component of their school's overall approach to SEL.

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COACHING FOR EQUITY

DISRUPT AND TRANSFORM PRACTICES THAT REVEAL IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT BIASES

BY TONIKIAA ORANGE, JO ANN ISKEN, AMBER GREEN,
NANCY PARACHINI, AND ANNAMARIE FRANCOIS

Marissa, an African American female teacher, has been teaching chemistry for two years in an ethnically diverse, urban public school that serves 96% Latinx students and 4% African American students.

Marissa is having difficulty

managing the class. When the whole class is assigned a task, some students are vocally disruptive, and she is unsure how to engage them. In particular, Marissa is concerned about three African American male students who tend to group together, seem to be disengaged, and often shout and cause disruptions in class.

Marissa does not want to dismantle what she is doing since the other students seem to be engaged and learning.

When Marissa's instructional coach, who has 15 years of teaching experience, observes the classroom, she skillfully provides strategies for overall classroom management and

HOW THE RECIPROCAL LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS FOR EQUITY FRAMEWORK CONNECTS TO THE STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Learning Communities	Outcomes	Learning Designs
<p>The Reciprocal Learning Partnerships for Equity framework reframes the coaching model from coach/mentee to a learning partnership and situates discussions of equity in a community where collective responsibility emerges in the co-construction of equity action. Participatory inquiry initiates a cycle of continuous inquiry, action, implementation, and reflection.</p>	<p>The Reciprocal Learning Partnerships for Equity framework has an explicit focus on equity that links teacher practice to student learning with an implicit understanding of an expectation for the success of all students.</p>	<p>The Reciprocal Learning Partnerships for Equity framework reflects a learning model that requires active engagement and deep understanding of teaching practice leading to construction of a new personal understanding of student motivation.</p>

instructional delivery. But she offers little about how to support the three African American boys who are disengaged in the work. Marissa is left to struggle with one of her most pressing challenges on her own.

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

In our work observing coaches and teachers, we have seen this type of scenario again and again. Despite many productive conversations, noticeably absent is any real conversation about how the lived experiences and identities of teachers and students influence decisions about pedagogical moves and student engagement.

Without the intentional examination of how cultural identities and personal bias impact beliefs about teaching and learning, coaches and teachers miss important opportunities for reflection and improvement.

In the scenario above, this led to Marissa and her coach missing the underlying root cause of the disengagement and disruptive behavior of the African American students. Attention to equity would lead to a significantly different analysis and potentially different solutions.

From the outset of our observations, the replication of uninterrogated and sometimes deficit-focused practices was a serious concern. As we saw teachers engage in multiple coaching cycles, we continued to see expression of both explicit and implicit

biases, and in our work supporting the development of teachers in becoming coaches, we saw these practices perpetuated in their coaching. We began to question the effectiveness of conventional coaching models in moving the needle toward identifying and tackling issues of equity.

Having observed 128 coach-mentee partnerships and more than 1,100 coach-mentee interactions over a four-year period in the UCLA IMPACT Urban Teacher Residency program, we identified an urgent need for both the coach and mentee to come to a coaching conversation ready to counter bias, refute deficit thinking, and combat racial stereotypes.

We developed a coaching framework with an explicit focus on equity to provide a high-powered lens to zoom in on a practice and deconstruct it for the purpose of disrupting and transforming inequitable practices.

THE NEED FOR EQUITY

Historically, students of color and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds in urban communities have been judged to be deficient, lacking social capital, or simply not as intelligent as their more advantaged peers (Howard, 2003; Oakes, 1985; Oakes, Ormeseth, Bell, & Camp, 1990).

Differences in academic outcomes across race and class have typically been described as an achievement gap, but what we are really dealing with is an

equity gap, which results, in large part, from both implicit and explicit biases that educators carry into the classroom and perpetuate in their practice. Structures, cultures, and pedagogy in schools are often culturally oppressive and exacerbate inequalities.

Yet these kinds of critical conversations and self-reflection are seldom found in conventional coaching models. As critiques of coaching models have pointed out, it is not enough to share best practices for teaching linguistically, culturally, and ethnically diverse students.

There is a need to develop the attitudes, knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to think deeply about and work effectively with diverse student populations. Indeed, this has been and remains a major policy issue in teacher preparation (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006; Horsford, Grosland, & Gunn, 2011; Milner, 2003).

RETHINKING COACHING

Many conventional coaching models include an expert “other” teacher who is guiding, modeling, or transmitting expertise to novice teachers. But as much expertise as a coach may have, he or she may be unconsciously guiding mentees through suggestions or reflective questions that marginalize students of color and low-income students.

We asked ourselves: Could listening to the narratives of the less-experienced

teacher, who comes to the partnership with new and relevant knowledge of pedagogy and theories of action around equity, serve as a catalyst for thinking about challenging and transforming established practice? Could the resulting interchange centering on equity contribute to the learning of both participants in the conversation?

We began to reimagine coaching conversations to consider how an individual's identity and positionality come into a conversation between two or more people who have different levels of rank and experience. What would happen if the newer teacher was a young, female person of color and her coach was an older white woman? What if the young teacher's coach was a highly successful and experienced African American male administrator?

We aimed to establish conditions for teachers and mentees from different backgrounds to each have a recognized

voice in the coaching conversation. Our goal was to build a coaching framework in which both partners viewed the conversation as an opportunity for co-constructing an action to challenge an inequitable practice and invent a new solution. This required a shift to a more egalitarian and equity-grounded partnership focused on relationships and reciprocity.

EQUITY-CENTERED FRAMEWORK

As a result of these questions and reflections, we have developed a new equity-centered framework for coaching, Reciprocal Learning Partnerships for Equity. This is not a series of prescribed steps, but an open-ended framework to encourage conversation and reflection.

The framework creates a space to consider how an individual's identity and positionality may unconsciously lead to unexamined bias in selecting

teaching practices and, therefore, influence a coaching conversation.

Using this framework, teachers identify, name, and take action toward eliminating inequitable practices in classrooms. The process of participatory inquiry, which lies at the center of the framework, engages educators in continual critical reflection, questioning their beliefs, and ideals, while acknowledging each other's agency and co-creating new knowledge and transformative actions.

Engaging in participatory inquiry requires coach and mentee to establish and maintain four conditions for introspective inquiry into their own practices: developing relational trust, engaging in reciprocity, examining identity and positionality, and developing an equity stance. Here are descriptions of those conditions and questions that can help frame conversations about them.



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Relational trust is rooted in personal exchanges, personal regard, responsibility, and personal integrity. It allows people to be open and vulnerable so that change can occur. *Questions: What does learning together mean for us? How are we continually working on building our relational trust?*

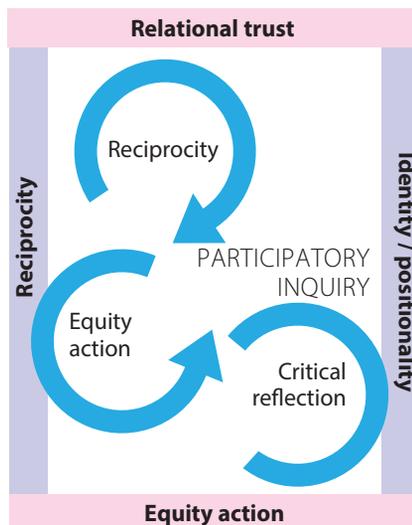
Identity is how we acknowledge ourselves. It is formed by relationships, experiences, cultural upbringing, etc. One’s positionality is shaped by social relationships and the way we see and understand ourselves in various contexts. It dictates how we interact with one another and navigate different communities. *Question: Given who we are, how do we understand the equity issues?*

Reciprocity is the act of sharing and receiving information, resources, and skills between two people with the expectation of fair exchange. Education partners participate equally in co-constructing new understandings and have equal responsibility for shared outcomes. Conversations focus on “we,” not “I.” *Questions: What knowledge and skills do we both bring to the relationship? What will we each contribute to the work?*

Equity stance means intentionally noticing and disrupting the conscious and unconscious structures that perpetuate inequities in classrooms and schools. *Question: How are we challenging assumptions and deficit notions that are embedded and reproduced in our decisions about classroom practices?*

The Reciprocal Learning Partnerships for Equity framework is a powerful way to engage in coaching conversations because it intentionally uncovers and addresses issues of bias, identity, and race that have powerful implications for teaching and learning.

The framework builds collective efficacy and enables coach and mentee to center themselves as co-learners in reciprocal dialogues. The participatory inquiry process provides a framework for the coaching conversation. The coach and mentee:



1. **Engage in reciprocal dialogue**, a two-way exchange of ideas and knowledge in which each person challenges and explores his or her worldview with shared norms and open, authentic communication.
2. **Practice critical reflection**, an examination and awareness of our perspectives and biases, along with the subsequent challenging of our assumptions through repeated cycling between action, dialogue, and reflection.
3. **Create an equity action**, the process by which inquiry moves to action and contributes to improved outcomes for diverse students. Action is directly linked to empowering and changing the lived experiences of diverse students and those most marginalized in classrooms and schools.

APPLY AN EQUITY LENS

Approaching a conversation through the lens of Reciprocal Learning Partnerships for Equity would require Marissa and her coach to be mindful and intentional about their identity and positionality entering the conversation as well as be specific on how they are building relational trust.

They would explicitly identify an

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For more information, contact the Culture and Equity Project at UCLA Center X by visiting www.culturallyresponsive.org.

equity issue and co-construct an equity action where both have responsibility to move on that action with the intent to disrupt or dismantle practices that lead to inequitable outcomes for students. The following are examples of questions that could guide their conversation:

- **Equity issue:** What equity issues showed up in my classroom? Which one should we tackle in this conversation?
- **Relational trust:** How are we building our relational trust, and how is our identity and positionality showing up and being addressed to begin a reciprocal conversation to disrupt the equity issue(s) identified?
- **Reciprocity:** What knowledge or understanding do we each bring to the table to address this equity issue?
- **Co-construction of equity action:** Given our conversation, what equity action will we co-construct to support teaching and learning in the classroom?
- **Evidence:** What will be our evidence of success or progress in changing this condition for students?

A Reciprocal Learning Partnerships for Equity conversation may begin with examining the fact that the students were engaged, but not in the way the teacher expected or intended.

A deeper discussion through the participatory inquiry process might reveal that the African American students were the only ones struggling or had a disproportionate number of discipline referrals. Critical reflection would lead to an examination of beliefs and teaching practices and how they

impact student behavior, such as how current grading practices — which benefit some students and marginalize others — manifest in student engagement.

The co-constructed equity action could be to design alternative grading practices to re-engage students by decreasing student failure. Marissa and her coach could also talk about the ways in which the African American students are engaging and how to build participation structures into the lesson that will engage them in other ways. Overall, the equity conversation is about this question: Why are the African American boys being seen as discipline problems?

EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS

We have used the framework in partnerships between novice and veteran teachers, as well as with school-level teams, teacher leaders, and school leaders and teachers working together. We have observed increased ability for coach and mentee (the learning partners) to reveal and discuss inequitable practices.

Other qualitative indicators of the framework's effectiveness include increasing teacher agency and efficacy, increasing engagement of *all students*, and developing the ability of coach and mentee to co-construct new ways to address equity in every coaching conversation.

Long-term, the goal is for teachers to internalize the inquiry process to

Systems whose stated mission is a focus on equitable outcomes for all students must implement a coaching model that is intentional about achieving those outcomes.

explore unconscious equity issues underlying practice, ultimately leading to a decrease in disproportional consequences for students that result from inequitable practices in classrooms.

We hope to see more outcomes like those in Marissa's classrooms: As a result of her work with her partner teacher, Marissa developed new participation protocols that show promise in bridging her African American students to the content and their peers using more relevant and culturally responsive ways.

Systems whose stated mission is a focus on equitable outcomes for all students must implement a coaching model that is intentional about achieving those outcomes.

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Photo by DANIEL RARELA/Child360

Child360 Program Coach Claudia Velasco (left) models how the classroom teacher might ask open-ended questions with a young student.

BRIGHT AND EARLY

COACHING INCREASES THE QUALITY
OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

BY NOELLE V. BANUELOS,
MARIEL K. DOERFEL,
AND RACHAEL E. STOFFEL

For nearly 15 years, Child360 (formerly Los Angeles Universal Preschool) has offered coaching services to early childhood education providers who serve children up to age 5 in public centers and family-based childcare homes. These coaching services give educators the support they need to ensure their programs are places where children are happy and healthy, and where a love for learning is born.

Coaching at the preschool

level substantially improves teacher instruction (Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2018), which in turn produces higher-quality environments and practices that lead to better outcomes for children (see Pianta, Barnett, Burchinal, & Thornburg, 2009). With this in mind, Child360's coaching model integrates research-based practices that promote teacher competency, confidence, and professional growth.

Coaching and professional learning are crucial for developing early educators' skills, but are less commonly experienced by teachers in the early childhood education environment than by K-12 teachers.

To evaluate its practices, Child360 examined the effectiveness of its coaching model during the 2017-18 program year. Overall, teachers who received coaching improved their practices, and their programs saw increases in quality ratings from Quality Start LA, a tiered quality rating system that parents can use to make decisions about where to enroll their children.

WHAT IS CHILD360'S COACHING MODEL AND WHAT SETS IT APART?

The central tenet of Child360's coaching model is that the cultivation of positive and effective relationships between coaches and teachers strengthens early childhood education programs.

This focus on relationships drives the four ongoing components of the coaching model: building coach-teacher

relationships, setting goals, maintaining continuous support (through modeling teaching strategies, providing feedback on observed practices, sharing resources, checking in via phone and email, etc.), and engaging in thoughtful reflection.

Each of these components is associated with its own set of activities designed to support coaches in helping teachers reach their goals.

Child360's relationship-based approach is based on four theories and frameworks:

- **Appreciative inquiry**, which asks questions and focuses on strengths (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005);
- **Process consultation**, which focuses on building relationships through questioning and asking, "What changes would be helpful in a given situation?" (Schein, 1999);
- **Servant leadership**, which encourages leaders to serve others first to help them achieve individual goals while supporting organizational goals (Autry, 2001); and
- **The Quality Counts California Rating Matrix**, which provides seven elements of quality that can be used to shape classroom-level goals (California Department of Education, 2017).

To guide the coaching process, teachers work with their coach at the beginning of the school year to co-

COMMENTS FROM COACHES

Coaches reported observing that teachers improved instructional and behavioral strategies during the year. The following are examples of coaches' comments during focus groups:

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

- **"By increasing** their 'why' questions, the teachers engaged the children further by having them analyze and reason their comments and ideas more deeply."
- **"The teacher was able** to ask children open-ended questions during small group. She was also able to prep the questions ahead of time and write them on sticky notes for the assistants to ask as well."
- **"Increased use of visuals** to support children to know what to do, success with connecting concepts to children's experiences, and teaching concepts in the context of children's play and hands-on experiences."

BEHAVIORAL STRATEGIES

- **"I was able to work** with [teacher name] on supporting students with aggressive behaviors by coming up with strategies to use in her classroom. These strategies also included helping the teacher practice mindfulness to remain calm."

construct a quality improvement plan, with at least two specific goals they aim to achieve by the end of the year.

Based on this plan, coaches support teachers to use research-based instructional strategies, including asking children open-ended questions, modeling the use of rich language and vocabulary, and teaching concepts in multiple ways to make them accessible to more children.

As one coach described it, she focused on encouraging the teaching team to ask “why” questions of children: “By increasing their ‘why’ questions, the teachers engaged the children further by having them analyze and reason their comments and ideas more deeply.”

Coaches conduct site visits every two to four weeks, based on the individual needs and scheduling availability of each site. Informal check-ins over phone or email may also occur between site visits.

HOW DO CHILD360 SUPERVISORS WORK WITH COACHES?

For our coaching model to be effective, Child360 requires coaches to have six core competencies that are aligned with our foundational theories and core values: resourcefulness, professionalism, building relationships, facilitation of learning, clear communication, and reflective practice.

Coach supervisors employed by Child360 to manage and direct coaching teams support all coaches. Research suggests that when coaches receive the support and mentoring they need, the quality of coaching they deliver is significantly higher. These supervisors are often former coaches themselves, with a personal understanding of common experiences and challenges.

Isner et al. (2011) described effective supervision as a balance of traditional supervision activities (such as structured observation and documentation) and support activities, including feedback and opportunities for reflection.

Research suggests that when coaches receive the support and mentoring they need, the quality of coaching they deliver is significantly higher.

Child360 supervisors leverage both supervision and support to guide their coaches.

They provide guidance via three primary activities: shadow assessments during two classroom visits per year; reviews of site case notes; and periodic check-ins, which can be formal or informal.

During the shadow assessment process, a supervisor accompanies the coach on a site visit, observing the coach’s interactions with teachers, checking for appropriate implementation of coaching strategies, and then debriefing and reflecting with coaches about their strengths and areas for improvement.

To guide this process, Child360 developed a rubric that contains specific criteria aligned with the coaching model’s core competencies. Feedback from supervisors on the rubric has been very positive, with supervisors reporting that it led to more formal and specific debriefing conversations.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE CHILD360 COACHING MODEL?

To understand the effects of our coaching model, we surveyed teachers at 200 of the 540 sites we served in the 2017-18 program year. These included both school district sites and family childcare homes, and included a mixture of quality tier ratings at baseline.

Before sample selection, we removed some sites from the potential pool. Many family childcare homes were already involved in an evaluation related to coaching. We removed sites from a large urban school district due to union challenges and concerns. The remaining pool of 340 sites contained

proportional distributions of the most recent overall tier ratings and site types, to account for potential variations in coaching activities between school district sites and family child care homes.

We drew a sample of 200 sites from that pool, using proportional sampling of tier and school type. Once we selected these 200 sites, we randomly selected a single classroom from each site, resulting in a final study sample of 200 classrooms.

We collected both quantitative and qualitative data to learn how coaches implement the coaching model through their activities, how these activities help teachers achieve their goals, and how coaching affected program quality. Here’s what we learned.

Teachers mastered their goals.

When surveyed, 59% of coaches reported that they achieved more than half of the goals they had co-created with their teachers before the end of the program year. Teachers reported on their own goal achievement using a reflection form provided to them at the end of the year. Lead teachers from 74% of the sampled classrooms (N=147) reported partial achievement or mastery of at least one of their quality improvement plan goals during the coaching process.

These goals were most often related to language and questioning with children, behavioral management, classroom management, and instructional strategies. For example, one teacher said, “My transitions have improved, and I know how to implement learning during transition times.”

Another said, “Through the coach’s guidance, I became more aware of the importance of teaching with intention during my interactions with the children and using every activity or play time as a learning opportunity to teach children not only the learning objectives of a week, but also other concepts such as numbers/counting, colors, vocabulary, and social skills.”

Programs receiving coaching increased their ratings.

Ratings of programs are generated by a regional quality rating and improvement system, Quality Start LA, which assesses and rates early childhood programs using California state standards for quality care and education.

Its five-star rating system provides families a snapshot of a program's overall performance and the quality of its environment.

Once assessed, sites receive a tier rating from 1 to 5. In a separate effort from the survey of 200 classrooms described above, we investigated the tier ratings for 292 sites across the Child360 network, looking at changes from the 2014-15 (or 2015-16) program year to the 2017-18 program year.

During this two- to three-year span, 40% of sites (116 sites) increased their ratings. Over half of the sites overall (51%) remained at the same rating since the previous assessment year. Only 9% of sites saw decreased ratings during this time. The increases by tier rating were:

- Tier 2 sites at baseline: 64 of 91 sites increased to a tier 3 or 4 rating.
- Tier 3 sites at baseline: 42 of 88 sites increased to a tier 4 or 5 rating.
- Tier 4 sites at baseline: 10 of 112 sites increased to a tier 5 rating.

The ratings elements that showed the greatest changes were child observation, teacher qualifications, and director qualifications. The child observation element measures teachers' usage of child assessments (e.g., the Desired Results Developmental Profile) to track child progress and inform curriculum development, and 54% of sites increased their ratings on this element.

The lead teacher qualifications element and the director qualifications element both include achievement of degrees, permits, and professional development hours. Almost half of all

sites (48%) increased their rating for lead teacher qualifications; similarly, 47% of sites increased their ratings for director qualifications.

Support led to positive outcomes.

Qualitative data from focus groups indicated that coaches appreciated the support, feedback, and reflection opportunities their supervisors provided.

This support likely enabled them to provide coaching that led to improvements in teaching and program quality.

On a survey, 94% of 46 coaches described their supervisors as approachable and "always available." The majority of coaches (90%) reported they had opportunities to collaborate and reflect in many forms, including team meetings and informal peer support.

WHAT ARE RESEARCH-BASED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COACHING PROGRAMS?

Classrooms in our Child360 network demonstrated successful implementation of coaching activities, positive outcomes for teaching professionals, and increased quality ratings for the children in their care.

Our results demonstrate that when teachers receive guidance from professional coaches, they can achieve their goals and provide a high-quality classroom environment, ensuring that every hour children spend at school is meaningful, enriching, and stimulating.

Based on our experience and research findings, we recommend that other coaching initiatives fulfill their potential by using tools and resources tied to teachers', coaches', and supervisors' goals, and by creating focused opportunities for coaches to reflect, share information, and strategize.

These systems and supports can help create consistency to ensure that all teachers receive the same high-quality coaching and support for their early education practices.

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Coaches from Fort Wayne Community Schools in Indiana work together in small-group learning communities during professional learning hosted by the district. From left: Kathy Gordon, Lisa Kelly, Jenny Relue, Rhian Crider Ferhl, Jana Laborde, and Faith Wise.

THE POWER OF COACHING

FORT WAYNE'S MODEL SHOWS WHAT AN INTENTIONAL LEARNING SYSTEM CAN ACCOMPLISH

BY KAY PSENCIK, VALERIE MITRANI, AND RAMONA COLEMAN

Effective coaches make time for their own learning. As they systematically engage in professional learning, they develop and deepen their knowledge in areas including the Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011), adult learning principles, and research-based instructional practices.

This ongoing learning process

doesn't happen automatically. It takes intentional design and support at the district and school levels. When district leaders keep a vigilant, strong focus on the content and quality of professional learning, coaches develop common vocabulary and skills, which supports equity for all students (Hirsh, Psenick, & Brown, 2018). Coaches who are well-supported tend to be more engaged in their own learning

community than those who aren't.

Unfortunately, many coaches don't have access to this kind of support or meaningful professional learning. For example, 86% of schools have teacher leader roles, but only 32% offer specialized teacher leadership training (Valdez & Broin, 2015). Even in districts that offer professional learning for coaches, what coaches often experience is one-time training

and curriculum sharing rather than tools and ongoing conversations about improvement.

Fort Wayne Community Schools, the largest school district in Indiana, breaks that mold. A model of a districtwide learning system, Fort Wayne illustrates the central role of coaching in a systemic professional learning approach and what effective support for coaching looks like. We have worked with coaches throughout the district for many years and have seen firsthand how supporting coaches supports the entire system.

CORNERSTONES FOR IMPROVING INSTRUCTION

In 2014, Fort Wayne Community Schools set a goal to engage everyone in the district in excellent professional learning as the foundation for all significant implementation of innovations.

Deeply committed to learning for all, district leaders began with learning communities for academic services, interventionists, and instructional coaches as the start of a ripple effect to reach all leaders and educators (see sidebar at right).

They knew that instructional coaches were cornerstones for improving instructional practices, providing coherence in district expectations for curriculum, and building readiness to learn, and therefore for achieving equity. They designed a system of support that would focus on coaches learning from each other and experts in the field.

Two years ago, the district hired an external evaluator to assess the impact of the systemwide professional learning work. Those findings showed major positive shifts emerging in the district,



HOW FORT WAYNE BUILT A LEARNING SYSTEM

Beginning in 2001, Fort Wayne Community Schools participated in a Wallace Foundation grant to prepare and support school leaders. Through this work, district leaders saw the vital role of leadership development in transforming their schools.

Recognizing the need for continued development, superintendent Wendy Robinson established a partnership with Learning Forward in 2014 to rethink professional learning and redefine how her district leadership team would become the model of learning that she wanted to see throughout the district.

The district established a learning community of district cabinet leaders, made up of chief officers and directors from all aspects of the organization: finance, human capital management, social and emotional health, special education, and academic services.

Robinson stressed to them and everyone in the district the importance of professional learning because, as she said, they could not lead what they did not understand. Robinson considered it critical to engage central office leaders, including instructional and noninstructional staff, from the onset so that leaders had knowledge of and capacity for a continuous

improvement approach in schools and departments. And she was clear that the approach was not intended to be top-down but instead a way to build leadership capacity at all levels to sustain learning throughout the organization.

The cabinet's first focus was to explore effective strategies for implementing the Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011). This meant making a shift from one-time professional development to ongoing, embedded, community-based professional learning. The cabinet team established definitions of leadership and professional learning to guide the work of implementing the standards.

While the district focused on professional learning as the approach to achieving its goals, Robinson realized that the district wasn't supporting instructional coaches enough to ensure their success in all schools. She challenged her cabinet leadership team to explore the most powerful ways to engage instructional coaches in ongoing professional learning and create a coaching framework and a professional learning plan to support them.

Learning Forward senior consultants and the district leadership team created a broad system for learning throughout the district that included principals, coaches, and teachers. The district's model is featured in the book *Becoming a Learning System* (Hirsh, Psencik, & Brown, 2018). Today, learning communities flourish throughout the district, from school professional learning communities of principals to the finance and human resources departments.

and coaches were a big part of these improvements (RTI International, 2018).

Here we describe lessons learned about the roles that coaches play and how the district supports them to thrive and make excellent teaching and learning possible.

Instructional coaches have clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

One of the first steps that ensured coaching success in the district was to establish a clear vision of what instructional coaches do and how they support and are supported by others. In Fort Wayne, everyone from the superintendent and principals to teachers understands the roles of instructional coaches.

Fort Wayne's instructional coaches are not just curriculum and instructional specialists or resource providers, although these are essential roles. Nor are they assistant principals or teacher substitutes.

Focused on student and adult learning in their buildings, instructional coaches are skilled in processes and systems that lead those they serve to learn and increase their effectiveness so significantly that student learning increases as well. These skilled coaches empower teachers to take ownership for their own learning and responsibility for their students' outcomes.

Understanding this important role, district-level directors and principals ensure that coaches coach. They also ensure that coaches engage in their own professional learning. They do not derail coaches' efforts with other responsibilities.

Furthermore, district leaders articulate to staff that instructional coaches' role is to ensure all innovations are implemented with fidelity through coaching rather than directives. Coaches come together as a community to develop competence in coaching, deeper understanding of adult learners, and common strategies all might use in facilitating professional learning and coaching.

Coaches practice the district's coaching cycle and support each other in solving issues arising in their schools, such as what to do when a team is not working well or how best to introduce new curriculum units or instructional practices to their teachers.

Ongoing professional learning strengthens coaching skills and instructional expertise.

Coaches, like teachers and principals, increase their effectiveness when they are engaged in ongoing, long-term, sustained professional learning throughout their careers. Fort Wayne leaders acknowledge the power of supporting coaches with ongoing professional learning. Superintendent Wendy Robinson insists that all coaches are present for their learning sessions and engage in their own learning communities.

She and other district leaders are clear with new coaches about the expected skills they will develop over time, and they are committed to ensuring the resources, including funding and time, to implement that support throughout coaches' careers.

Fort Wayne's process begins with effective onboarding of prospective and new coaches and continues with professional learning communities for all school-based instructional coaches. The content for these learning communities focuses on the instructional core, standards students are to master, and district curriculum and instructional materials, all to ensure excellent instructional practices.

Coaches practice coaching regularly.

No one gets better at something just by reading and talking about it. They may develop deeper understanding, but they must practice to increase their effectiveness. Effective practice increases effectiveness in coaching.

Fort Wayne's coaches reflect constantly on their practice and make adjustments to improve. They continuously set regular goals for themselves, learn through practice, and

reflect on progress.

Peer support is important to this process. Coaches support each other in reflection and practice by coaching each other on challenging issues in their schools or designing a challenging coaching session together. They observe each other coach. They share strategies with each other.

As instructional coaches work together, they feel a sense of community with their peers. They develop a strong sense of collective responsibility not only for the learning of their peer coaches, but also for teachers in their collective buildings.

THE CYCLE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Engaging coaches in their own cycle of continuous improvement is essential for the success of coaches and the school as a whole. This cycle of setting adult learning goals, designing learning strategies, implementing those strategies, monitoring progress, and assessing the impact of their learning on teacher learning aligns with the cycle of continuous improvement that is at the heart of effective learning teams and systems (Hirsh & Crow, 2017).

Fort Wayne established a self-assessment and goal-setting process to help all coaches focus on their specific learning needs. The self-assessment not only caused instructional coaches to think deeply about their role and their learning needs but also painted a clear picture of what the district expected from coaches.

One of the challenges for Fort Wayne and many other districts is to monitor the effectiveness of instructional coaching on shifts in teacher practice and, ultimately, student achievement. Coaching is effective over time, as coaches build relationships, engender confidence in others, and develop their own competence (Psencik, 2011).

That makes it difficult to assess impact at a discrete point in time. And because a major aspect of coaching is building trusting relationships,

and because good coaches are deeply respectful of all classroom teachers, introducing evaluative assessment into the process can pose risks to the relationships.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE RTI STUDY

An evaluation study of Fort Wayne's districtwide professional learning system found that the district is "on track to building the desired capacity of system leaders to implement effective professional learning" and that teachers report this work is making a positive impact on their practice (RTI International, 2018).

The results also show:

- Nearly all coaches and principals reported feeling confident or very confident using the cycle of continuous improvement to make changes to professional learning (95% coaches, 97% principals). The majority agreed or strongly agreed that they understood how to use the district's theory of change and logic model to develop school improvement plans (96% coaches, 97% principals).
- Coaches and principals reported using more data to determine teachers' professional learning needs (93% coaches, 100% principals).
- Nearly all coaches and principals (93% coaches, 100% principals) either agreed or strongly agreed that they understand better how to design teacher learning opportunities using adult learning principles and how to provide learning opportunities over time to ensure new concepts become rooted in practice.

A major finding, according to



Eva Trout, left, and Angie Everly-Anderson analyze learning designs for coaching teachers in developing reliable student assessment strategies.

interviews and surveys, is that the Standards for Professional Learning are taking root in Fort Wayne. This appears to be having an impact.

Coaches say professional learning has positively impacted their practice and built their capacity to support teacher professional learning. Likewise, teachers remarked on the knowledge level of their coaches and described in depth how their coaches participated in the process of designing school-based curriculum with them.

The majority of teachers (83%) report using data more effectively to determine whether they are meeting student needs as a result of professional learning and coaching. Furthermore, principals and coaches say that district leaders are using a systematic approach to improve teaching and learning, which assists coaches and principals in ensuring equity across the district.

Coaching is a powerful professional learning process for facilitating others to make changes in their instructional

approaches that positively impact their teaching and student learning. When everyone understands the essential skills of instructional coaches and values the roles they play, coaches serve their purpose well.

Fort Wayne Community Schools offers an inspiring — and still growing — example of the power of coaching within an intentional professional learning system.

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A DASHBOARD VIEW OF COACHING

DIGITAL LOG ZOOMS IN ON COACHES' DAILY ACTIVITIES

BY LAUREN B. GOLDENBERG, VIOLET WANTA, AND ANDREW FLETCHER

Early literacy is the foundation of academic success and predicts outcomes far beyond elementary school. So when only 30% of 3rd graders in New York City public schools scored proficient on the state test in 2014, district leaders began targeting improvements in literacy instruction in grades K-2.

In 2016, the New York City Department of Education rolled out a major investment in early literacy called Universal Literacy. The district placed nearly 500 reading coaches in almost 700 schools to provide job-embedded coaching for K-2 teachers.

Coaches, who report to the district's early literacy office and work in close

collaboration with principals and teachers, focus on research-aligned reading instruction and are at the heart of Universal Literacy's approach to increasing the percentage of children reading at grade level by the end of grade 2.

Early in the initiative, we — a central office administrator and a small internal evaluation team — realized we needed a mechanism to capture at scale what these instructional coaches do with teachers on a daily basis. It was imperative to find a way for coaches to discuss and report on their work and to ensure use of what Kane and Rosenquist (2019) call “potentially productive coaching activities” — those that research shows are likely to lead to

refining teacher practice.

While coaches typically share their planned schedules with supervisors and keep detailed narrative records about coaching cycles, these do not necessarily reflect a day-to-day account of their work. Moreover, aggregating narrative coaching reports would yield little useful or actionable information.

To address the gap, we began a collaboration between the early literacy team and the district's research office to develop and implement what became known as the digital daily coaching log.

THE DIGITAL DAILY COACHING LOG

Coaches complete the online digital daily coaching log every day they are in

schools. The log captures information about how coaches spend their time — for example, coaching teachers, working with school building leaders, and providing professional learning sessions.

This is important because the ways coaches understand the focus of their work and allocate their time across tasks varies, despite strong research evidence about the importance of spending time working with teachers (Elish-Piper & L’Allier, 2011; L’Allier, Elish-Piper, & Bean, 2010).

Depending on the school they work in — the leadership, the culture, and the needs — or their own preferences, coaches might prioritize working with students, collecting and analyzing data, gathering and organizing instructional resources, and administrative activities over coaching teachers in classrooms (Bean, Draper, Hall, Vandermolen, & Zigmond, 2010; Deussen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio, 2007).

The discrepancy between expectations of coaches and the reality of their work has surfaced in several studies of coaching (e.g. Bean et al., 2010; Kane & Rosenquist, 2019). In one study of Reading First, coaches were explicitly asked to spend 60% to 80% of their time in the classroom with teachers or working with teachers directly on their instruction, but while coaches dedicated long hours to their jobs, they spent on average only 28% of their time working with teachers (Deussen et al., 2007).

In the digital daily coaching log, coaches select the individual teachers or groups they worked with and then note the reading content and pedagogical

areas of focus as well as the coaching moves they employed, e.g. visiting and debriefing, modeling, or side-by-side coaching. The coaches — all former district teachers who have been extensively trained by the district’s early literacy team — focus on and record instructional practices and principles outlined by the National Reading Panel (2000).

While the specific instructional focus varies from classroom to classroom, based on schools’ chosen curricular materials as well as teachers’ goals for their coaching cycles, the practices are always research-based. Because the district’s central office endorses curricular materials and provides incentives for adoption, but does not dictate use of particular materials, coaches are prepared to use research-based practices that apply across curricula.

For instance, coaches are able to work with teachers on how to effectively implement phonics lessons, regardless of the specific curriculum, so they can tailor their support to align with the materials teachers use. As an example, some coach-teacher pairs focus on implementation of the curricular materials used in their classrooms such as the supplemental phonics program Foundations.

DESIGNING THE LOG

From the beginning of the design process, we have aimed for the log to be what Yeager and colleagues (2013) call a “measure for improvement,” a practical tool that is a regular part of coaches’ work flow and results in usable

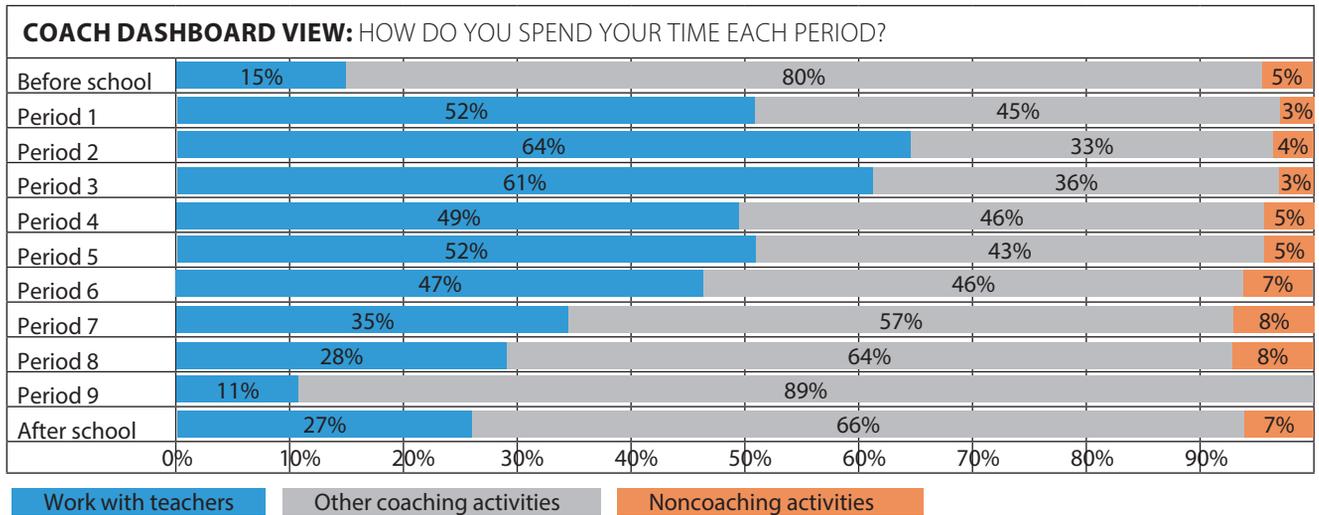
AN EXAMPLE OF HOW ONE COACH USES THE LOG

Toward the end of an eight-week coaching cycle, the reading coach worked with a 1st-grade teacher on implementing targeted word-work within guided reading groups. A small group of students sat on a rug in the front of the room, practicing “tapping” out the individual sounds in words like “red” and “ham” while sorting the cards into two columns (short a and short e).

Using side-by-side coaching, the reading coach provided quiet instructions to help the teacher get the most out of her time with this small group of students.

At the end of her day, the reading coach completed the digital daily coaching log. When she recorded her work with the 1st-grade teacher, she noted the reading content (e.g. phonemic awareness, phonics); research-based pedagogical practices (guided reading, centers/stations), and instructional coaching activities (side-by-side coaching).

At a later date, she might use the log’s data dashboard to reflect on her work across all 1st-grade teachers in terms of reading content and pedagogical practices, as well as noting how much she has worked with each teacher.



information. Our goals were for the log to be user-friendly and the dashboard actionable. We iterated on the design, testing each version and remaining attentive to how the log fit into and reflected coaches’ daily work.

Each year, we undergo a revision process to ensure the log is representative of coaches’ day-to-day activities, aligned with the initiative’s evolving policies and language, and as streamlined as possible. The current version of the log consists almost exclusively of check-off items and typically takes less than 10 minutes to complete.

One of the lessons we learned after the first year was that coaches and program leadership needed more ready access to their data. Our goal was to promote continuous improvement among coaches by providing them with data they can use to reflect on and adjust their practice, but the first survey tool required the evaluation team to process raw data and create spreadsheets for each coach.

In the second year, we switched to a survey tool that had built-in dashboard functionality, streamlining the process of getting data in the hands of coaches and leadership.

MEASURING COACHING TIME

Coaches use data reports for conversations about their work with

We created the digital daily coaching log to do two things: track the everyday activities of reading coaches and collect data to inform practice and policy.

school building leaders as well as with their instructional supervisors. (Log data aren’t used to evaluate coach performance.) To facilitate discussion about how much time coaches spend with teachers, the dashboard view in the figure above visually shows coaches how much time they spend with teachers by period.

This view allows coaches to consider whether there are additional times during the day they can use for classroom coaching. Inspired by economic nudge theory (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008), we refer to this view as a “research nudge.”

Over our initiative’s first three years of implementation, the average time coaches spend with teachers has consistently hovered at around 40% of their time in schools. Several factors constrain the total amount of time coaches can be in classrooms — for example, coaches work a longer day than the classroom teachers, and, in some schools, reading instruction in

all classrooms occurs within the same 90-minute block of time.

Still, some coaches are managing to work with teachers more than others. In the 2018-19 school year, log reports show that coaches reported spending between 14% and 76% of their time in schools with teachers.

OTHER USES OF THE LOG

During professional learning sessions, coaches have time to explore and reflect on other aspects of their log data using data protocols. For instance, in one session they considered whether they were using instructional coaching moves strategically and focusing on the right foundational reading skills, based on student assessment data. They also investigated the breadth and depth of their coaching across the K-2 classroom teachers in a school.

The log also promotes improvement at scale by providing a common language among coaches, their supervisors, and central office staff — a benefit we did not anticipate. It gives coaches a mechanism to codify their complex work in ways that allow them to reflect on how they can improve their coaching work at a building level.

At the same time, it affords coach supervisors and program leaders an aggregate view across coaches and schools, letting them consider variations to better support coaches and help

advocate for systemic change in reading instruction, curricular materials (e.g. the use of a supplemental phonics program where needed), and fidelity in the use of reading assessments.

For example, at coach professional learning sessions, the district's early literacy director referenced average time spent on each coaching move to encourage more active strategies such as modeling, co-teaching, and side-by-side coaching. He also cited the data coaches reported on their foundational literacy skills foci — the five pillars described by the National Reading Panel and the Institute for Education Sciences (NRP, 2000; Foorman et al., 2016), plus writing — to emphasize the importance of phonological and phonemic awareness.

Log implementation uncovered tacit assumptions about the initiative's theory of action, as well as coaches' assumptions about professional learning and school capacity building. For instance, deciding which teachers to list in the log provoked discussions about what high-leverage coaching looks like. Should long-term substitutes receive job-embedded coaching cycles? How about paraprofessionals? These discussions led to policy decisions, with room for variation in individual contexts.

Although the main focus of the log is as a measure for improvement, the evaluation team also aggregates log data to create briefings for policymakers, inform program design and development, and use for program evaluation.

Unlike school-level measures such as standardized test scores, which are lagging indicators and often fail to detect the early changes that may be indicative of larger gains later on, coach log data can be considered a leading indicator, allowing us to identify the amount of coaching teachers receive.

Consequently, we can investigate whether students of coached teachers make more gains on an outcome measure of reading. For example, we can explore relationships between

how much coaching teachers receive and student achievement.

REFLECTIONS

We created the digital daily coaching log to do two things: track the everyday activities of reading coaches and collect data to inform practice and policy. From the outset, it has been important to recognize what the log can and cannot accomplish to set expectations and avoid pitfalls.

Coaches record their time, and we hope that because the data aren't used for individual accountability, coaches are as honest as possible. We are also clear that the log does not capture the quality of coaching interactions. With these caveats, we have found the log to be a valuable tool with immense promise.

We encourage districts involved in instructional coaching, particularly those grappling with creating coherence at scale, to implement a similar strategy. Using an off-the-shelf survey tool and a collaboration between the instruction and data teams, it is eminently attainable.

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STEPS TO SELF-RELIANCE

COACHING PROCESS STRENGTHENS
MATH STUDENTS' CONFIDENCE

BY SUE CHAPMAN AND MARY MITCHELL

All teachers of mathematics want to know that our teaching is causing students to develop deep and lasting understanding of math concepts, fluency with mathematical procedures, competence in solving problems, and a positive relationship with mathematics.

Unfortunately, the relationship between teaching and learning is not always clear. The dynamics of

a classroom are complex, making it difficult to know which teaching moves lead to specific student outcomes. When we try to link our teaching to students' learning, we may feel we are looking into a black box, a space containing countless elements that may or may not positively affect student achievement (Black & William, 2010).

Through deliberate reflection, however, we can examine the influence of specific teaching practices on student

learning outcomes (Huinker & Bill, 2017), and it is essential that we do so to address issues of equity and access.

According to the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics landmark publication *Principles to Actions: Ensuring Mathematical Success for All*, "The question is not whether all students can succeed in mathematics but whether the adults organizing mathematics learning opportunities can alter traditional beliefs and practices to

promote success for all” (2014, p. 61).

Focused reflection is teacher-directed professional learning that uses ongoing formative assessment aligned with research-based instructional practices and standards. It allows teachers to operate as researchers and hold ourselves accountable for what we are teaching and what students are learning. The table at right outlines the focused reflection theory of change (Killion, 2008), which includes four stages of planning and reflection, each guided by a set of core questions for reflection and discussion.

The work of focused reflection is complex and best suited for collaborative settings, such as in partnership with an instructional coach or in a professional learning community.

To illustrate how these steps play out, this article tells the story of Lindsey, a composite of teachers we have worked with over the years, and the process she goes through, which is representative of the process we strive for when coaching teachers.

FOCUSED REFLECTION IN ACTION

With the help of her math coach, Lindsey worked hard to build a culture of respectful discourse in her 5th-grade math classroom and help students see themselves as mathematicians, regardless of background, special needs, or interests. However, Lindsey and her coach noticed that, when students worked in collaborative small groups, some students regularly took a more active and vocal role while others

FOCUSED REFLECTION: A LAB APPROACH TO IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING			
	PLAN FORWARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can students do now? • What do we want to see them do more? 	
	LEARN TOGETHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are we going to try? • What is our data collection process? • What measurable goal are we shooting for? 	
	APPLY AND MEASURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened? • How do we know? 	
	REFLECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did we learn? • What are our next steps? 	

tended to mostly observe and listen, writing down the more vocal students’ explanations so they could report out during whole-class discussions if called on.

Knowing that students’ confidence and willingness to make conjectures and challenge others’ ideas is critical to the students’ success in school and life, Lindsey and her coach shared their concerns with Lindsey’s grade-level team and learned that other teachers were noting the same patterns.

They decided to use focused reflection to investigate and address this issue. Here’s what happened as they applied the four phases of focused reflection.

PHASE 1: PLAN FORWARD.

The core questions that guide this phase are: What can students do now? What do we want to see them do more?

Lindsey and her coach started by

brainstorming the specific verbal moves they wanted to hear from students as they worked in collaborative small groups, interactions that would indicate mathematical self-reliance. Together they developed this list of things they wanted students to be able to do, regardless of whether they were quiet and shy or more extroverted:

- Offer mathematical conjectures, strategies, or ideas to the group;
- Explain their mathematical thinking to the group; and
- Question or challenge another student’s mathematical conjecture, strategy, or idea.

Lindsey agreed to gather some baseline data about individual students’ proficiency with these behaviors to help determine what support students might need. Because this data collection would require focused listening, Lindsey would listen in on one small group each day so that she would have

data on each student by the end of the week (see the table at right).

The data confirmed her hunches: 43% of students didn't exhibit any of the targeted behaviors during the time they were observed. A small portion of students initiated much of the mathematical thinking within their small groups. In the most extreme cases, more assertive students led other group members through a series of steps to find the solution to a problem, thereby removing an opportunity for the less vocal or confident students to make personal sense of the mathematics. In every group, there was at least one student who took a back seat to others in mathematical thinking.

PHASE 2: LEARN TOGETHER.

The questions guiding this phase are: What are we going to try? What is our data collection process? What measurable goal are we shooting for?

Lindsey and her coach began with some professional reading about equity-based instructional practices for mathematics classrooms, then agreed to implement the following instructional practices:

- Review the mathematics tasks in use to make sure they were low-threshold, high-ceiling tasks and that they supported the use of multiple approaches and representations.
- Be explicit with classes about the goal of helping all students learn to rely on their own mathematical thinking and expect mathematics to make sense. Explain why this ability is important both now and in the future. Explain the three specific behaviors that indicate mathematical self-reliance and post these on an anchor chart. Tell students that they would receive feedback on their use of these important learning moves.
- Give students opportunities to self-assess their mathematical self-reliance in terms of these three behaviors and monitor

SAMPLE OF STUDENT DATA COLLECTED IN LINDSEY'S CLASSROOM			
Data collection			
	Offer mathematical conjectures, strategies, or ideas to the group	Explain their mathematical thinking to the group	Question or challenge another student's mathematical conjecture, strategy, or idea.
Students/groups			
Harold			
Derek		✓	
Robin	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Stuart			
Oliver			
Tommy		✓	
Tomeka			
Robbie	✓	✓✓	
Andre	✓	✓	✓✓

their growth in mathematical self-reliance. (See the table on p. 65.)

- Provide support for students to try out the identified behaviors by establishing discussion protocols and a rotating group facilitator role for small-group work. Provide sentence frames to support conjecture-making, strategy sharing, and respectful questioning of another student's idea.
- Repeat the original data collection process once a month until the goal was met.

Lindsey's goal was that 100% of students would demonstrate one or more of the targeted behaviors during each collaborative group lesson.

PHASE 3: APPLY AND MEASURE.

The third phase is an interactive process of asking: What happened and how do we know?

After a month, Lindsey saw growth in students' mathematical self-reliance and their awareness of this important

learning disposition. Eighty-seven percent of students exhibited one or more of the targeted behaviors during the observation period. While Lindsey was pleased with these results, she continued working toward the goal of all students participating and becoming self-reliant. In addition to continuing the practices she had started, she added the following:

- Conferencing individually with each of the students who were not yet exhibiting mathematical self-reliance to support them in setting manageable goals for taking risks in collaborative group settings.
- Providing a weekly guided math lesson for students who were hesitant to share their mathematical thinking in collaborative groups to give them opportunities to practice this skill with teacher support. Encouraging students' use of mathematical representations to support their communication of mathematical ideas.

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF MATHEMATICAL SELF-RELIANCE					
Today, I ...					
Offered mathematical conjectures, strategies, or ideas to my group.		Explained my mathematical thinking to my group.		Respectfully questioned or challenged another student's idea.	
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Tomorrow I will work on ...					

In the third month, Lindsey assessed again (because focused reflection is an iterative process) and observed that all students exhibited one or more of the targeted mathematical self-reliance behaviors, even though some students were clearly not yet comfortable with these moves. She had met her goal.

In analyzing the data, Lindsey and her coach noticed more examples of students explaining their mathematical thinking than either of the other targeted behaviors. This is perhaps a natural first step toward building mathematical self-reliance, but it made them aware of the opportunity to provide some focused support for the skills of question asking and conjecturing.

PHASE 4: REFLECT.

Reflection occurs throughout the process, but in the fourth phase it focuses on driving next steps, using the questions: What did we learn? What are our next steps?

Overall, Lindsey and her coach were pleased with students' growth. Students' reliance on their own thinking had begun spilling over into other classroom routines, with more students participating in whole-class discussions than ever before.

The students' literacy teachers reported that the students' newfound confidence was also making a difference in how students approached their reading and writing work. Lindsey was

also delighted by the support that the more confident students began showing to reluctant students and the sense of community that grew stronger in the classroom.

Lindsey's insights through the focused reflection process included the power of teacher collaboration, the importance of encouraging students to be agents in their own learning, the value of identifying data to monitor students' growth related to mathematical practices and dispositions, and the use of this data to guide instructional work.

She and her coach decided to spend the rest of the month observing students and thinking about a next goal to help them grow as mathematicians. They also planned to meet again in a couple of weeks to plan a new focused reflection project.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FOCUSED REFLECTION

Researcher John Hattie refers to the kind of work these teachers did — the hard work of looking at the impact of their teaching on student learning — as visible learning. As he puts it, "Fundamentally, the most powerful way of thinking about a teacher's role is for teachers to see themselves as evaluators of their effects on students" (2012, p. 18).

Key to doing this work, he writes, is teachers' mindsets: "It matters what teachers do — but what matters most is having an appropriate mind frame

relating to the impact of what they do. An appropriate mind frame combined with appropriate actions work together to achieve a positive learning effect" (2012, p. 18).

The thoughtful work of these educators also embodies the definition of professionalism as defined by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics because the teachers "hold themselves and their colleagues accountable for the mathematical success of every student" (NCTM, 2014, p. 99).

When we adopt a visible learning mind frame and engage in focused reflection on teaching and learning, we are able to acknowledge our ability and responsibility to gauge and improve our effectiveness as teachers, and we empower ourselves and our students as learners and as mathematicians.

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BRIDGING THE DISTANCE

ONE-ON-ONE VIDEO COACHING
SUPPORTS RURAL TEACHERS

BY CYNTHIA D. CARSON, CYNTHIA CALLARD, RYAN GILLESPIE,
JEFFREY CHOPPIN, AND JULIE M. AMADOR

Coaching is an increasingly popular and promising method of professional learning, but unfortunately, many teachers do not have access to high-quality coaching due to geographic and financial constraints. Technology offers an opportunity to increase access to coaching, especially for educators in isolated rural areas.

Research shows video is useful in teacher education and professional learning to focus on moments of practice (Gaudin & Chalies, 2015;

Knight & van Nieuwerburgh, 2012). It can show teachers a clear picture of their instructional practices and provide documented, objective evidence of teacher moves and student responses that are often different than what teachers subjectively perceive.

Recognizing the potential of technology for coaching in the rural areas where we work, we developed an online coaching model in a joint venture between the University of Rochester (New York) and the University of Idaho, with funding from

the National Science Foundation.

We designed this model, which was grounded in the Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011), to provide rural mathematics teachers one-on-one video coaching with expert mathematics coaches. We have found that the model, which is being implemented in New York and Arizona, has been feasible and well-received by teachers, even offering some benefits not possible with traditional coaching.

For example, one participating

teacher said, “I get observed all the time ... [but this] was a much better way of having me focus on what I’m doing in the classroom.”

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

As we began this work, we based our online model on previous experiences with content-focused coaching (West & Staub, 2003), which uses these coaching cycle steps: a prelesson co-planning discussion, a co-taught lesson, and a post-lesson reflection discussion focused on observations of student learning and implications for future instruction.

Throughout our design process, Learning Forward’s Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011) supported our thinking as we transitioned our face-to-face coaching model to fully online. (See sidebar at right.)

Translating this model to an online environment meant overcoming some obvious challenges, such as the inability to co-teach. To address these challenges, we determined which parts of the coaching cycle were best suited for synchronous or asynchronous communication.

Hrastinski (2008) has identified that asynchronous activities allow for deeper reflection on complex concepts and allow participants to work at times that are more convenient for their personal schedules. Synchronous activities, on the other hand, lend themselves to building relationships, planning tasks, and more committed and motivated interactions due to quicker response times. These considerations led us to develop our online video coaching model (see diagram on p. 69).

TECHNOLOGY OVERCOMES CHALLENGES

Selecting the right technology tools helped us make high-quality, standards-

HOW LEARNING FORWARD’S STANDARDS GUIDED OUR WORK

The Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011) guided the development of the online video coaching model, especially the following standards:

Learning Communities

Because our model took place in an online space, coaches had to be cognizant of, and explicitly work toward developing, safe, collaborative relationships. We developed norms of collaboration and relational trust by encouraging coaches and teachers to meet informally online before their first coaching cycle.

This initial meeting helped the teacher and coach get to know each other by inquiring about each other’s background, the background of the students in the class, the curriculum, and their goals for their coaching work. In subsequent coaching meetings, coaches continued to be explicit about their focus on the teacher’s goals for improving instructional practices and worked together to construct those goals.

In addition, coaches frequently reminded teachers that they were there as nonevaluative support for the teacher to reflect on and improve his or her practice.

Resources

Because many rural districts are strapped for personnel funding, we made sure that the components of the online video coaching sessions could take place during teachers’ planning time or outside of their school day so that we did not draw on district resources for substitutes.

We used Zoom and Google, as no-cost platforms, for communicating and sharing documents. And because time is a precious resource, especially in rural communities where many teachers often hold responsibilities in addition to teaching, we prioritized schedule flexibility with asynchronous meetings and video viewings.

Learning Designs

We grounded our coaching model in research about online and video coaching and face-to-face coaching (e.g. West & Staub, 2003). We capitalized on the asynchronous nature of the online model to incorporate feedback and reflection, which coaching research shows are essential.

Implementation

The ultimate goal of the model is to support continuous improvement to allow “educators to move along a continuum from novice to expert through application of their professional learning” (Learning Forward, 2011, p. 44). The coaching provided is job-embedded, long-term, and allows for follow-up and new cycles to build on past ones.

Outcomes

There is a constant focus on both student and teacher learning outcomes. Throughout the three phases of the model (planning, implementation, and reflection), discussions and practices emphasize student learning of mathematical ideas represented in national and state standards. To get to these outcomes, the teacher and coach co-construct detailed goals for the teacher’s knowledge and practices.



Leadership Development

Learning Forward supports organizations in implementing sustained, standards-based professional learning grounded in a cycle of continuous improvement.

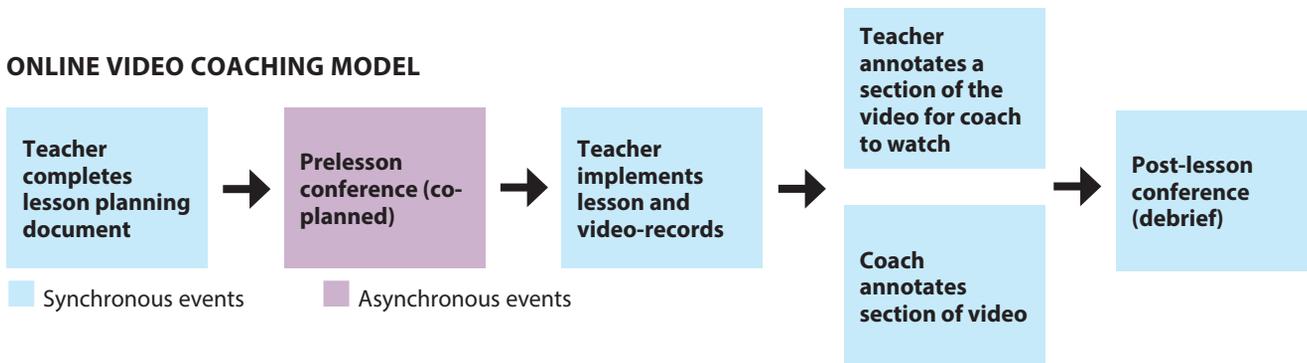
Learning Forward supports:

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ONLINE VIDEO COACHING MODEL



based professional learning possible in the online environment.

We addressed the challenge of sharing materials by using Google folders, where teachers could post lesson plans and other materials before the prelesson discussion and the coach could review them.

For the prelesson discussion, we used a videoconferencing software, Zoom, that allowed coach and teacher to see each other as they talked (see screen shot at right) and share screens if they wanted to simultaneously view documents in synchronous sessions.

The prelesson discussion involved coach and teacher engaging in lesson design and task selection focused on identifying and unpacking the mathematics; anticipating likely student strategies, conceptions, and misconceptions; and planning for opportunities for student engagement.

During the discussion, the Google folder and files allowed the coach and teacher to collaboratively design the lesson by viewing and editing the documents synchronously.

In the third phase of the coaching model, the teacher video recorded the planned lesson using a Swivl robot with a paired iPad application. We synched the Swivl robot with a marker that recorded the audio as the robot rotated and pivoted to follow the marker (usually worn by the teacher) around the room. Additional markers could be used to audio record students as well. When the recording ended, the video automatically uploaded to a Swivl library that both coach and teacher could access when convenient.

Before the post-lesson discussion,

IMAGES OF ONLINE POST-LESSON CONFERENCE



Coaches Cynthia Callard and Ryan Gillespie work together using Zoom to review comments from a video coaching session.

the coach and teacher independently viewed the video and recorded annotations at noteworthy moments. Video afforded teachers and coaches the opportunity to pause, review, and rewatch segments of the lesson, and a feature of the Swivl library allows coach and teacher to pause the video and type a comment or question about these noteworthy moments in the lesson. This annotation feature also allowed the viewer to navigate the video easily because the user can click on an annotation to be taken directly to that segment of the video.

The final component of the coaching cycle — the debriefing discussion — occurred synchronously, after the teacher and coach had each viewed and annotated the video. But before the discussion, the teacher uploaded student work to the shared Google folder, which, combined with

the video and annotations, provided evidence to support a discussion focused on student learning.

We found that the specific, detailed comments of the annotation feature of the software helped coaches and teachers prepare for the conversations and served as a catalyst for many rich coaching conversations.

Of course, the online nature of the coaching came with challenges as well as benefits. Some teachers were uncomfortable being videotaped. It was often difficult to hear students or see their work in the videos. In addition, the asynchronous nature of the coaching meant a lack of opportunities for real-time feedback or modifications in practices during the lesson, which we had used in previous coaching, and challenged us to find new ways of providing the feedback and engaging teachers in reflection.

LOOKING FORWARD

Our goal is to expand our online coaching program to reach more teachers in rural settings, as well as urban and suburban districts. We believe that online coaching can be effective in supporting teacher change and provides access for teachers to reflect on their practice in new and different ways.

The success of this model, with a focus on synchronous opportunities, raises the bar for the professional learning community to continue seeking new and innovative ways to improve access for teachers to high-quality professional development.

By removing geographic barriers, increasing flexibility in scheduling, and providing one-on-one support for teachers with content specialists from a distance, this model demonstrates new ways to partner with districts to increase

their ability to support teachers.

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CLASSICS



THE POWER OF LISTENING WELL

As Learning Forward celebrates its 50th anniversary, we're digging into our archives to bring you articles that have had a major impact on the field along with commentary from current Learning Forward staff and consultants. The esteemed contributors whose work we've selected have built a foundation of knowledge that undergirds all of our work. We encourage you to revisit their insights to stay grounded even as you push forward.

IN THIS ISSUE, Cindy Harrison, Learning Forward senior consultant and former president of the board of trustees, revisits an article by Robert J. Garmston in the Spring 2008 issue of JSD.

"As co-founders of what is now the Learning Forward Coaches Academy, Joellen Killion and I have worked with districts around the U.S. to enhance the skills of instructional coaches. We have used Bob Garmston's work on conversation skills because it emphasizes both the emotional and cognitive aspects of coaching.



Cindy Harrison

"This particular article, published in 2008, focuses on paraphrasing skills, which are really pivotal to coaches' conversations with teachers and leaders. Paraphrasing takes a surprisingly nuanced skill set. Understanding how and when to use **different** kinds of paraphrasing is essential for a coach to move the learner's thinking forward.

"Learning about each kind of paraphrasing and being able to use each type is one of the targeted outcomes of the Coaches Academy. Participating coaches report that this module is one that has a great impact on the actions they take in their coaching work. Based on their feedback and our own experience, we believe every coach — and other education leaders — should read this article to hone their listening skills and deepen their communication."

— "Raise the level of conversation by using paraphrasing as a listening skill," p. 72



RAISE THE LEVEL OF CONVERSATION BY USING **PARAPHRASING** AS A LISTENING SKILL

BY ROBERT J. GARMSTON

*since feeling is first
who pays any attention
to the syntax of things
will never wholly kiss you ...*
— E.E. Cummings

I've just left Rome, and though I spoke through a translator, I am very clear that emotion was being expressed in the room. Just as E.E. Cummings knew that feeling is integral to relationships,

we know that the expression and recognition of feelings is a major factor in conversational competence. This column explores the importance of expressing feeling and thinking.

THINKING AND FEELING

Meetings facilitate reflecting, planning, problem solving, constructing, and building community. None of us are cognitive machines, processing only logic and analysis.

Decisions are often informed by gut reasoning and feelings. Too often I have seen a group member temporarily overcome with sadness or discomfort, and the group tries to either comfort the person (“It’s all right, dear”) or withdraw. Both of these responses signal that the group prefers that members bring only parts of themselves to a meeting and that expressing emotion makes others uncomfortable. A more respectful response, and one

SHIFT LEVELS OF THE CONVERSATION		
COMMENT	SHIFT UP	SHIFT DOWN
This class is making me crazy: no respect, no order, no following directions.	Value: Discipline is very important to you.	So a choice for you might be to make some rules about raising hands, taking turns, being courteous, etc.
If they won't study, they won't learn, yet some kids don't do homework and still test well.	Belief: You believe that learning requires effort, yet for some kids, this doesn't seem to be so.	So it's puzzling that Aldo doesn't seem to study, yet he excels on tests.
Some of our group meetings are unfocused and a waste of time.	Goal: What you want is a productive team.	You want people on time, prepared, and on topic.

more useful to the group, is to accept feelings with an acknowledging paraphrase. Paraphrasing encourages elaboration, which ultimately moves the group's work into cognitive domains in which content can be addressed.

PARAPHRASING

Mention paraphrasing to some, and they experience a sense of uneasiness. Sometimes, participants feel uneasy because they have been on the receiving end of ineffective paraphrasing. In addition, paraphrasing has generally been treated as a language skill, when it is a listening skill.

Phrases such as "I think I hear you saying ..." may become robotic with repetition, conveying a sense of inauthenticity.

Listening and then paraphrasing

well is hard work. In both the Cognitive Coaching and Adaptive Schools work, however, we have learned that it can become easier in two ways.

Turn "I" into "you."

Drop the "I" at the beginning of a paraphrasing statement and use "you" instead. This eliminates the need to remember and use a nonessential beginning to a paraphrase. An "I" in the paraphrase subtly shifts the message so that it becomes about you and not about the person to whom you are responding. "I" also signals that your statement is an interpretation of what was said, further distancing yourself from the speaker.

Improve your listening skills.

Paraphrases are never the majority

of listening responses in a conversation. Listening includes verbal behaviors (OK, yeah, I got it), nonverbal behaviors (eye contact, mirroring, physical referencing,) asking questions, or probing for specificity. Listening is balanced with putting one's own ideas and feelings on the table.

All good paraphrases reflect both thinking and feeling. Reflected feelings do not always need to be in words but instead can be communicated by tone of voice, facial expression, or posture.

THREE TYPES OF PARAPHRASE

Why paraphrase? In my work with groups, whenever members start spontaneously paraphrasing one another, I know a watershed in group development has occurred.

Speakers know they have been heard or that you have attempted to understand them. Paraphrases help you check your understanding of the

Reprinted from *JSD*, Spring 2008, Vol. 29, No. 2.

CLASSICS

speaker's meaning, and occasionally paraphrases can clarify a speaker's thinking. Paraphrases are categorized into three types, each with its own distinctive structure and purpose:

- Acknowledge and clarify;
- Summarize and organize; and
- Shift discourse to a higher or lower logical level.

Acknowledge and clarify.

This form of paraphrase serves as a mirror to the speaker, reflecting what has been understood. When a paraphrase misstates the speaker's meaning, the speaker often elaborates, making necessary corrections. In this way, both parties are clear about the communication.

Listening is direct, and stems are simple. "You are thinking ..."; "You are wondering ..."; "We (a group member speaking for the group) are considering ..."; "In other words ...".

Summarize and organize.

Sometimes a paraphrase clarifies a speaker's thinking: The speaker understands what she or he said as if hearing it for the first time. This is especially true for speakers who think aloud or for communications that are complex. To do this, the listener stops listening for details and listens for themes or patterns instead. This is an achievable focus when a speaker is covering many details.

The summarize-and-organize paraphrase metaphorically puts ideas into baskets or containers.

"We seem to be struggling with three themes: where to _____, how to _____, and who should _____."

"On the one hand, we _____ and on the other, we _____."

Shift logical levels of the conversation.

Group members may have difficulty detecting meaning when the speaker is either exceptionally abstract or exclusively concrete. Recently, a group of primary teachers was telling war stories about children's behavior. The settings varied — on the bus, in the

lunchroom, on the playground — but the theme remained the same: Someone did something hurtful to someone else. A teacher listening to this conversation said, "Our students do not show much respect for each other." Suddenly the conversation shifted to the more useful topic of respect — what would it look like, and how can we teach it?

A paraphrase can also ground concepts when they get too abstract. A participant might say, "The problem here is communication." If a facilitator responds with, "So you would like members to include each other on the memos they send," she has turned an abstraction — communication — into a specific behavior she knew was important to group members. This is likely to shift the conversation to other behavioral manifestations of good communication.

To develop an appreciation of differing logic levels of discourse, think of an escalator. First floor, *Ford*, second floor, *car*, third floor, *transportation*. To shift down to a more specific level, search for a word or concept that would be subsumed in the term you heard

from the speaker. To shift up in logic level to a more general term, search for a category that would include the concept you heard. Stop listening for details or themes. Listen for what you believe to be the unexpressed meaning under the words.

Because you will be making inferences as you use this form of paraphrasing, proceed with exploratory language and an approachable voice. The table on p. 73 contains examples of such paraphrases.

BEYOND PARAPHRASING

Other strategies address both the thinking and feeling aspects of collaborative work. Groundings, used at the beginning of meetings to value each voice in the room, can cover both. (See example above.) This activity also gives participants opportunities to practice effective listening and paraphrasing behaviors.

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GROUNDING ACTIVITY

Form groups of six to eight.

- Members take turns talking.
- When one member talks, all others are silent.
- After everyone has talked, the first person to talk summarizes what was said.

Post on a flip chart what you would like members to talk about.

- My name is ...
- My relationship to this topic is ...
- My expectations are ...
- How I feel about being here is ...

When all groups are finished, the facilitator calls on the first person in each group to give a summary statement to the full assembly.

- During a grounding, everyone needs to have uninterrupted time to talk and know that they are understood. Groundings, therefore, should be timed based on the needs of the group, not governed by the clock.



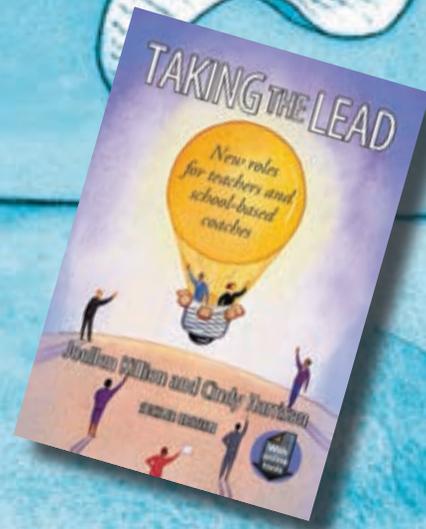
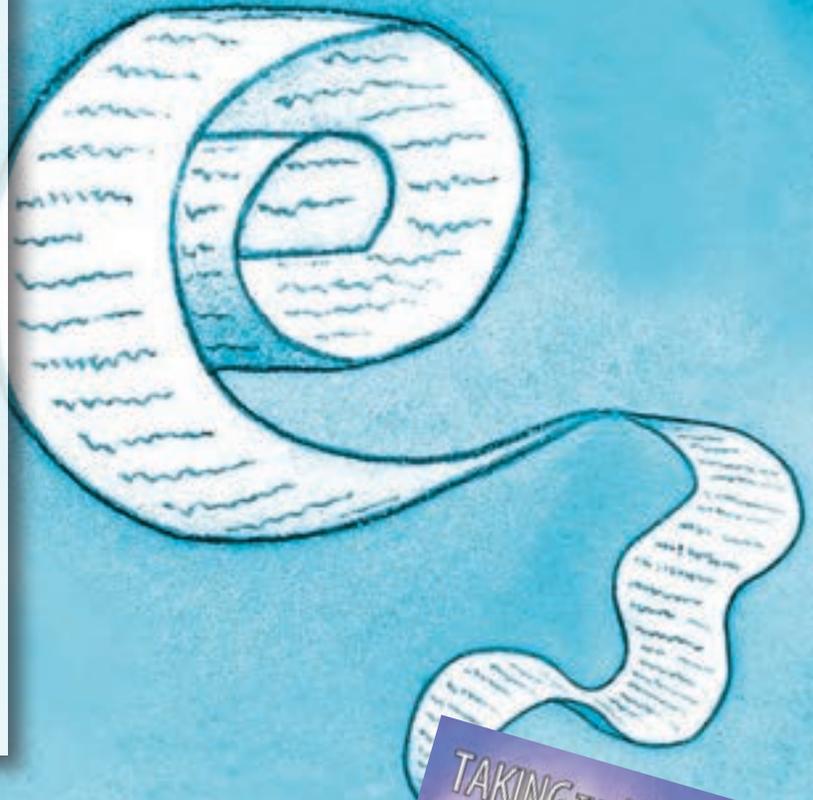
Discuss. Collaborate. Facilitate.

TOOLS

COACHES' VALUABLE ROLES

Coaches play many valuable roles in improving teaching, including what Joellen Killion and Cindy Harrison call classroom supporter. In this role, coaches work side by side with teachers in their classrooms, demonstrating instructional practices and supporting implementation in other ways.

This tool, from the second edition of *Taking the Lead* (Learning Forward, 2017), helps coaches plan a demonstration lesson and debrief with teachers. It includes specific reflection questions and prompts coaches can use to make the insights teachers gain actionable.



COACH AS CLASSROOM SUPPORTER

PROTOCOL GUIDES COACHES CONDUCTING DEMONSTRATION LESSONS

School and district-based coaches have multifaceted roles. To ensure their work is strategic and meaningful, rather than surface level, school leaders must decide what specific roles and responsibilities should be the focus of their work. Joellen Killion and Cindy Harrison’s 2017 book, *Taking the Lead*, describes a range of potential roles for coaches, including resource provider, instructional specialist, curriculum specialist, mentor, and classroom supporter.

They write that the role of classroom supporter “may have the greatest potential to make a dramatic impact on student learning” (Killion & Harrison, 2017, p. 65). In this role, coaches work side by side with teachers while students are present to implement new practices and improve instruction.

This role has three components: modeling or demonstrating teaching practices, co-teaching, and observing and reflecting on practice. When coaches are supporting teachers in using new instructional practices, they can use these components to facilitate a gradual release of responsibility from coach to teacher (see table below).



This tool focuses on the first phase of that: modeling through demonstration lessons. Coaches can use the first page of the tool to guide their planning and conduct the lesson. The second page is a debrief protocol that can be used to facilitate a reflective conversation between coach and teacher, either orally or in writing, to ensure transfer of learning to practice.

Coaches and teachers are encouraged to use the tool in combination with content standards,

spacing and curriculum maps, student data, and other locally relevant documents to set goals that are relevant and target instructional practices that are aligned to district and school goals and student needs.

REFERENCE

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CLASSROOM SUPPORTER OPTIONS			Gradual release of responsibility
When the teacher is ...		The coach serves as a ...	
Acquiring new content or instructional practices	▶	Consultant/ knowledgeable other by modeling/ demonstrating the new content or instructional practice in the classroom with students	
Ready to implement new content and/or practices with support	▶	Partner/collaborator by co-teaching with the teacher in the classroom with students	
Ready to implement new content and/or practices independently	▶	Mediator of reflective self-analysis	

Source: Killion & Harrison, 2017, p. 66.

LESSON PLANNING MODEL

Step 1	Determine what specific skill, knowledge, attitude, or behavior you want to showcase.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with teacher. • Identify from among a set of possibilities. • Follow an established plan. • Choose from among predetermined options.
Step 2	Plan how you will amplify what you will demonstrate in your teaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it visible. • Make it BIG. • Make it obvious.
Step 3	Preview the lesson with the teacher.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the lesson plan. • Co-develop the lesson plan.
Step 4	Assign the teacher the role of observer with a data template.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help the teacher know what to look for. • Encourage the teacher to watch the students more than you, unless that is inappropriate. You want the teacher to see the interaction between what he or she does and what students do. • Give the teacher a visit-preparation template or create one with the teacher.
Step 5	Debrief the visit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the teacher to share what he or she observed. • Ask the teacher for data about the impact of the lesson on students. • Ask the teacher to identify the process, sequence, or strategy used in the teaching. • Encourage the teacher to identify the reasons, the process, sequence, or strategy is successful with students. • Ask the teacher to identify a generalization about the use of the process, sequence, or strategy.
TIPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All demonstration lessons are equal work for you and the teacher observing. • The purpose of the demonstration is learning. Amplify learning in the debriefing. • One or two demonstrations are great. Three demonstrations are too many. If you practice gradual release, you accelerate the teacher's learning. 	

DEMONSTRATION/MODEL LESSON DEBRIEF FORM

How did this demonstration or model lesson help you?

What did you see that was effective?

What did you see that was ineffective?

What piece(s) would you use in your classroom?

What would you change or modify?

What pieces of this lesson need further clarification?

What is one suggestion for improvement of this lesson?

How can I support you in the future?

Source: Killion, J. & Harrison, C. (2017). *Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches* (2nd ed.). Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.



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UPDATES

A WORLDWIDE COMMUNITY

Attendees come from across the globe to participate in Learning Forward's Annual Conference, representing eight countries and 57 states and provinces in the U.S. and Canada. How will you join the conversation?

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REMEMBERING SHIRLEY HORD

It is with sadness that we report that our friend and colleague, Shirley Hord, died in October at the age of 90. Hord was known to many as a prolific writer, scholar, and researcher, and she had an immeasurable impact on Learning Forward and the field of professional learning.



Shirley Hord

Hord spent much of her career associated with the University of Texas and the Southwest Education Development Laboratory (SEDL).

Her work focused on implementing change in schools, professional learning communities, professionalization, and professional development standards.

She was involved with Learning Forward for nearly 30 years, as a lead faculty member for the second graduating class of the Academy, as the research advisor on several editions of the Standards for Professional Learning, overseeing the development of the Standards Assessment Inventory, and chairing the evaluation committee of the Learning Forward Foundation.

Upon her retirement from SEDL, Hord was named Learning Forward's scholar laureate. Since 2012, Learning Forward has presented the Shirley Hord Learning Team Award in her honor (co-presented with Corwin), an annual recognition of a learning team of educators implementing a teacher-led cycle of continuous improvement that transforms teaching.

Stephanie Hirsh, former executive director of Learning Forward, said, "She helped each one of us who had the honor of collaborating with her become deeper thinkers, better communicators, and deliberate planners. She was our guiding star."



Teacher-led professional learning as a driver for strategic improvement was the focus of a panel discussion Learning Forward co-hosted in October in Washington, D.C.

The Learning Policy Institute, the American Federation of Teachers, and the National Education Association co-sponsored the event, which was inspired by new research described in this issue's Research Review article on p. 16 about California's Instructional Leadership Corps (ILC) and the value its teachers placed on learning from their colleagues.

Panelists from states and districts, ILC, the sponsor organizations, and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards provided insight into specific strategies, including teachers using feedback and analysis to educate colleagues on content and pedagogy and intentional use of thought partners to assist with addressing real-time instructional issues.

Nikki Mouton, Learning Forward's senior vice president of business development, consulting, and content, encouraged leaders to view professional learning as more than a workshop or inservice and acknowledge it as a foundational driver for change and improved results. She also emphasized the need for a strategic approach and alignment across a district or organization so that professional learning doesn't get stuck in "silos." Instead, she said, members of the organization should be working in "swim lanes — everybody has their role to play, but they're all in the same pool of learning. They're learning some of the same concepts, and the outcomes are all related."



Nikki Mouton

Lily Eskelsen Garcia, president of the National Education Association, said that professional learning shouldn't be limited to teachers, adding the need to include "the learning community, the support staff, the bus drivers. It's everyone who has an impact on those students."

Panelists also addressed the importance of active engagement by leaders at all levels in professional learning and the conditions, contexts, policies, and funding needed to leverage the momentum for continued progress. Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, pointed out the importance of policy in improving professional learning. She said, "Policy won't work without people believing in it. We have to examine how we actually align values with policy, focusing on collaboration in professional development and creating teacher agency."

Access the presentation video and related resources from this panel at learningpolicyinstitute.org/event/empowering-teacher-learning.

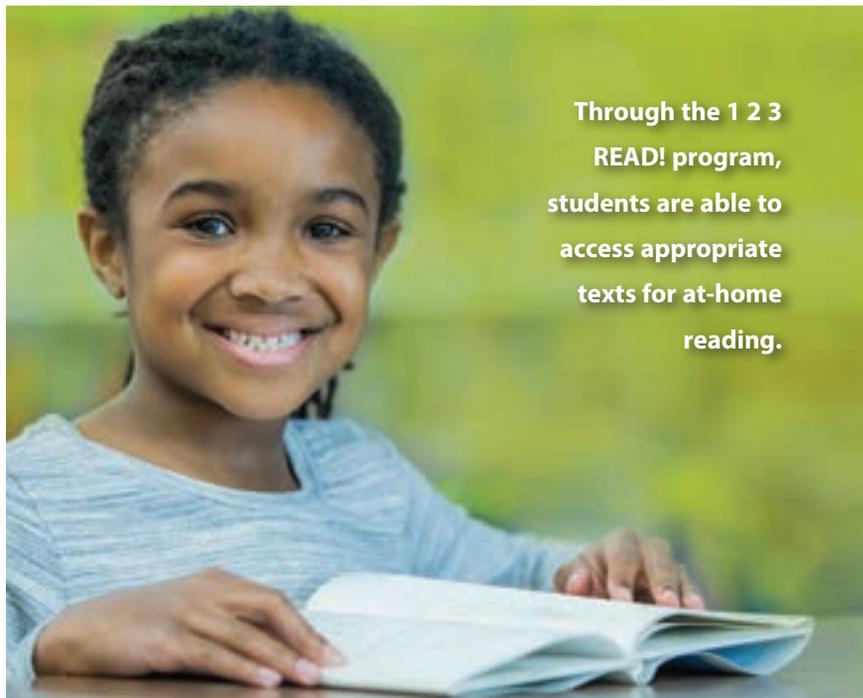
Host committee project benefits the Little Bit Foundation

Each year, the local host committee of the Learning Forward Annual Conference selects a philanthropic project and invites the entire Learning Forward community to contribute. The project benefits a community in need located in the area of the conference's host city or state. This year, the St. Louis 2019 Host Committee has selected the Little Bit Foundation.

The Little Bit Foundation is a nonprofit organization committed to breaking down barriers to learning for students living in poverty through partnerships and programs that serve the needs of the whole child. The foundation's goal is to empower students to achieve their academic goals and dreams for the future, while leaving an imprint of love and hope on young lives for whom a little bit means a lot. The goal and the work of the organization align with Learning Forward's vision of equity and excellence in teaching and learning.

Since 2001, the Little Bit Foundation has partnered with St. Louis area schools and community organizations to provide after-school meals for students, access to medical screenings and mental health support, and instruction in personal and dental hygiene care.

In addition, the Little Bit



Through the 1 2 3
READ! program,
students are able to
access appropriate
texts for at-home
reading.

Foundation provides academic enrichment supports that focus on literacy and STEM. Through the 1 2 3 READ! program, students are able to access appropriate texts for at-home reading. Through the mySci Do partnership with Washington University and Maryville University, students engage in project-based STEM learning.

Throughout the 2019 Learning

Forward conference, participants can stop by the St. Louis Hospitality Table to learn more about the Little Bit Foundation and make donations. Every little bit can help our collective goal of achieving equity and excellence for every child.

Learn more about the Little Bit Foundation at www.thelittlebitfoundation.org.

FEATURED SOCIAL MEDIA POST

Follow us on social media.

Share your insights and feedback about *The Learning Professional* by using #LearnFwdTLP.



Nancy Routson, NBCT @Nancy Routson - Oct 10
Every student, every classroom, every day. Proud to be supporting #TitleIIA on Capitol Hill today with my @APSLearns team. Thanks for having us, @LearningForward !! #LFAcademy21 @ERowdenAPS @CateCoburn @ssarber



2019 ANNUAL CONFERENCE UPDATE

We've added six networking sessions to our conference lineup. Attendees can sign up to meet others in similar roles, share successful strategies, discuss challenges, and consider how to best advance student success in your role.

Networking sessions are available for:

- Superintendents;
- Principals and assistant principals;
- District and central office professional learning leaders;
- Coaches and teacher leaders;
- Urban district leaders; and
- State and provincial education agencies.

UPDATES

WEBINAR: ANALYZING ASSIGNMENTS FOR RIGOR AND EQUITY

Learning Forward recently hosted a webinar with Tanji Reed Marshall of the Education Trust about why and how to analyze assignments for rigor and equity.

Assignments are important because they shape students' thinking and skill-building, affect teachers' instruction, convey teacher expectations of their students, and influence how students interact with the curriculum. As Marshall reminded participants, "Students can do no better than the assignments they are given."

Research from the Education Trust reveal that, nearly two decades after many states adopted more highly rigorous standards, students continue to be given assignments far below the rigor demanded to be successful in



Tanji Reed Marshall

college and careers.

The webinar began with a review of this research across content areas. Marshall also asked participants

to share examples of memorable assignments from their own school years. Most participants shared examples of projects or sustained learning experiences that required deep thinking about complex topics.

Marshall then shared a guide for analyzing the rigor of assignments, which can be used for individual assignments or analyzing assignments over time, and demonstrated how two different lessons would fare in the analysis.

The webinar ended with a discussion about using assignments as a vehicle for thinking about equity.

If you missed it, you can access the archived webinar at learningforward.org/learning-opportunities/webinars/webinar-archive.



Career Center | Connecting highly qualified educators with relevant career opportunities

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- Find job seekers with advanced professional learning expertise using our Learning Forward member and Academy graduate badging icons.
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As you expand your networks, knowledge, and skill sets through your affiliation with Learning Forward, you will find your career growing in new and exciting directions. The Learning Forward Career Center supports you in your professional journey.



Access the career center at careers.learningforward.org.

Advancing equity through professional learning

Learning Forward hosted a Capitol Hill briefing on advancing equity through professional learning in October. Panelists from across the United States shared their powerful Title II stories and data.

Denise Glyn Borders, Learning Forward president/CEO, kicked off the event by framing the equity problem facing states and districts: Teacher shortages are rampant, with a national attrition level of 9% to 10% annually. Teachers leave the profession because they do not feel supported. And, not surprisingly, teacher shortages disproportionately impact schools with high percentages of students living in poverty.

Principal retention is also at issue, especially in the highest-need schools. Research has shown that professional learning makes a positive impact on principal retention. Principal effectiveness has a multiplying effect: Schools that lack strong leadership have high rates of teacher attrition.

Schools, districts, and states across the country are using Title II funds to address this inequitable access to professional learning and making great progress as a result.

Panelists reported that:

- **Norman Public Schools in Oklahoma** is using Title II funding, in part, to tackle high rates of teacher attrition. The district is focused on new teacher retention and has hired new teacher specialists to observe and coach new teachers. The result has been a 25% drop in the number of new teachers that need to be hired in this most recent year.
- **South Brunswick, New Jersey**, is spending its Title II funds to provide specialized professional learning to middle school math teachers to prepare them for a new cohort of students who would otherwise not have taken



Photo by MELINDA GEORGE/Learning Forward

Leigh Wall, president of the Learning Forward board of trustees, meets with Jon Bernstein, president of Bernstein Strategy Group, at a Capitol Hill event on advancing equity.

algebra 1 before the 9th grade, at which point the pass rate is very low. The result of this Title II investment was that 90% of the students in the first cohort met or exceeded expectations on the PARRC Assessment.

- **The state of Missouri** focused its state allocation on leader professional learning known as the Missouri Leadership Development System. Already the state is seeing 10% higher retention rates amongst participating principals.
- **Suffolk Public Schools in Virginia** invested Title II dollars in coaches and class

size reduction teachers for the district's five highest-need schools. For the first time since 2005, all of Suffolk's schools are fully accredited.

- **In Santa Fe Independent School District in Texas**, where 10 people were killed in a school shooting in May 2018, teachers and principals received coaching to help students who face trauma, resulting in increased math and reading scores, particularly among students from traditionally underserved areas.

Learning Forward encourages all educators to be advocates. Watch the video of the Capitol Hill briefing, use our new data compilation tool to capture and begin to shape your story, and share your data summary with Learning Forward so we can herald your high-quality professional learning story as well.

Video, slides, and data summaries from the briefing are available at learningforward.org/advocacy.

AT A GLANCE

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING: BY THE NUMBERS

ACCORDING TO THE MOST RECENT NATIONAL DATA¹
(2015-16 SCHOOL YEAR):

66%

of schools had staff with specialist or coaching assignments



41%
reading coaches



37%
general instructional coaches



28%
math coaches



10%
science coaches

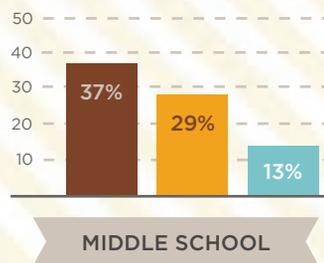
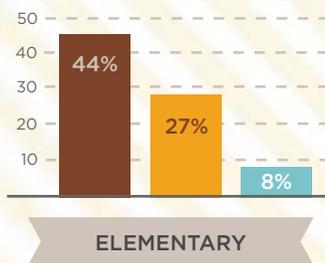
READING COACHES ARE MOST COMMON IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, WHILE MATH AND SCIENCE COACHES ARE MORE COMMON IN MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS.

SUBJECT

Reading

Math

Science



% OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITH COACHES IN EACH CONTENT AREA



COACHING IS MOST PREVALENT IN:

large schools

city and suburban schools

schools with many low-income students

ACCORDING TO A NATIONAL STUDY OF PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS:²

COACHING TIME IS DEDICATED TO:

35%
new teachers

25%
struggling teachers

40%
all other teachers



24%
weekly or multiple times per week

33%
monthly or multiple times per month

16%
regular but less than monthly

27%
a few sessions, not on a regular schedule

¹ nces.ed.gov/surveys/ntps/tables/Table_5_042617_fl_school.asp

² k12education.gatesfoundation.org/download/?Num=2336&filename=Gates-PDMarketResearch-Dec5.pdf

THROUGH THE LENS

OF LEARNING FORWARD'S STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

LEARNING FORWARD'S STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students ...

Learning Communities

... occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.

Leadership

... requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.

Resources

... requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.

Data

... uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.

Learning Designs

... integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.

Implementation

... applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.

Outcomes

... aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

Many of the articles in this issue of *The Learning Professional* demonstrate Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning in action. Use this tool to deepen your understanding of the standards and strategies for implementing them.

Ways you might use this tool include:

- Discuss the questions in a professional learning community;
- Share one or more articles from the issue with your staff and facilitate a conversation; and
- Do a self-assessment of what you have learned from this issue.

<p>STANDARD: DATA</p> <p>IN ACTION</p> <p>“A dashboard view of coaching” (p. 58) shows how early literacy coaches in New York City are using a digital log to record how they spend their time. Each day, they record with whom they work, for how long, and with which standards-aligned goals and practices. Viewing their data and discussing it with supervisors helps them assess their work, plan, and improve.</p>	<p>TO CONSIDER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The authors point out that typical documentation — coaches’ planned schedules and narrative description of coaching cycles — “do not necessarily reflect a day-to-day account of their work.” How do coaches in your school or district record and measure their work with teachers? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many coaches get pulled away from time in classrooms to help with other tasks. How can you use data to ensure that coaches can maintain focus on their primary role? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>STANDARD: LEARNING DESIGNS</p> <p>IN ACTION</p> <p>Beliefs and assumptions have an important but sometimes unexamined effect on the way coaches and other learning professionals approach their work. In this issue, authors encourage coaches to examine their mental models (p. 24), reflect on equity (pp. 10 and 45), and attend to student engagement (p. 28), among other topics.</p>	<p>TO CONSIDER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As you reflect on this issue’s articles, what beliefs or perspectives are you considering that you have not explored previously? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you tend to approach your work from the mental model that Killion (p. 24) calls the heart, the head, or the hand? How can you expand your perspective and better incorporate the three, as she recommends? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Learn more about Learning Forward's Standards for Professional Learning at www.learningforward.org/standards-for-professional-learning.

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- Private consultations with our experts.