

## Chapter 12: Resource staff as coaches

	<b>TOOL</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>
12.1	<b>Sample action research project</b>	See one district's approach to action research.
12.2	<b>Library media specialist's partnership agreement with the principal</b>	Review a media specialist's coaching agreement that helped strengthen her role.
12.3	<b>Student support specialist job description and responsibilities</b>	Use this sample job description to describe concrete coaching roles of student support specialists.
12.4	<b>"Using a classroom-based coaching model to foster differentiation"</b>	Read this article to explore how special education providers can provide professional learning support using coaching.

**TOOL 12.1****Sample action research project****Action on inclusion capacity building project****PURPOSE:**

1. To build a school culture that embraces a coaching model to support student learning.
2. To allow learning support teachers and family-school liaison counselors to focus their efforts in a case study format based on student(s) needs.
3. To promote ongoing reflection and analysis to inform the division's coaching framework, and promote professional growth of learning support team/French as a second language.

**RESEARCH QUESTION: CAN INTENTIONALLY DESIGNED, SHORT-TERM COACHING PARTNERSHIPS AFFECT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AS A RESULT OF CHANGE(S) IN TEACHER PRACTICE?**

**PROJECT APPROVAL CRITERIA:**

1. Designed around the identified needs of a student (one preferably, but if concerns are similar, may include two or three).
2. Involves a teacher interested in exploring/trying new pedagogy to address the student's needs within a school's Response to Intervention framework.
3. Uses the student's Individualized Program Planning or Behavioral Support Plan as a basis for the project design.
4. Provides a timeline of outlined work.
5. School learning support team and principal support the project.
6. Will discuss process and learning with jurisdictional learning support team. (The jurisdictional learning support team is a team of specialists whose purpose is to provide information and sample strategies that parents of children with disabilities might use to support their students' learning.)
7. Will keep reflections on process (journal format).

**APPLICATION:**

1. Applications will be considered upon submission. Each school will be allowed up to \$4,000 to support identified work.
2. Application deadline is Dec. 15, 2011. After that date, unused funds will be available to other schools.
3. Submit applications to the associate superintendent, education services.

**TOOL 12.1** cont'd

<b>LEARNING SUPPORT COACHING CASE STUDY</b>	
<b>Project title</b>	
<b>School</b>	
Learning support teacher or family-school liaison counselor.	
Teacher involved, subject area and grades taught.	
Overview of project (identified student strengths and need(s), pedagogy to be explored, tier of Response to Intervention involved).	
Timeline of work (collaboration, co-teaching, modeling, observations, etc.).	
Research that supports the work. Please include author(s) and title of work(s).	
Approximate cost of project given work outlined above (substitute teacher costs).	

**Source:** Livingstone Range (Alberta, Canada) School Division.

## TOOL 12.2

# Library media specialist’s partnership agreement with the principal

Partnership agreement for \_\_\_\_\_ (name), library media specialist  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (school name)

Timeline: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Beginning month, year) to (Ending month, year)

THE LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST AGREES TO ...	THE LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST’S ACTIONS/TASKS
<b>Be a classroom supporter</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate on lessons involving information literacy and research.</li> <li>• Help teachers integrate technology into lessons.</li> <li>• Conduct book talks on requested topics or genres.</li> <li>• Be an extra pair of hands in the classroom when implementing technology or research lessons.</li> </ul>
<b>Be a resource provider</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide timely instructional support by providing resources to teachers.</li> <li>• Locate information and resources using subscription databases, the Internet, and the online public access catalog.</li> <li>• Find and post websites on classroom resource page to support curriculum.</li> </ul>
<b>Be a curriculum specialist</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support curriculum by purchasing print and nonprint resources.</li> <li>• Identify power standards across the curriculum that align with library and technology skills.</li> <li>• Order professional materials.</li> <li>• Develop library media technology assessments.</li> </ul>
<b>Be an instructional specialist</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with professional learning communities.</li> <li>• Use a variety of strategies to meet teacher and student learning needs.</li> <li>• Integrate research lessons with curriculum content areas.</li> </ul>

**TOOL 12.2** cont'd

<p><b>Be nonjudgmental and honor confidentiality</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep communication lines open between teachers and principal to foster growth and learning.</li> <li>• Honor confidentiality when working with teachers and students.</li> </ul>
<p><b>THE PRINCIPAL'S RESPONSIBILITIES</b></p>	
<p><b>The principal</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agrees to keep communication lines open between the media specialist, teachers, and principal.</li> <li>• Will be nonjudgmental and honor confidentiality between the media specialist, teachers, and principal</li> <li>• Recognizes that the media specialist is a primary resource provider for teachers, staff, and students.</li> <li>• Recognizes that the media specialist is a professional with a unique role in the building.</li> <li>• Is supportive of the library media program.</li> </ul>

**Source:** Fargo (ND) Public Schools.

**TOOL 12.3****Student support specialist job description and responsibilities**

**JOB DESCRIPTION:** The student support specialist will work closely with the building principal, building curriculum teacher leader, and the director of elementary curriculum to act as:

- **Interventionist:** Provide Response to Intervention Tier II and assist with Tier III interventions when appropriate.
- **Data coach:** Offer building-level support to collect and analyze student data.
- **Classroom supporter:** Work with teachers through the gradual release of responsibility (model, co-teach, observe) for Tier I core instruction practices and interventions.

**REPORTS TO:** Building principal(s)

**WORK ASSIGNMENTS:** Student support specialists are assigned to schools at the discretion of the assistant superintendent for instruction in consultation with the director of elementary education and the building principals. Student support specialists will agree to a three-year commitment.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:****INTERVENTIONIST: Help all students learn at high levels**

- Provide one-on-one tutoring and/or small-group instruction for students during intervention/extension blocks.
- Continue to identify research-based supplemental math and literacy programs and support materials for use in Tier II and Tier III of the pyramid Response to Intervention.
- Assist in creating/modifying building-level pyramid of interventions.
- Support teachers in using progress-monitoring tools that match intervention programs and support materials. Help teachers find ways to monitor student growth.
- Continue to identify opportunities within and outside of the traditional school day for Tier II and Tier III interventions.

**DATA COACH: Use data to improve instruction**

- Ensure teachers have relevant and timely access to the formative and/or summative assessment data that will help them make day-to-day instructional decisions.
- Provide ongoing training and support to ensure teachers and support personnel know how to collect and analyze data efficiently and effectively.

## TOOL 12.3 cont'd

- Collaborate with principal and other teachers in the building to analyze findings regarding data to target professional development needs of individual teachers, grade-level groups, or the entire building staff.
- Conduct action research using scientific research-based programs to determine their effectiveness, and share these findings.

### **CLASSROOM SUPPORTER: Provide support, feedback, and reflection**

- Provide support to individual classroom teachers by:
  - Meeting with each grade-level collaborative team multiple times throughout the school year;
  - Modeling, co-teaching, and observing Tier I core instruction and Tier II interventions; and
  - Collaboratively revising classroom schedules to ensure consistent instructional support.
- Provide ongoing training and support to ensure teachers and support personnel use scientific, research-based best practices for working with students in Tier II and III.
- Help the principal provide building-level professional development.
- Facilitate alignment of existing student interventions provided by multiple staff (e.g. Title I, English language learner, special education, classroom teacher) to ensure clear communication.
- Provide building-level support and feedback within the intervention/extension block.
- Serve as a resource to staff in using technology to enhance learning.

### **TRAINING AND TIME COMMITMENTS:**

- Attend AIMSweb Training June 2-3 to collaborate with the building principal to design the building implementation of the AIMSweb tool and assessments.
- Attend School Improvement Camp June 9 and August 16, 2010, to work with assigned building staffs in developing goals and plans.
- Attend the Using Data and Getting Results: Improving Student Achievement Through Collaborative Inquiry workshop on June 14–17, 2010.
- Attend Instructional Coaching Academy sessions throughout the 2010–11 school year. This is a four-day commitment, with the first two days scheduled for August 17–18, 2010.
- Attend monthly collaboration time with support specialists, principals, and the director of elementary education.
- Meet biweekly with other student support specialists, curriculum teacher leaders, and the director of elementary education.

## TOOL 12.3 cont'd

- Meet regularly with building principal(s) and assigned curriculum teacher leader(s).
- Serve on district committees/task forces as an ad-hoc member when appropriate.

### REQUIREMENTS:

- A minimum of five years of successful elementary teaching experience
- Ability to maintain the confidentiality of schools, teachers, and classrooms
- Understanding and use of the gradual release of responsibility model
- Experience using assessment results to guide instruction
- Knowledge of research and best practices in instructional design and differentiating instruction
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Demonstrated ability to use technology and willingness to teach others
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively as part of a team
- Effective group presentation skills
- Effective problem-solving skills

### EVALUATION:

The building principal and the director of elementary education will evaluate the student support specialist's work.

**Source:** Fargo (N.D.) Public Schools.



**TOOL 12.4****“Using a classroom-based coaching model to foster differentiated instruction”****Using a Classroom-Based Coaching Model to Foster Differentiated Instruction**

By Diane Newman and Marcia Singer

Instructors everywhere are trying to address the instructional needs of all learners along a continuum, from those with the most severe learning challenges to those who are gifted.

In an effort to implement differentiated instruction as their teachers’ primary teaching approach, many schools are using traditional methods of providing professional development, with most staff training taking place outside of the classroom. For the most part, in this professional development approach teachers participate in one- or two-hour workshops provided by experts in the field. Although workshops provide the opportunity for teachers to become familiar with the concepts and strategies related to differentiated instruction, this up-front teacher training approach is insufficient in enabling teachers to gain new instructional skills or to know how to incorporate these skills into classroom practice.

**Coaching — an alternative to workshops**

An alternative teacher development approach draws on coaching methods rather than training. As consultants we visited many classrooms, in many different school settings, in a wide range of urban and suburban communities in and around New York City, each time attempting to encourage teachers to adopt the practices of differentiated instruction. We worked in approximately seven to eight middle and elementary schools, from six to nine months per setting, as we formulated our classroom-based coaching model.

In our interactions with school staffs, we found that although participating teachers could verbalize and define the concepts of differentiated instruction, they appeared to be at a loss as to how to integrate these concepts into their classroom practice. We observed teachers who, despite their exposure and training, varied greatly in their ability to significantly impact students’ learning. In some instances the teachers did not actually use any of the constructs of differentiated instruction. Most typically, these teachers continued to provide traditional whole-class teaching while espousing the ideas of differentiated instruction. In other cases they did apply the constructs, but inappropriately. For instance, some teachers incorporated a singular approach to differentiation by simply using different levels of assignments. Others created small instructional groups that were unchanged throughout the year.

To better implement differentiated instruction within their classrooms, teachers need to change not what they learn but where and how they apply it. This model moves staff support from outside the classroom to within the classroom and shifts the role of the instructor from trainer to coach. The delivery method itself models differentiated instruction for teachers.

This model provides support for teachers to implement differentiated instruction to address their own students’ learning while working in their own classrooms. The goal is for the teachers to effectively and appropriately implement differentiated instruction and to ultimately gain the ability to do

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so independently. The overall objective of this coaching model is for teachers to develop responsive instruction that is flexible in both implementing classroom strategies that apply to everyone and incorporating individual strategies for students who require even more support.

### How the coaching model works

This classroom-based coaching approach is defined as a mutual conversation that takes place between the coach and a teacher and is designed to increase student performance. It is based on an assessment of the needs and strengths of the students and teachers, as observed within the instructional setting. The first step in implementing this model with teachers is to start where they are. Set aside time to talk with teachers to explore their ideas and views of the efficacy of differentiated instruction. Coaches can use this discussion to develop a common framework for understanding the core concepts and terms. It is essential that both the coaches and the teachers believe in the importance of creating responsive classrooms.

Next, ask the teachers to fill out a self-assessment rubric to establish where they are along the continuum in differentiating their instruction and to determine their natural comfort level with this approach. Coaches can use this rubric periodically to gauge teacher progress and determine whether they are benefiting from the coaching and where adaptations should be made. From the information gathered, you can establish long- and short-range goals that are then used to guide the continued support.

This model is two-pronged, involving both regular observations and meetings and long-term development. These visits may take place approximately every two weeks. During each visit, the coach should divide his or her time between observing and meeting with the teacher. Teachers can be observed teaching a variety of subjects from English as a second language to science and math. Ideally, meetings will be held in a private area immediately following the classroom observation or on the same instructional day to provide timely feedback. It is important that teachers understand that the coaches are there to help them further their differentiation skills and not to evaluate their teaching performance.

This coaching approach is also teacher-centered. The teachers are given the option to select the subject in which they want to initiate differentiating their instruction; it is not imposed by the coach or the administration. Thus, teachers often start in the subject area in which they are most comfortable.

### **Observation**

An important component of this approach is for the coach to get to know the teachers and their students, to observe how the teachers organize the instruction, and to note whether instruction is provided to the whole class or small groups of students. It considers whether instruction is provided to the whole class or small groups of students. It focuses on how teachers teach and how students respond to the instruction. It also considers the curriculum taught, the materials used, and how students respond to new concepts and information, particularly when delivered using different approaches.

### **Meeting with the teachers**

In the meeting, the coach and teacher talk openly about the lesson. Discussions typically center on teachers' reflections on their instruction as well as the students' responses to the instruction. The

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teacher and coach should explore the intended and unintended outcomes observed and reflect on how the instructional choices help the teacher and students meet the objective of the lesson. It is important to ascertain if the coach and the teacher both saw and experienced the same thing and whether both parties evaluated the same strengths and needs of the lesson. This process enables the teachers to discover where problems exist and opens the discussion on how to improve. To build continuity into the coaching support, relevant strategies identified in previous meetings are included as well.

The coach will also want to explore with the teacher if all the students were able to benefit equally from the instruction. If all students did not gain in skill to the same extent, instructional strategies and management techniques that might be incorporated to help these youngsters should be discussed.

Another important component of this classroom-based coaching model focuses on the gathering and use of data. Teacher-coach discussions often concentrate on the systematic ways in which teachers initially gather information about the students and continue to use this information to determine small-group and individual student needs. The coach should encourage the teacher to alter her instruction based on all data available. The coach should also help her devise strategies for best meeting the learning needs of all the students and guide her through the implementation of these techniques.

These conversations will form the foundation upon which subsequent discussions are based. They underscore the importance of the classroom-based model since coaches are able to see firsthand how classroom instruction changes over time and the effect the changes have on student learning.

### What is the impact on teachers?

In this classroom-based coaching model, staff development moves out of the workshop format and into the classroom. The classroom then becomes the laboratory for helping teachers develop and implement the skill of differentiating their instruction and of meeting the learning needs of each and every student in their class.

As a result, teachers become more aware of the diversity of learners in their classrooms and more comfortable implementing the constructs of differentiated instruction and therefore are better able to address students' needs. The results of the data gathered from the self-assessment rubrics substantiate these findings. The teachers developed skills in organizing and implementing lessons that met a wider range of learners. Students' time on task increased and students were better able to meet standards as the teachers became more facile in using strategies that positively impacted student behavior and performance.

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