



The Why Behind Instructional Coaching

Teacher professional growth has been part of the educational system for decades, however, the way in which professional development (PD) has traditionally been presented is not the most efficient or productive way to address adult learning. Research conducted by Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers (1980) illustrates that the ‘one shot’ version of teacher PD is ineffective at making sustainable long term change within the classroom and therefore within a school or district. On-going one-on-one high quality professional development, such as that offered through coaching, is key for long term improvement. The purpose of instructional coaching is to help close the student achievement gap and to accelerate learning for all students by building teacher capacity through the implementation of evidence based, effective instructional practices (Casey, 2008).

Coaching is high-quality professional development

Instructional coaching reflects the growing consensus about what constitutes high-quality professional development for teachers. It is job-embedded because it addresses issues teachers face daily in their classrooms. It is ongoing, not a one-shot workshop. It is aligned to state standards, curriculum, and assessment. And its goal is twofold: improved instructional practice and improved student learning.

An instructional coach is someone whose chief professional responsibility is to bring evidence-based practices into classrooms by working with teachers and other school leaders. The instructional coaching process includes the goals of increasing student engagement, improving student achievement, and building teacher capacity in schools.

Coaching is an established professional practice

Many professions ensure that their practitioners benefit from the wise counsel and hands-on assistance of experienced colleagues — in other words, coaches. Some professions require coaching as an essential part of mastering the requisite skills. In medicine, for example, internships and residencies provide required coaching for doctors new to the profession or specialty. In the legal profession, senior partners mentor junior associates. The education profession is now adopting coaching as a promising strategy for building teacher expertise, raising student achievement, and advancing school reform.

Coaching is one-on-one and small group professional development



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At its core, instructional coaching involves two people: the classroom teacher and the coach. Coaches work one-on-one and in small groups with teachers, providing guidance, training, and other resources as needed. Together, they focus on practical strategies for engaging students and improving their learning. Coaches also are often responsible for providing or arranging professional development activities for all teachers in a school or district.

Who are the coaches?

Coaches are experienced, highly accomplished, and well-respected educators. Coaches must have credibility with teachers and administrators, the ability to juggle several roles, and the skills needed to work one-on-one with teachers as well as to oversee a wider professional development effort in the school.

How does instructional coaching work?

“Instructional coaches partner with teachers to analyze current reality, set goals, identify and explain teaching strategies to meet goals, and provide support until goals are met” (Knight, 2018, pg. 2) The key to a successful coaching program is a trusting relationship between teachers and coaches, but training and support from administrators are vital as well. Coaching is confidential, non-evaluative, and supportive. Coaches work one-on-one and in small groups with teachers on specific teaching strategies or problems, focusing on practical changes they can make in their classrooms. This ongoing one-on-one work is supplemented by other professional development activities, and skillful mentors, such as team leaders, often help support and extend the work of coaches.

Resources

Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (1980). Improving in-service training: The messages from research. *Educational Leadership*, 37, 379-385.

Knight, Jim (2018). *The impact cycle: What instructional coaches should do to foster powerful improvements in teaching*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, A Sage Company.

Knight, Jim (2015). *High-impact instruction, a framework for great teaching*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Knight, Jim. (2007). *Instructional Coaching: A partnership approach to improving instruction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

The Evolution Of Peer Coaching
Ascd -

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar96/vol53/num06/The-Evol>

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What Is Instructional Mentoring?

Orlena Dupree -

<http://piic.pacoaching.org/index.php/piic-coaching/what-is-instructional-mentoring>