

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING: A RESEARCH BASED RESOURCE GUIDE

by

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The Capstone Project

"Coaching done well may be the most effective intervention designed for human performance." - Atul Gawande

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Introduction

The Purpose

The creation of this coaching guide began with my own desire to have an anchor for a newly acquired position as an instructional coach. The job of an instructional coach is to bring evidence based practice into classrooms by working with teachers to refine their practice (Bryan, Clifton, Harrison, Killion 2012). Leaving the classroom after 17 years afforded me practical teaching experience and strong relationships with my colleagues but little in the way of coaching adults. In my experience, coaches have been high performing teachers with good interpersonal skills. I did not feel this was enough for me to base my work; I wanted a depth of understanding about coaching that could help move teachers and students forward. Although I began this project for myself, I discovered along the way that most instructional coaches have little to no training in how to coach which contradicts what research has found about the importance of a research based knowledge base for all literacy coaches (McKenna & Walpole, 2013). That discovery made me realize that this guide could be an anchor for other coaches. Thus, I began my research with a broader audience than first intended and a possible contribution to the field of coaching in the form of a research based coaching guide. The goal was twofold—increase coaching efficacy amongst new coaches and consequently increase student achievement. The completed guide is a collection of resources that reflect research based best coaching practice.

My research afforded me the opportunity to learn, digest, and synthesize an abundance of information about instructional coaching. I acquired a bank of knowledge based on the work of many prominent coaching experts and adult learning theorists to anchor my project. When I began my capstone research, I found myself continually asking how I would retain, use, and integrate all that I learned? In response, I created a product that would allow me to positively answer the question that has been the driving force behind my research: What impact would a research based coaching guide have on a coach's effectiveness with teachers, understanding that the end goal of coaching is increased student achievement? The resource created is a synthesis of all that I have learned in the form of a research based coaching "tool kit" for coaching staff.

The Process

Because the audience for this guide is adults, I had to consider a format that would be easily accessed, digested, and provide an arena for learning. Knowles (1977), a pioneer in adult learning, suggested that adult learners benefit from knowing the purpose of the learning and how it directly applies to them. In reference to this guide, it meant planning for purpose driven task-oriented learning for coaches. Ideas that can guide the work of the coach the very next day provide a sense of accomplishment and clear purpose. The final product is a Google document, which makes it accessible from anywhere, viewed by multiple users at once, and can easily be a vehicle for collaboration. As the collective knowledge of the coaches grows, so can the guide with the

addition of new research based sources.

The constructivist developmental adult learning theory believes that much of what we know about student learning is true of adult learning (Breidenstein, Fahey, Glickman, & Hensley, 2012). Because of what I know about adult learners, I knew it was important during the construction part of my guide that I provide resources for all levels of coaches. Coaches who already have a depth and breadth of knowledge around coaching and ones who are new to the field can benefit from this resource. These common threads in adult learning: clear purpose for learning, constructive feedback, reflection, and differentiated resources to meet the needs of the coach are embedded in the planning and implementation of the guide.

The Potential

Inherent to any coaching resource is the end goal of improved performance of the team. The team, in this case, is a group of coaches whose performance directly affects teachers' work with students is the increased efficacy of the classroom teacher that results in increased student achievement. Researchers Baxter and Sandvold (2008) asserted that the primary purpose of a literacy coach is to help move building and teacher goals forward by connecting school improvement and classroom implementation. This guide provides research based best practice for coaching that, in the end, transfers to refined classroom practice. Similarly, author and literacy leader, Moran (2007), described the end goal of coaching as the interlacing of improved instruction to improve student learning. Likewise, Marzano and Simms (2013) suggested the purpose of

coaching is to guide teachers toward best practice, show teachers best practice, help teachers maintain best practice, challenge and support teachers learning, and to create a culture where taking risks to improve is the norm. Although the researchers use a variety of words to describe the purpose of coaching, common themes arose. The themes all pointed to increasing student achievement through the work of the teacher. It is my belief that the work with teachers will be more effective when we use, refine, and expand this research based resource to anchor our work.

The Impact

Coaches need to be in a constant state of reflection as they use this guide. Moran (2007) contended it is critical that literacy coaches measure the effectiveness of the coaching process. Guskey (2002) acknowledged there are many variables in directly measuring the impact of professional development but argues that "in the absence of proof, you *can* collect good evidence about whether a professional development program has contributed to specific gains in student learning" (p. 48). Coaches need to be sure to document all of what they see and hear as they measure effectiveness along the way. The impact of this guide will be seen in classroom observations, coaching conversations, and, of course, formative and summative student data. My plan is that I continually refine this resource in response to our reflections about our coaching, classroom practice, and student data. This guide will demonstrate a growth mindset and be in a continual state of revision as we are continually learning more about instructional coaching.

Planning for Coaching

Research, Recommendations, and Resources

Links to Research Based Resources	
Coaching Models and Coaching Roles Click Below	Challenges in Coaching Click Below
<u>Research and Recommendations on Coaching Models and Roles</u>	<u>Research and Recommendations on Confronting Common Challenges</u>
<u>Difference Between a Coach and a Mentor</u>	<u>Confronting Common Challenges Article</u>

Looking to learn more about planning for coaching ... Click on some of my favorites below.

The Art of Coaching by Elena Aguilar

Coaching Classroom Instruction by Robert Marzano

Coaching Matters by Bryon Clifton, Harrison Killion

The Literacy Coach's Handbook By McKenna and Walpole

The Heart of Coaching by Thomas Crane

The Literacy Coach's Survival Guide by Cathy Toll

Coaching Best Practice

Research, Recommendations, and Resources

Links to Research Based Resources			
Relationships/Culture Click Below	Coaching Conversations/Journals Click Below		Scheduling Click Below
<u>Research and Recommendations on Relationship Building</u>	<u>Research and Recommendations on Coaching Conversations and Journaling</u>	<u>Coaching Conversation Stems</u>	<u>Research and Recommendations for Setting up a Coaching Schedule</u>
<u>Research, Recommendations on Building a Literacy Culture</u>	<u>3 Steps to Great Coaching Article</u>	<u>Improve Your Coaching With One Move- Stop Talking</u>	<u>Literacy Coach Coaching Schedule Example</u> <u>Coaching Schedule (Blank)</u> <small>*Used with permission from ASCD</small>
	<u>How To Plan for Coaching Conversations Article</u>	<u>Goal Setting Conversations</u>	<u>Literacy Coach Activities Pie Chart Example</u> <u>Pie Chart (Blank)</u> <small>*Used with permission from ASCD</small>
	<u>Record of Coaching Conversation</u>	<u>Coaching Session Planning Tool</u>	<u>Coach Tool- Weekly Calendar</u>
	<u>Teacher Moves - Discussion Points</u>		

Looking to learn more about coaching best practice... click on some of my favorites below!

Online Resources:

<http://elenaaguilar.com/resources/coaching-tools/>

<http://www.literacycoachingonline.org/>

Books and Articles:

[The Art of Coaching by Elena Aguilar](#)

[Instructional Coaching By Jim Knight](#)

[The Fundamentals of Literacy Coaching by Maelou Baxter and Amy Sandvold](#)

[Coaching Classroom Instruction by Robert Marzano](#)

[What matters for elementary literacy coaching? Guiding principles for instructional improvement for student achievement- The Reading Teacher](#)

[The Literacy Coach's Handbook By McKenna and Walpole](#)

[Differentiated Literacy Coaching by Mary Catherine Moran](#)

[Effective Literacy Coaching by Shari Frost, Robert Buhle, and Camille Blachowicz](#)

[The Literacy Coach's Survival Guide by Cathy Toll](#)

[Coaching Matters by Bryon, Clifton, Harrison, Killion](#)

Differentiated Coaching Opportunities

Research, Recommendations, and Resources

Links to Research Based Resources			
Differentiated Coaching <u>inside</u> Classrooms Click Below		Differentiated Coaching <u>outside</u> Classrooms Click Below	Coaching Within Professional Learning Communities Click Below
<u>Research and Recommendations on Differentiated Coaching</u>	<u>Demonstration Lesson Planning Tool</u>	<u>Study Group</u> <small>*Used with permission from ASCD</small>	<u>PLC Meeting Record Sheet</u>
<u>Lesson Planning, Modeling, and Debriefing Template</u>	<u>Visitation Observation Form</u> <small>*Used with permission from ASCD</small>	<u>Book Study</u> <small>*Used with permission from ASCD</small>	<u>What to Look For in PLCs - Energy Quadrants</u>
		<u>Large Group Presentation</u> <small>*Used with permission from ASCD</small>	<u>Building Communities of Practice</u>
			<u>Key Components of Effective PLCs</u>
			<u>Creating a Coaching Culture in PLCs</u>

Looking to learn more about coaching best practice... click on the some of my favorites below!

Online Resources

<http://elenaaguilar.com/resources/coaching-tools/>

<http://www.literacycoachingonline.org/>

Books and Articles

[The Art of Coaching by Elena Aguilar](#)

[Creating a Coaching Culture in Professional Learning Communities by James Kise and Beth Russell](#)

[The Fundamentals of Literacy Coaching by Maelou Baxter and Amy Sandvold](#)

[Coaching Classroom Instruction by Robert Marzano](#)

[Effective Literacy Coaching by Shari Frost, Robert Buhle, and Camille Blachowicz](#)

[The Literacy Coach's Handbook By McKenna and Walpole](#)

[The five disciplines of PLC leaders By Timothy Kanold](#)

[Differentiated Literacy Coaching by Mary Catherine Moran](#)

Measuring Effectiveness

Research, Recommendations, and Resources

Links to Research Based Resources		
<u>Research, Recommendations, and Resources on Measuring Effectiveness Research and Recommendations</u>	<u>Evaluating a Coaching Cycle</u> <small>*Used with permission from ASCD</small>	<u>Coaching Conversation Analysis Tool</u>
<u>Professional Development Checklist</u>		

Looking to learn more about measuring effectiveness... click on some of my favorites below!

Online Resources

<http://elenaaguilar.com/resources/coaching-tools/>

<http://www.literacycoachingonline.org/>

Books and Articles

The Art of Coaching by Elena Aguilar

Evaluating Professional Development by Robert Guskey

Effective Literacy Coaching by Shari Frost, Robert Buhle, and Camille Blachowicz

Coaching: Fostering Reflection With Teachers- The Reading Teacher

A Study of the Effectiveness of Literacy Coaches by National Reading Center

The Literacy Coach's Handbook By McKenna and Walpole

Differentiated Literacy Coaching by Mary Catherine Moran

Conclusion

This journey has been one with many twists and turns and much self discovery along the way. It was truly a journey of a lifetime which included blood, sweat, and tears. As I reflect on all that I have learned from the research and creation of the coaching guide, I am pleasantly surprised at my new-found confidence in the coaching role. I find myself leaning on the research based recommendations and the reference materials in the project in my daily work. Upon completion, the resource was shared with my colleagues and will subsequently be offered to coaches who may join us in the future. My hope is that my coaching colleagues will not only use the resource but contribute to it and make it a core resource for themselves too. The coaching guide fills a void I saw as a new coach—no core resource. By filling this void, I believe I have made a contribution to the professional development of new coaches. I am honored to contribute to the profession while I gained so much knowledge about coaching and myself in the process. It is such a privilege to be in the field of education where I can perhaps spark the love of learning in many students and colleagues through my work with them.

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