

Coaching Matters

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S.O.S. (A Summary of the Summary)

The main ideas of the book are:

- ~ Coaching has tremendous potential to transform teaching and learning *if* the right conditions, structures, and supports are in place.
- ~ This book not only describes the attributes of *effective* coaching programs, but it provides the tools and strategies to help you build a stronger coaching program.

Why I chose this book:

This book provides an excellent overview of all the components that go into a *successful* coaching program. It can help you strengthen your existing coaching program or help you plan thoughtfully for bringing coaches on board.

The truth is that with all of the changes occurring right now in education – from the Common Core State Standards to new teacher evaluation systems – teachers need the type of *ongoing* help and support that coaching provides. Rather than spending your school's money on one-time PD or consultants, consider allocating that money for the type of professional learning that will help your teachers learn how to meet all of these new challenges gradually with the support of a coach.

The Scoop (In this summary you will learn...)

- ✓ The steps to help you thoughtfully plan for creating a successful coaching program
- ✓ The characteristics of effective coaches – and how you can use these to help your current coaches become more effective
- ✓ All the different roles coaches can serve so you can choose which of these roles you would like your coaches to perform
- ✓ How to hire and place coaches to maximize their benefit
- ✓ What is essential in *successful* principal-coach relationships and teacher-coach relationships

Introduction and Chapter 1 – Coaching Matters

We are currently experiencing sweeping changes in the education world unlike any we have seen in the past century. Educators are seeing enormous changes in standards, assessments, and data systems to monitor both staff and student performance. In order to successfully deal with these significant changes – changes that require educators to continually improve their practice – teachers need substantial support in the form of *sustained coaching*. The old model of professional development in which teachers attend a few workshops when a new initiative is rolled out just won't work with the depth of change we are confronting.

Districts and schools should consider coaches to be a vital part of the team to help prepare teachers for new standards and assessments. Because of the significant shifts demanded by the Common Core State Standards, coaches can provide the support teachers need to deepen their content knowledge and pedagogical skills while helping them with the frustrations, negativity, and resistance they may experience when adjusting to these new demands.

Coaches bring tremendous benefits to a school or school district. By working individually with teachers, they can understand each teacher's particular strengths and weaknesses and help teachers develop the changes in knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions necessary to improve their practice and the achievement of their students. Coaches have tremendous potential to impact teaching, student learning, *and* school culture. However, coaching is an expensive intervention, and if implemented inconsistently or inadequately, it will *not* have an effect. Research shows that to maximize the benefits of coaching, district and school leaders must create the environment, structures, and conditions – all of which are outlined in this book -- for coaching to succeed.

Chapter 2 – Creating a Coaching Program

This chapter outlines steps a school or school district can take to establish a coaching program. Like all effective initiatives, any successful coaching program *must* place student achievement at the heart of the program. When the process of planning a coaching program is done in a thoughtful way, there is a greater likelihood that the coaching will be successful in improving teaching and learning. Before beginning this process, it would be useful for a leadership team to do the following:

- Do some research on coaching and gather examples of successful coaching models.
- Visit schools in which successful coaching is occurring, ask questions to better understand the nuances of those programs, and ask for sample tools and artifacts (such as a sample partnership agreement between coach and teachers).
- Conduct a focus group (school leaders, teachers, staff, and others) to better understand the current problems coaching will address, perceptions of coaching, and the intended impact of coaching (sample questions are on p.15 of the book).

Once the groundwork has been laid, below are steps to take to ensure your coaching program will get off on the right foot. Note that each step is described more fully in upcoming chapters; below are just brief descriptions of the steps:

Step 1: Form a steering committee – Include teachers, staff, school and district leaders to include a wide range of voices.

Step 2: Create a charge statement and define outcomes – Outline a general charge statement such as, “To provide support for teacher success with the Common Core State Standards and new teacher evaluations.” Then outline the parameters (“Who will make recommendations and who will make final decisions?”) and the design questions the committee will address (such as, “What is the coach's job?” “Who will train the coaches?” and “How will conflicts that arise be addressed?” See p. 16 for more design questions.) Then outline the results you hope coaching will achieve. If these are in line with the school's or district's goals, then coaching will seem like less of an *add-on* program. Sample outcomes might include, “Increased job-embedded professional learning” or “Increased facilitation of teacher collaborative planning” as well as “Increased student performance on state and district measures.”

Step 3: Outline a timeline -- Draft a timeline like the one excerpted below from the **tools** section (the full sample timeline is included in the **tools** section when you purchase the book.)

Task	Process	Timeline
Learn more about coaching	Attend conferences, visit schools, etc.	September – November
Set up a steering committee	Include representatives from...	Dec 15-16
Define outcomes	Etc.	Jan 3-5
Etc. (go through the steps outlined below)		

Step 4: Define the coaches' roles – A variety of possible coaches' roles are explained in Chapter 5. Limiting and specifying the role of coaches will increase the likelihood that they will succeed.

Step 5: Gather feedback – Make a deliberate effort to plan how you will seek feedback and then incorporate that feedback into revisions of the coaching plan.

Step 6: Create a hiring plan – Hiring is discussed more fully in Chapter 6. It is vital to create a plan with clarity around job descriptions, roles and responsibilities, goals, and the process for hiring.

Step 7: Provide professional learning for coaches – Again, this is outlined in Chapter 7. Before coaches even begin their work, you should allocate time to improve the professional learning of coaches as well as provide them with support.

Step 8: Evaluate and monitor the program – Chapter 11 will help you evaluate your coaching program, but it is also important to monitor the program on an ongoing basis to determine the tensions, challenges, and successes.

Chapter 3 – Characteristics of Effective Coaches

In the same way that *high quality* teaching can improve student learning, high quality coaching can help improve teaching as well. Overall, the effectiveness of coaching depends on a coach's skills as well as the school environment in which the coaching occurs. This chapter describes the characteristics of successful coaches which fall into six key areas: their *beliefs* about working with others, their *teaching expertise*, *coaching skills*, *relationship skills*, *content expertise*, and *leadership skills*. The chart below provides brief descriptions of those skills.

An effective coach:		
<i>Beliefs</i>	<i>Teaching expertise</i>	<i>Coaching skills</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is willing to learn. • Believes in others' capacity to grow and develop. • Does not presume to have "The Answer." • Is committed to continuous improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is skilled in instructional planning. • Demonstrates success in his/her own classroom. • Reflects on his/her own practice. • Uses multiple methods of assessment. • Has strong organization and class management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands adult development. • Diagnoses teachers' needs. • Aligns support to teachers' identified needs. • Listens skillfully. • Has effective questioning skills.
<i>Relationship skills</i>	<i>Content expertise</i>	<i>Leadership skills</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has good interpersonal skills. • Wants to be part of a team. • Fosters trust. • Works effectively with teachers and principals. • Has patience for the learning process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possesses in-depth content knowledge. • Uses research to support instructional decisions. • Stays current with changes in curricula and instructional practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates the school's vision. • Aligns work with school goals. • Uses data to make decisions. • Understands and applies knowledge about change.

Beliefs – In the same way that students thrive when their teacher believes all students can learn, a *successful* coach believes that all of his or her teachers can learn. The coach finds ways to work toward continuous improvement no matter where the teachers are in their development. It is vital that the coach believes that everyone in the learning community is essential and finds ways to influence and support teachers. Successful coaches do not claim to have all of the answers and display a willingness to learn as well.

Teaching expertise – It is clearly a requirement that coaches have demonstrated their own expertise in their own classrooms. This not only lends credibility to them in their role as coach, but it also allows them to more successfully demonstrate lessons, co-teach, co-plan, and give teachers useful feedback.

Coaching skills – When coaches understand adult development, they understand that the goal is to build the *capacity* of teachers themselves to make appropriate decisions and meet their students' needs. They find ways to support teachers without judging them. Furthermore, they have effective communication skills such as pausing to allow teachers time to think, questioning to develop teacher thinking, and listening with respect.

Relationship skills – An effective coach knows the importance of establishing trust with teachers and conveying respect. Coaches who are trusted by both principals and teachers will more likely have a positive influence on teaching.

Content expertise – One way to improve student learning is by strengthening teacher content knowledge. Coaches may be at a disadvantage if they do not possess this knowledge. However, if coaches do not possess expertise in multiple content areas they can still engage teachers in reflecting on their practice by using their classroom data and can still stay up to date on research-based instructional practices.

Leadership skills – Coaches may not have had previous experience as leaders, however, now they have the opportunity to serve on school-wide committees such as the leadership team. As coaches, they will serve in a capacity to foster professional learning and their actions will serve as a model for setting professional goals, analyzing data and identifying indicators of progress. Furthermore, they serve as leaders by working to communicate the school's goals and by aligning teacher work with those goals.

The book provides two self-assessment **tools** coaches can use to determine, based on the above list of characteristics of effective coaches, what their strengths are and which are the areas they need to improve. These two **tools** (Tool 3.2 and 3.3) can be found in the tools section of the book. One suggestion is to take the table of effective coach characteristics above and have coaches write a "+" symbol next to the areas they feel are their strengths, a "*" next to the areas they want to improve, and a "?" next to areas they are unsure about.

Chapter 4 – Types of Coaching

There are a number of different types of coaching schools can choose to use. Research does not suggest that one model is superior to any other model. What is important is that school leaders are *deliberate* in selecting the type of coaching that will best match the needs of their schools. In making this decision, it may help to consider the following questions:

- What problem do we want the coaching to address?
- What other approaches have we tried to address this problem?
- What evidence points to coaching as the best intervention for this problem?
- What resources are available to support, implement, and maintain a coaching program?

Below are five models of coaching schools can consider:

Instructional coaching – This type of coaching is beneficial when there is a gap between teachers’ knowledge and their ability to implement instructional strategies, especially when student learning results are not strong. Instructional coaches can engage in tasks such as demonstrating lessons, co-planning lessons, and co-teaching lessons to help teachers learn new strategies. To do this, instructional coaches need expertise in pedagogy and effective instructional practices.

Technical coaching – Technical coaching is usually called for when teachers receive training in a specific teaching method and need follow up. This is useful when teachers are expected to follow a particular program, like Success for All. Technical coaches have specific expertise in a particular program or content knowledge.

Content coaching – Content coaches help teachers improve their own content knowledge as well as their academic habits of reasoning in a specific discipline. Unlike technical coaching, they are not expected to follow a particular program or methodology.

Cognitive coaching – This is a type of coaching that was developed in the 1980s to help teachers become more reflective and aware of their own thinking. Rather than bringing in content or pedagogical expertise, the coach mirrors the teacher’s thinking back and helps the teacher become more reflective. These coaches have expertise in habits of mind and can help develop professional communities.

Peer coaching – In this model, teachers serve as both coach and client. As peer coaches, they regularly observe and provide feedback and support to other teachers. This type of coaching requires expertise in collaboration and inquiry.

Chapter 5 – Roles of Coaches

Effective coaching programs outline what exactly the coaching role should be. When there is no clear definition of the coach’s role, it is less likely that coaching will help to improve teaching and learning. In fact, coaching programs have been cut because uncertainty about the coach’s role made it difficult to determine if coaches were effective. Research shows that when the coach’s role is not clearly defined, coaches end up working on a number of *noncoaching* tasks – such as assessment administration, managing materials, and placing students – in addition to their coaching responsibilities. Several studies have shown that coaches in successful schools spend less time managing resources and assessments and more time helping teachers analyze and use data to improve instruction. In order to help you plan your coaching program, below are ten possible roles that coaches might play:

10 Roles and Responsibilities of Coaches	
Resource provider	Gathers and shares resources including websites, instructional materials, and leveled books. Also shares professional resources such as articles and books.
Data coach	Leads conversations to engage teachers in analyzing and using data to improve instruction.
Instructional specialist	Shares and helps teachers implement instructional strategies such as differentiation, formative assessment, and increasing student engagement.
Curriculum specialist	Understands standards (such as the CCSS) and helps teachers use them to plan instruction and assessment. Helps build curricular consistency across grades and schools.
Classroom supporter	Supports teachers by co-planning, modeling, co-teaching, observing, and giving feedback. Facilitates teacher reflection.
Learning facilitator	Brings teachers together to facilitate professional learning. Assists in planning school-level PD.
Mentor	Mentors <i>novice</i> teachers in any of the 10 roles described here.
School leader	Acts as a leader in the school by serving on a committee or acting as a chair and sharing responsibility for the school’s overall success.
Catalyst for change	Supports teachers as they make changes.
Learner	Models continuous improvement by improving their own learning through reflecting, thoughtfully receiving feedback, and attempting new approaches.

Keep in mind that coaches should *not* be performing all ten of these roles. The most successful coaching programs outline what their coaches’ roles will be at the *outset* and *narrow* the number of roles coaches are expected to perform. By describing and limiting the coaches’ roles, this helps to improve school relationships because everyone will have a clear idea of the coaches’ responsibilities. Some schools even produce a brochure to explain the coaches’ roles to all staff members. **Tool 5.2** (from the **tools** section of the book) is an example of the way one school created a clear document which outlines: the goals and anticipated outcomes of the coaching program, the training coaches will receive, a list of who will supervise the coaches, and the roles of all stakeholders involved (the principal, coach, teacher, the supervisor, and any district-level staff).

Furthermore, in an attempt to make sure that coaches' primary work impacts teaching and learning, it is helpful to look at how coaches *spend their time* and periodically assess if this is the best use of their time. **Tool 5.3** shows how to create a pie chart to document a coach's time, and **tool 5.5** also helps to examine the use of a coach's time and is excerpted below:

Role	Function	Time Allocations								Comments about alignment with school goals
		None		Little		Moderate		Considerable		
		Current	Desired	Current	Desired	Current	Desired	Current	Desired	
Resource Provider	Gathers and shares resources including...									
Data Coach	Leads data talks...									
Etc.										

Chapter 6 – Hiring and Placing Coaches

A successful coaching program depends on hiring high-quality coaches. Hiring coaches who are well-suited to the job can make a significant difference. In contrast, hiring the wrong people can lead to mistrust, impede professional development, and damage the reputation of the coaching program. Furthermore, many coaches go on to become school leaders so it is vital to get the hiring right.

It is important to outline a robust set of criteria for hiring the coaches. Ideally, the person who will be evaluating the coaches should write this job description with input from those stakeholders involved (the principal, other coaches, and teachers). The previous three chapters – the roles of coaches, type of coaching, and characteristics of effective coaches – can be used to write the job description. There are three sample job descriptions for coaches included in the **tools** from the book. While each is distinct, it is helpful to include the following components in a job description:

Sample Components of Coach Job Description	A Few Examples
Required and/or Preferred Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep content and pedagogical knowledge in math or ELA • Ability to work as part of a team • Willingness to learn to use assessment results to drive instruction
Job Description/Work Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve in the following roles: CURRICULUM SPECIALIST, INSTRUCTIONAL COACH, CLASSROOM SUPPORTER, and DATA COACH • Facilitate school-wide PD • Develop, coordinate, and support inservice for new teachers
Expected Professional Development and Time Commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend the following PD sessions on coaching... • Meet biweekly with the secondary director and other coaches
Supervisors	Etc.

Although it may be tempting to simply hire a support staff member – like a special education teacher or technology specialist – to serve as a coach, it is important to outline and implement a clear *hiring process*. This process should include the criteria outlined in a job description, as well as *who* will be doing the hiring, what the process will involve (eg., teaching a model lesson), what questions will be asked in an interview, who else will be included in the hiring process, and how coaches will be placed to maximize their effect. On the one hand, it can be useful to place a coach in a school where he or she has already taught because the coach will already have established credibility and trust with the teachers. *However*, it may be hard for teachers to see the coach in this new role.

The **tools** contain three sets of questions you can adapt to interview coaches. Note that the format of these questions is useful because it includes suggested points to listen for in the answers that are aligned to the expectations for the coach. A few examples are below:

Example: Discuss the ways an instructional coach can work with teachers to improve teaching and student achievement.	
<i>Talking points to look for:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of collegiality, adult learning theory, strong communication, rapport, and relationships • Reflective practitioner, intentional planning • Use of data to inform instruction, increased understanding of best instructional practices
Example: As a coach, how will you work to close achievement gaps?	
<i>Talking points to look for:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally responsive culture and classroom • Positive relationships, parent involvement • High expectations, data analysis to identify gaps, Response to Intervention
Example: What are the skills and dispositions of a successful coach? Why are you right for this position?	
<i>Talking points to look for:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifelong learner, problem solver, resourceful, collaborator, leader • Listener, flexible, reflective, open minded • Confidence, credibility, follow through, initiative, relationships, respectful

Chapter 7 – Professional Learning for Coaches

It is vital that coaches receive quality training and support. Once a teacher has an unfavorable experience with a coach, it's hard to get back on the right track. Not only do coaches need training up front, but they also need continued opportunities for professional learning and support throughout the year. The **tools** section contains sample agendas for initial training of coaches and weekly half-day professional learning meetings for coaches. There is also a sample list of the topics coaches might focus on throughout the year. Below are some excerpts:

Sample Agenda for Coaches' INITIAL Professional Learning Meeting		Sample Calendar of Topics for Coaches' ONGOING Meetings	
Day 1	Welcome, overview, characteristics of effective coaches, different roles of coaches, addressing teacher resistance	Nov 5	Address coaches' issues and problem solve, math facts for elementary coaches and computation for upper grades
Day 2	Partnership agreements with teachers, the coach's stance with teachers, co-planning and co-teaching with teachers	Nov 12	Lunch with principals, accommodating English Language Learners in math class
Day 3	Communication skills, the cycle of planning, observing and collecting data and reflecting with teachers	Nov 19	Coaches' issues and problem solving, student assessment
Day 4	What makes PD effective, data coaching	Dec 3	Differentiation
Etc.		Etc.	

While many training programs focus on developing coaches' knowledge and skills, not enough effort is put into helping coaches understand the changes teachers go through as they learn and grow. Particularly given the large changes occurring with the Common Core State Standards, coaches need to understand that acceptance of change is gradual and each individual experiences it differently. Coaches can acknowledge the individual nature of change by altering the way they approach teachers so they become more flexible and not try to "fix" teachers:

Coaches can change their interactions with teachers FROM:	To:
• directing	• inquiring
• correcting	• providing constructive feedback
• focusing on strategies	• focusing on beliefs
• making excuses	• generating possibilities
• advising	• listening

A coach will be better able to support teachers with this new approach. By exhibiting a mindset of appreciation and valuing teachers' strengths, coaches will be much more effective. Instead of focusing on the gap between the ideal and the teacher's current practice, coaches need to acknowledge a teacher's small successes as a way to build a constructive relationship and propel that teacher forward. For example, look at the appreciative and asset-based response of the coach below:

Teacher: This new curriculum is making me crazy. We spend way too much time on the same thing. Asking students to explain thinking for every problem doesn't tell me if they can solve the problem. Isn't that what's important in math?

Coach: The new curriculum is causing us to think differently about math. I appreciate what you are saying about feeling that you are spending too much time on the same thing. I want to understand more about what you are saying first. I heard you mention two ideas. One is that you spend too much time on one topic, and the second is that having students explain their thinking doesn't let you know whether they understand math well enough to solve the problems. Let's talk about these ideas. Where shall we start?

With this new stance of not trying to "fix" teachers, coaches understand that change is gradual and try to build from the level where the teachers are in implementing a new practice. For example, the chart below outlines teachers' level of use of the Common Core. This can be helpful in bringing teachers to the next level and helping them understand that change is incremental as well:

Level of Use	Description	Possible Coach Response
1. Early stage: Mechanical	Teacher is using the standards, yet using his or her own interpretation of what is appropriate.	Let's look at several <i>existing</i> unit plans to develop X (a particular standard). What are the strengths of these units and what might give you ideas for your own unit?
2. Early stage: Routine	Teacher is using the standards but seeking little/no feedback and making minimal changes based on feedback.	Tell me how you use the standards to plan, assess, and reflect on your work? How is your use of the standards affecting your teaching and student learning?
3. Advanced use: Refinement	Teacher is seeking to improve practice, gathering input, and making changes to improve student results.	Tell me about the kinds of feedback that will be most useful to you as you implement the CCSS. What kinds of data can I help you analyze as you refine your practice?
4. Advanced use: Integration	Teacher coordinates CCSS use collaboratively with peers.	What goals are you and your peers working on now? What are the benefits/challenges of collaboration? How is it helping to minimize variance in student learning?
5. Advanced use: Renewal	Teacher is seeking ways to improve results for <i>all</i> students to strengthen implementation of CCSS and improve student achievement.	Tell me about the refinements you are making because you weren't seeing the results you hoped for. How can we help others learn about these refinements?

One way coaches can determine if their teachers feel supported by them is by soliciting feedback. The **tools** section includes questions coaches can use with the teachers they are coaching, such as: *What is going well in our work together? What challenges are we facing? How is my work making a difference? How might I do something differently to better support you?*

Coaches learn with other coaches and the principal

Not only do coaches learn from regular, planned, professional learning sessions conducted by a skilled facilitator, but they also learn with and from the principal as well as with and from other coaches. Professional learning can occur through regular meetings with the principal as well as by having the coach attend some of the same learning sessions that principals attend. If the coaches need to help implement the same district initiatives, it is helpful to have the principal and coach attend together. In order for coaches to benefit from the opportunity to learn from other coaches, it is important to schedule regular professional learning sessions like the half-day sessions mentioned earlier. These can occur weekly, biweekly, or once a month. In addition to learning about best coaching practices, coaches feel more supported and more successful in their work when they share successes and struggles. One other model for professional learning during this time is through a *coaching lab*. In a coaching lab, a coach and a teacher conduct a coaching session in a fishbowl setting while the other coaches observe and take notes. After the coaching, all coaches debrief with a skilled facilitator.

Chapter 8 – Support for the Coaching Program

In order for coaching to be most powerful, it depends on a system of support at every level. This chapter briefly outlines the support that is needed from the district, peers, the principal, and external sources.

District support: One way to demonstrate district support is by designating a district-level administrator as a *coach champion* who oversees the coaching program, facilitates conferences between the coach and principal several times annually, ensures ongoing communication, and protects the coach's time. When there is a ratio of 1:25 of coach champions to coaches, the champion can visit schools monthly and help to connect coaches, help coaches learn from one another, and spread effective practices.

Peer support: Like teachers, coaches must work to continually improve their practice. Both formal and informal peer-to-peer learning helps coaches share best practices as well as everyday struggles. Principals must set aside time for coaches to meet with other coaches.

Principal support: This is so crucial to the success of the coaching program that Chapter 9 focuses entirely on principal support.

External support: Coaches benefit from outside expertise – through everything from networking with those outside their district to memberships in professional associations to collaborating online with blogs, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pings, and more.

The book contains a number of *protocols* that can be used by any of the above supporters to facilitate a discussion to help coaches explore their practices, successes, and challenges. These can be found in the **tools** section.

Chapter 9 – Principal-Coach Relationships

The foundation of a successful coaching program really depends on the principal-coach relationship. It is important to remember that it is the principal who is the primary instructional leader, but the coach supports the principal in that role. The two must work together to create a culture of collaboration, learning, and continuous improvement. In order to do this, the principal must prioritize the relationship with the coach. *Successful* principal-coach relationships are built on the following six elements, described briefly below: 1) communication, 2) feedback, 3) expectations, 4) time and resources, 5) confidentiality, and 6) professional development.

1. Communication – At the beginning of their relationship, it is helpful for the coach and principal to create a partnership agreement for how they will work together. There are three tools you can find in the **tools** section to help develop a strong partnership agreement between the principal and coach. Below is an excerpt of one:

	We agree and understand that:
Roles and Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% of the coach's role will involve serving as a curricular and instructional specialist, 25% as a data coach, and 25% planning and facilitating professional development.
Impacted Teacher Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches will work primarily with math and language arts teachers.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches will send a bimonthly email to department members with discussion topics (such as teaching tips, strategies and outcomes of departmental meetings) and copy the principal. • The work between coaches and teachers will remain confidential unless student safety/health is an issue.
Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is a problem, the coach will meet <i>first</i> with the disgruntled teacher. If that doesn't work, <i>then</i> the principal, coach, and teacher will meet to resolve the conflict between the coach and the teacher.
Leadership Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaches will plan and facilitate data conversations. • The principal will ask the coach to sit on specialized task forces. • Coaches will work with the principal to plan staff professional development.

During initial conversations the coach and principal should also designate a 30- to 60-minute meeting time each week to make sure their visions are aligned. These conversations should focus on how the coach is using his or her time, which teachers the coach is working with, and what tasks the coach is engaging in (modeling, co-planning, etc.) It is vital that they make sure teachers know that they are *not* discussing anything that may affect any teacher's evaluation.

2. *Feedback* – Like any educator, a coach needs feedback to improve, and the regular meetings with the principal serve as a perfect structure for the principal to give explicit feedback on the coach's effectiveness.

3. *Expectations* – It is up to the principal to set explicit expectations so the coach has a clear idea of his or her role. Furthermore, if there is a teacher the principal thinks would benefit from working with the coach, it is the *principal* who must hold the teacher responsible for improving his or her teaching and evaluating this teacher which allows the coach to serve in a more *supportive* role.

4. *Time and Resources* – If principals want to see results from coaching, they need to provide the necessary time and resources. For example, if the principal expects the coach to work with teacher *teams*, then the principal must schedule common planning time for them to meet. If the principal wants the coach to improve, then he or she must schedule professional development time for the coach.

5. *Confidentiality* – It must be clear that the coach's work does *not* impact teacher evaluations. This means that the coach must commit to *not* sharing any information about particular teachers that could influence their evaluations, unless it affects a student's safety. The principal remains the *primary* instructional leader, and as such, is responsible for observing and knowing teacher strengths and weaknesses. This way the coach can remain in a *supportive* role.

6. *Professional Development* – While the principal remains the primary instructional leader, the coach contributes his or her expertise. The principal may help the coach plan or co-facilitate a PD session, or may simply participate in it. Furthermore, it is helpful for the coach and principal to learn together and attend district sessions on new initiatives together so they can determine how best to implement them.

Chapter 10 – Teacher-Coach Relationships

Without good relationships with teachers, a coach cannot be effective. Positive relationships between coaches and teachers require mutual trust, respect, and a clear commitment to the work they are doing together. *Beliefs* are very important as well. Teachers must believe the coach supports them while the coach must believe that the teachers are capable of and committed to improvement. In order to build a strong relationship with teachers, the following elements are vital:

1. *Creating Effective Agreements* – In the same way principals and coaches need to be clear about how they will work together, it is important for coaches and teachers to purposefully outline how they will work together as well. They can create a more formal partnership agreement with roles and responsibilities, or they can create a less formal agreement by simply taking notes. In either case, below are some questions to consider when having partnership agreement conversations:

Partnership Agreements with an Individual Teacher (Can be modified for coaching a team as well)

- What would you like to accomplish in our work together?
- What services can I provide toward this end? How can we implement demo lessons/co-teaching/visits with feedback?
- Where should we start – what are our priorities?
- When will we work together? How will we work together – how do you want me to interact with you?
- How will we know if we are successful? What data will we collect?

2. *Building Teacher Leadership Capacity* – One way coaches know they are effective is when teacher leadership grows. Coaches are not the only teacher leaders and teachers will engage more in coaching when they feel the coach respects their knowledge and skills. Effective coaches send the message that all teachers have leadership potential and something to share. *How* can coaches foster teacher leadership? By inviting teachers to facilitate a meeting or PD session, by seeking teacher support in addressing teaching and learning challenges, by inviting teachers to share their resources and ideas with others, by engaging teachers in walk-throughs, and by asking teachers to open their classrooms to other teachers. Coaches can do this by gradually giving teachers more responsibility through an "I do, we do, you do" approach. Teachers will become more engaged and collegial when they take on these new leadership roles.

3. *Communicating the Coach's Services* – Teachers are more likely to engage in coaching when they know precisely what the coaches do and how they spend their time. Coaches can let teachers know what they do by electronic means or with a one-page brochure.

4. *Allowing Teachers to Identify Their Needs* – Because you can't force a teacher to engage in coaching, it is helpful to give teachers a voice and a choice in choosing the services the coach provides. This empowers teachers and encourages them to take a more active role in the coaching process.

5. *Gathering Feedback About Coach Effectiveness* – Another aspect of ensuring that the coaching relationship will be effective is to solicit feedback about the coach’s impact. When the coach actively seeks feedback on how she or he is helping and hindering the teacher, not only will this improve coaching and further engage the teacher, but it also models continuous learning for the teacher. Coaches might ask: *What did I do today that helped/hindered your learning? What would you like me to continue/stop doing? What changes are you making in your teaching as a result of the coaching? What has changed in your students as a result of the changes you’ve made in your teaching?* Anonymous feedback can be extremely helpful as well.

6. *Managing Resistance and Conflict* – Teacher resistance to coaching comes in many forms. It can be slight, subversive, or outwardly bold. Resistance often comes in the form of a teacher forgetting meetings with the coach, being late, or avoiding the coach all together. While it might be tempting to avoid these teachers, the best approach is to engage them. Coaches can do this by being friendly, discussing nonteaching issues, or even asking for advice. It is important that coaches realize that this resistance is usually not about them, rather it is about a previous issue or the teacher’s fear of being found inadequate. At any rate, conflict arises in most relationships and coaches need to be prepared with problem-solving skills in order to prevent minor problems from becoming larger ones. A simple problem-solving approach involves both parties stating their own interests and then brainstorming solutions. A mediator or the principal may be needed if the relationship becomes destructive, but it is best to resolve teacher-coach conflicts early.

Chapter 11 – Evaluating Coaches and Coaching

Evaluation is often overlooked when planning a coaching program even though it is a key part of ensuring the effectiveness of coaching. The time to plan for evaluation is *before* coaching is implemented. In Chapter 2 the steps for creating a coaching program were outlined briefly. As part of that planning process, it is important to be clear about the outcomes or goals of the program. When the intended results are clear, then it is easier to evaluate the coaching. To ensure that the goals are clear, it helps to phrase them as SMART goals (specific, measurable, attainable, results-based, and time-bound). For example, below is a school improvement goal, based on the district student-learning goal, along with the evidence the school will look for:

- 100% of students scoring below proficient will increase their scores on the end-of-year assessment by at least 15% for the next two years.
- Summative evidence of success with this goal: Scores on end-of-year reading assessment in comprehension.
- Formative evidence of success with this goal: Scores on benchmark assessments and student classroom work samples.

What evidence will indicate progress on these goals? It is best to use ongoing and multiple measures of success over time that include both formative and summative measures. Progress on annual goals and the use of coaching can be measured by the use of focus groups, questionnaires, walk-throughs and observations, as well as data from principals, teachers, and even students. There are some templates in the **tools** section that can be used to help evaluate the program. For example, the following questions can be used in focus groups with principals, coaches, or teachers:

- What do you think are the strengths of the program? Challenges?
- What suggestions do you have for revisions to the coaching program?
- Look at the characteristics of effective coaches in Chapter 3 – How closely does your experience with coaching match these elements?
- What impact have the coaches had on teacher practice? Student achievement?
- (For coaches) What structures have helped you do your work? What type of support or resources do you still need?
- (For principals) What support and resources do you provide coaches? Ideally what kind of support and resources do you need?
- (For teachers) What motivates you to work with a coach? What barriers do you see in working with a coach?

In addition to more formal measures of evaluation, many coaching programs ask coaches to engage in self-reflection. Coaches can regularly reflect on how they spend their time, how they are contributing to school goals, what data is telling them about their effectiveness in improving teaching and learning, and the changes they hope to make in their own practice. Coaches can also seek regular in-the-moment feedback or anonymous feedback from teachers, principals, and the central office. The more coaches seek out feedback, the more likely they will be to become master coaches who are able to focus on improving student learning.

Chapter 12 & 13 – Special Cases in Coaching

Using Current Resource Staff as Coaches

Sometimes for budgetary reasons, or simply to maximize coaching as a tool to improve teacher practice, schools tap existing staff members to serve as coaches by reallocating some or all of their work time to coaching. There are certain staff who have traditionally worked directly with students – special education resource staff – or worked more with providing resources – such as media specialists – who have untapped expertise and may be excellent coaches as well.

For example, teachers often feel anxious about their use of technology in the classroom. Rather than having a media specialist simply share resources with teachers, if these specialists can work alongside teachers to co-plan and co-teach lessons, they will be able to have a much larger impact by actually building the capacity of teachers to integrate technology into the classroom. Similarly, special education resource teachers often work only with students to provide direct service. However, by providing more coaching support for

teachers they can actually build teachers' abilities to support and respond to diverse student learning needs on their own. Rather than supporting a few students, as a coach the special education teacher can build instructional expertise to differentiate instruction on a much wider scale and have a larger impact on all students.

However, not all resource personnel make effective coaches. The principal or leader who is considering tapping resource specialists must think through the types of expertise that different staff members possess, and how each resource teacher's time will be reallocated. This may mean writing new job descriptions as well as providing the necessary training in coaching knowledge and skills. The **tools** section contains a sample Library Media Specialist's partnership agreement with the principal as well as a sample job description for a resource staff coach position.

Team Coaching

When a coach spends part of the day working with *teams* instead of just individuals, coaching can have a larger impact. It is much more difficult to make substantive changes by only working one-on-one as a coach. Not only does working with a team help teachers draw on a wider range of expertise and multiple perspectives, but the teachers build their capacity to support each other even after the coach has left. Furthermore, the coach can help the team increase the effectiveness of their collaborative work. However, team coaching has its challenges as well. For team coaching to work, everyone in the group must be committed to it. Also, if there is no common group goal than individuals may try to steer the coaching session toward a focus on their own goals. Finally, team coaching takes time and cannot be conducted within a 20- to 30-minute time frame. It is not easy to implement team coaching – and this is a new approach that has not yet been tried in many schools – but with the right structures in place, it can be more effective than individual coaching. Some of the tools to help make team coaching effective can be found in the **tools** section.

Chapter 14 – The Future of Coaching

Research has shown that the quality of teaching has tremendous impact on student learning. Because of this, regardless of what the future holds for education, coaching will be an important approach to improve teaching. The truth is that professional development is beginning to change. Teachers in countries that are far more successful than we are in educating students spend more time on their professional learning and less time in front of students teaching. American teachers still primarily attend workshops or engage in other short-term professional development. In order for real improvement in student learning, we will need to provide more ongoing, job-embedded professional development – the type of learning that occurs with coaches. Through coaching, schools can build teacher capacity and create the type of culture in which teachers take responsibility for their learning and improvement by engaging in continuous professional learning and reflecting on their practice. There are exciting new coaching practices that are possible due to technology -- everything from virtual coaching which provides support for teachers at any time, to bud-in-the-ear coaching that gives teachers instantaneous feedback. Regardless of how coaching is provided and who provides it, coaching will continue to be a powerful method to improve both teaching and learning in schools in the future.

THE MAIN IDEA's PD ideas for *Coaching Matters*

To improve the coaching at our school, where should we start?

There is a lot in this book, so it might be hard to know where to start. I'd recommend starting by doing a self-assessment of where your school is with coaching. Looking at all of the elements of a successful coaching program outlined in the book -- how does your school rate? (You can do this alone, with a leadership team, or with your current coaches.)

Element of a Successful Coaching Program	Brief Description	How are we doing? Rate it 1-10 and jot down notes.
<i>Thoughtful Planning</i> (Chapter 2)	A steering committee with a variety of voices has thought through the process of creating a successful coaching program (with concrete outcomes, a clear hiring process, precise job descriptions, a plan for the professional learning of the coaches, and an evaluation of the program).	
<i>Characteristics of Effective Coaches</i> (Chapter 3)	We have a clear idea of the characteristics of effective coaches and use these for selection, evaluation, and professional learning opportunities.	
<i>Types of Coaching and Roles of Coaches</i> (Chapters 4 & 5)	We are aware that there are a variety of types of coaching as well as different roles coaches can play and we have outlined and narrowed the role coaches will play to maximize their impact on student learning.	
<i>Hiring and Placing Coaches</i> (Chapter 6)	We hire high-quality coaches by using clear criteria, precise job descriptions, and a thoughtfully planned hiring process.	
<i>Professional Learning for Coaches</i> (Chapter 7)	We not only provide initial training for coaches, but we also provide ongoing learning and support through regular meetings with a strong facilitator and peer coaches. We help to improve coaches' knowledge and skills as well as their understanding of the change process, adult development, and other important leadership, relationship, and coaching skills.	
<i>Support for the Coaches</i> (Chapter 8)	Our coaches receive support from the district, the principal, the other coaches, and from external sources (networking, online support, associations, etc.).	
<i>Principal-Coach Relationships</i> (Chapter 9)	The relationship between our coaches and the principal includes frequent and clear communication, useful feedback, clear expectations, the provision of time and resources, opportunities for professional development, and the confidentiality of teachers.	
<i>Teacher-Coach Relationships</i> (Chapter 10)	Coaches and teachers have a clear idea of the way they will work together. The coach helps to build teacher leadership capacity, allows the teachers to be involved in identifying their own needs, and elicits feedback about his/her impact. Teacher-coach conflicts are resolved early.	
<i>Evaluating Coaches and Coaching</i> (Chapter 11)	Because the goals of the coaching program are clear, the evaluation of the coaching program focuses on these results. This evaluation includes multiple measures including both formative and summative measures (such as focus groups, questionnaires, walk-throughs, observations, and data).	

Take a look at the **three** areas above with the lowest ratings. Discuss these three areas with your leadership team:

- Would teachers, district staff, and coaches agree with the low ratings in these three areas?
- Why do you think we gave ourselves the lowest ratings in these areas?
- Are we prepared to address these three areas this year – What are the obstacles? Do we have the resources? Do we have the support? What questions and concerns do we have?

Once you have identified a few aspects of your coaching program you would like to focus on or enhance, if you feel these are areas you want to address this school year, go to the appropriate chapters in the summary or the book itself and create a timeline for implementation based on the recommendations in those chapters.