What the research says about INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING

WHAT IS INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING? “Definition of coaching as “a process that can move a person from where he is to where he wants to be. A coach needs to "enroll" a teacher…. A teacher has to want it… Once the teacher has been enrolled, the coach should help her determine goals for her practice….” (Aguilar, 2011, in Wang 2017).

Growing numbers of classroom teachers and specialists around the country—are being asked to assume a challenging new role: providing support and guidance to their peer colleagues through a process called "coaching" (Deussen, Coskie, Robinson, & Autio, 2007; Hasbrouck & Denton, 2007; Neufeld & Roper, 2003; Sturtevant, 2003). Various titles are being used to describe essentially the same role, including “literacy coach,” “reading” or “math coach,” “academic” or “instructional coach,” “reform coach,” or “instructional facilitator.” Coaching has also been applied in business and in other domains (e.g., "life coaches") (In C. Denton et al 2009).

WHY THINK ABOUT RESEARCH ON “INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING”? “Lockwood, McCombs, and Marsh (2010) found evidence that reading coaches improved student achievement in reading, but they did not find the same level of evidence in students’ mathematics scores. This result does not suggest that mathematics coaching is not effective. Instead, it suggests that coaching should target specific subject content” (Yopp et al 2011).

WHAT INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING IS NOT/ COMMON BELIEFS/MYTHS ABOUT “INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING” In practice, a lot of instructional coaching tends to be reactive on the side of the coach, casually scheduled, and focused on anecdotal data. It is common for coaches to spend time with teachers who request support as opposed to working on a set schedule with specific teachers and grade levels based on data and strategic priorities. In terms of coaching content, the coach often helps teachers work on practices requested by the teacher as opposed to those of need and/or are aligned to school improvement efforts. Similarly, data used to drive coaching should not be teacher anecdotes, but instead needs to be driven by measurable student and implementation data. Coaches also tend to spend a lot of time attending meetings and talking with teachers and teams. The core of coaching should observing and modeling.

RESEARCH SAYS: A recent meta-analysis of 60 studies found positive and significant effects of teacher coaching programs on both instruction and student achievement. The studies all employed teacher coaching methods, but the definition of those methods varied. For example, some studies looked at coaching as a way to ensure fidelity of instructional methods from previous trainings. Others, however, focused on encouraging teacher reflection through coaching or providing direct feedback from observations. Many of the studies focused on literacy coaches due to large federal investments in that area. The results of the meta-analysis found a significant positive effect of coaching on teachers’ instructional practices (e.g., the use of open-ended questions) when averaging across studies. The study also found significant positive effects on student achievement associated with coaching, but they were of a smaller magnitude than the effects on instructional practice. Interestingly, the study found that the effect size was smaller for general coaching programs when compared with content-specific programs (e.g., programs that target specific subjects, such as literacy, science, or math coaches). The effect of coaching on achievement was larger for programs that paired coaching with group trainings or with instructional resources or materials. The study concluded that having high dosage (more hours with coaches or in professional development) was not associated with better outcomes, supporting a hypothesis that the quality of the content and time with coaches is more important (Denton and Hasbrouk 2009).
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Meta Analysis of empirical research on instructional coaching: “findings affirm the potential of coaching as a development tool, further analyses illustrate the challenges of taking coaching programs to scale while maintaining effectiveness. Average effects from effectiveness trials of larger programs are only a fraction of the effects found in efficacy trials of smaller programs” (Kraft et al 2018).

PRACTICE/TOOLS and RESOURCES
https://www.instructionalcoaching.com/
❖ Jim Knight’s company - Instructional Coaching Group. See Resources tab.
http://brightmorningteam.com/
❖ Elena Aguilar’s website - Author of the The Art of Coaching. See Tools and Publications tab.

FULL SOURCE CITATIONS


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