PAHSCI Mentor Study

Finding 1
The working relationships that PAHSCI mentors built with coaches, principals, and others were fundamental to their effectiveness as mentors. The mentor study identified four factors that were crucial to their ability to construct sound relationships.

- professional credibility (mentors had previous experience as teachers, principals, or superintendents, and demonstrated knowledge or expertise in coaching and instruction)
- a nonjudgmental and non-prescriptive stance (mentors adopted an interactive style that was neither prescriptive nor critical, but used coaching techniques and strategies)
- modeling of practice (mentors modeled the strategies, speaking style, and principles that they wished to see coaches emulate)
- trustworthiness (mentors never shared confidences intended to be private, and they delivered what they promised)

Implications for New Mentors
Relationship building is a deliberate process, aided by the intentional pursuit of these characteristics and behaviors.

Implications for Initial Training
Training for new mentors should explore relationship building, including:

- why these relationships are important
- the contexts (school, classroom, school leadership team) in which the relationships grow
- exploration of these four factors
- challenges of trustworthiness
- phases of relationship building, such as introductions, ongoing interactions (modeling practice, coping with conflict)
- role play by former and new mentors

Implications for Ongoing Training
Revisit relationship issues in monthly mentor meetings, examining issues in relationships with coaches, teachers, principals, and other key players.

Finding 2
Math and literacy mentors engaged in a broad range of strategies to strengthen the capacity of coaches to improve (a) instruction and (b) their capacity as coaches, such as:

- shadowing and observing
- modeling
- BDA
- Walkarounds
- Monthly meetings

Implications for New Mentors
Learn, practice, and apply a variety of strategies in the practice of mentoring coaches.
PAHSCI Mentor Study

Implications for Initial Training
Training for new mentors should explore core strategies for instructional coaching
- Define strategies
- Role play
- Indicate particular strengths and challenges of each strategy
- Suggest resources for exploring strategies further

Implications for Ongoing Training
Provide professional development opportunities for mentors
- To explore coaching strategies
- To attend PLN
- To examine case studies of coaching issues at monthly mentor meetings

Finding 3
Mentors devoted much of their practice to helping coaches resolve challenges that hindered the PAHSCI initiative in schools:
- confusion about the practice of coaching *(how it differs from teaching, tutoring, or “expert” roles)* experienced by coaches, teachers, and principals
- teacher resistance to change *(ignore or criticize coaches, pressure others to do the same)*
- pressure on coaches to perform tasks *(grading, tutoring, proctoring)* useful to the school but entirely distinct from coaching

Implications for New Mentors
Deliberately anticipate and plan for these challenges.

Implications for Initial Training
Training for new mentors should explore these challenges.
- Define these challenges and explore case examples *(provided by Foundations’ mentors)*
- Discuss strategies for dealing with each challenge
- Role play *(triads: mentors, coaches, teachers/principals)* how mentors may work with *(coach) coaches around these challenges*
- Role play how mentors may coach administrators about each of these challenges, in particular pressuring coaches to perform tangential tasks.

Implications for Ongoing Training
Revisit these challenges in monthly mentor meetings, as they arise.

Finding 4
Both leadership mentors and some content mentors provided support intended to encourage school and district administrators to supported PAHSCI, including:
- information about PAHSCI
PAHSCI Mentor Study

- encouragement
- support to attend training
- mentoring

A few principals reported that, in working with mentors, their viewpoint and behavior had shifted toward a more collaborative working style with their teachers and coaches, demonstrating more engagement as well as more trust of their staff.

Implications for New Mentors
Support for administrators is an important element of the mentor role.

Implications for Initial Training
Training for new mentors should explore how administrators may help or hinder the success of instructional coaching and how mentors may work with administrators.

- Define the key administrative roles in instructional coaching (*principals, superintendents, others*)
- Explore ways that each of these administrators support instructional coaching
- Explore ways that each of these administrators hinder instructional coaching (*i.e. pressuring coaches to perform non-coaching roles, pressuring coaches and mentors to divulge confidential information, not being visibly in support of instructional coaching*).
- Ask one or more administrators who took part in PASCHI to talk about their experience and work with mentors
- Define and explore the various ways that mentors may communicate with administrators (*i.e. information, e-mail, drop-in visits, mentor role on school/district leadership teams, individual executive coaching*)
- Discuss the impact of collaborative vs. top-down administrative leadership in instructional coaching schools
- Explore the executive coaching role of mentors with administrators, specifically how collaborative leadership may be encouraged.

Implications for Ongoing Training
Revisit these roles in monthly mentor meetings, as they arise.

Finding 5
Mentors devoted much of their work with administrators to helping them resolve obstacles that hindered instructional coaching.

- hiring and support for coaches
- resistance from school boards (*for e.g., to release time*)
- resistant or uncooperative teachers

Implications for New Mentors
Deliberately anticipate and plan for these challenges.
Implications for Initial Training
Training for new mentors should explore the challenges faced by administrators of schools and districts implementing instructional coaching.

- Define the challenges and explore case studies of each
- Discuss strategies for dealing with each challenge
- Role play how mentors may coach administrators around these challenges

Implications for Ongoing Training
Monthly mentor meetings examine mentor-administrator relationships and challenges.

Finding 6
Mentor teams were conscious of deliberately modeling teamwork in order to encourage and support the formation of coaching teams, and most coaches and principals viewed their mentors as successful teams.

Implications for New Mentors
Modeling teamwork is an important strategy for supporting coaching teams.

Implications for Initial Training
Training for new mentors should explore the value of mentor teams modeling teamwork for coaches and strategies for doing so.

- Discuss different teamwork models (*differentiated or complementary roles, mirrored roles*)
- Explore techniques for modeling teamwork (*staying on the same page, communicating core messages, dealing with conflict*)
- Conduct teamwork exercises/case studies.

Implications for Ongoing Training
Monthly meetings explore teamwork issues and exercises.

Finding 7
Substantially increased student engagement in the classroom was observed in some schools and was recognized as an indicator of change brought about by PAHSCI.

Implications for New Mentors
Look for and reinforce student engagement.

Implications for Initial Training
Training for new mentors should cover indicators of student engagement in the classroom as well as strategies for encouraging student engagement of high quality.

- What is student engagement in the classroom and what are its benefits
- Define indicators of high quality student engagement
- Explore strategies that teachers can use to promote student engagement
- Discuss coaching for increased student engagement

Implications for Ongoing Training
Monthly meetings discuss patterns of student engagement and role play strategies.