

PIIC hosted the first Professional Learning Opportunity (PLO) of the school year from October 29-31, 2012 at The Penn Stater Conference Center in State College, PA. 70 administrators, coaches, mentors, and Regional Mentor Coordinators from across the state braved the elements from Hurricane Sandy to engage in conversations with colleagues from 13 Intermediate Units (IU). Flexibility was our motto!

After a brief introduction from PIIC Executive Director Ellen Eisenberg, participants rotated to preselected breakout sessions. Participants registered for breakout sessions prior to the conference via an online registration form. Day 1 sessions included: *Coaching 101*, facilitated by Ellen Eisenberg and IU 8 PIIC Mentor Diane Hubona; *Making Connections: Instructional Coaching, Digital Tools, and Literacy*, facilitated by PIIC Regional Mentor Coordinators (RMC) Virginia Glatzer and Charles Territo, and IU PIIC Mentors Jeremy Gaborin and Lori Ceremuga; *Notemaking and Notetaking to Improve Student Engagement*, facilitated by RMC Gen Battisto and IU 9 PIIC Mentor Brandy Sheneman; and *Small Group Coaching through Study Groups and Book Talks*, facilitated by RMC Kathy Gori and IU PIIC Mentors Amy Walker, Bethann McCain, and Evelyn Wassel.

Day 1 concluded with a panel discussion consisting of IU 4 PIIC Mentor Amy Walker and instructional coaches Laura Cipriano and Mike Baker. The panel discussed *The Nuts and Bolts of Effective PLCs for Improving Instruction* by sharing personal experiences, advice, and answered questions from the audience.

Day 2 started with a brief introduction and agenda review. Participants immediately rotated into preselected breakout sessions, including: *Literacy- Building a Foundation through PLN*, facilitated by The Penn Literacy Network (PLN) Director, Joe Ginotti; *Small Group Coaching Through Study Groups and Book Talks*, facilitated by Amy Walker, Bethann McCain, Evelyn Wassel, and Kathy Gori; *The Art of Questioning to Improve One-on-One Coaching*, facilitated by RMC Tom Sebastian and IU PIIC Mentors Nancy Neusbaum and Jordan Lozosky; and *The Coaches' Role in Supporting Rigorous Writing Across the Curriculum*, facilitated by IU PIIC Mentors Diane Hubona and Cindy Shaffer.

Participants regrouped for the first general session of the day. Participants new to PIIC

collaborated with veteran coaches and mentors about instructional coaching experiences in a mixed table-talk format. This powerful session led into the final general session of the day, *Instructional Coaching: Building a Focus on Literacy*, facilitated by Joe Ginotti. The day concluded with IU team time and reflections.

After a short agenda review on day 3, participants attended their preselected breakout sessions. Some sessions were repeated from the previous two days. Available sessions included: *Small Group Coaching through Study Groups and Book Talks*, facilitated by Kathy Gori, Amy Walker, Bethann McCain, and Evelyn Wassel; *The Art of Questioning to Improve One-on-One Coaching*, facilitated by Tom Sebastian, Nancy Neusbaum and Jordan Lozosky; *Notemaking and Notetaking to Improve Student Engagement*, facilitated by Gen Battisto and Brandy Sheneman; *Real Time Problem Solving: Practicing One-on-One Coaching*, facilitated by Diane Hubona and Chris Caton (IU 3 PIIC mentor); and *Making Connections: Instructional Coaching, Digital Tools, and Literacy*, facilitated by Virginia Glatzer, Charles Territo, Jeremy Gaborin, and Lori Ceremuga.

After the breakout sessions, participants moved into *Birds of a Feather*, a table talk-style session where participants suggested a variety of topics that piqued their interests throughout the conference and either facilitated the conversations or participated with their colleagues leading the conversations. In standard PIIC fashion, the PLO concluded with a final group reflection.

Feedback from the online conference evaluation was positive:

"Being a 'newbie,' the entire experience was wonderful. You get ideas that you never thought about and affirmation of what you're doing correct. It also brings to light things you may need to work on."

-Full-Time Instructional Coach

"The small and intimate nature of this PLO allowed new coaches and experienced coaches to share tips and strategies in a very safe environment... people were willing to participate and be very open. I think that the idea of regional or cross IUs collaborating could be very valuable for coaches and for mentors."-IU PIIC Mentor

"Again, the conference reinforced the necessity for instructional coaches to function as leaders

to move academic rigor forward and to create a consistency of instruction within our systems."
-Full-Time Instructional Coach

"The questioning session was wonderful! It was packed full of ideas I could take back and share with other coaches!"
-Full-Time Instructional Coach, Elementary School Coach

The agenda from this event is available on our [Past Professional Development Conferences](#) page. You can also find photos from this event in our [PIIC Photo Gallery](#)

. Our next PIIC Professional Learning Opportunity will be January 7-9, 2013 at The Penn Stater Conference Center in State College, PA. Details can be found on our [Events](#) page.