

Not every coach or other school leader has the luxury of providing full time coaching to the entire school faculty. If, in fact, the school or district administrator had been an instructional coach previously, the discussions about these conditions might occur frequently and actions taken in the best ways possible to create the enabling conditions where an effective instructional coaching model is implemented. On the other hand, if a school does not have the flexibility to implement a part time or full time instructional coaching position, innovation, creativity, and collective problem-solving must be cultivated so that every staff member has the opportunity to receive differentiated support which ultimately influences individual, team, and school-wide performance.

Undeniably, one of the most transformative roles of the coach is to meet one-on-one with teachers for the purpose of promoting effective instructional practices. But, what if there is no time for the coach to do that? How can a school have a "coach" but not have dedicated time on the schedule for that coach to work with colleagues?

Unfortunately, this is a scenario that is becoming more common. This may be due to scheduling, limited staffing, the economy, misunderstanding about the coach's role, or any other circumstances that exist in our schools. If these are the conditions at a school, what's a coach to do??

There are two choices: a coach can either lament the current conditions at the school and fall into the trap where anger determines his/her actions or the coach can decide that coaching from the classroom, albeit not the optimum, keeps the importance and value of ongoing professional learning front and center. The latter reaction makes certain that providing job-embedded professional learning designed to improve practice supports changes in classroom habits and helps teachers implement effective instructional practices in non-evaluative ways. Coaches in this kind of environment look for creative and alternative ways to nurture the professional growth of his/her colleagues, help them think about their classroom decisions, and help them become reflective practitioners who use data to inform their practice and make necessary adjustments in their instruction to ensure positive student outcomes.

If the goal is to provide opportunities for coaches and teachers to work together and promote educator effectiveness across all content areas by improving educators' skills, then coaching from the classroom is a practical surrogate model. The key is to make the substitution effective and not just a band aid approach to sustaining high quality professional learning.

So, how do coaches teach their own classes and help their colleagues learn and grow at the same time? There are two options: face to face and/or virtual opportunities to work with colleagues. For instance, virtual study groups and online book studies are growing in popularity as staff members seek ways to promote communication and professional discussions. A coach can also have virtual "office" hours where colleagues can ask questions and join in conversations or discussion threads about student learning. The SAS portal has an instructional coaching community where topics of interest are posted and colleagues share their best thinking. A school community can start its own conversation thread in a variety of social networking sites.

Well, what about face to face? How does that happen in an environment where scheduling is an issue? Why not try something from the following list and let us know what worked for you...

- Open the doors and welcome colleagues into classrooms where they can see myriad instructional strategies and techniques modeled in real time. Of course, prior electronic communication may be necessary so that the visitors will know the expectations and lesson goals before the visitation;
- Create PLCs organized according to interests, book studies, and/or student needs that can meet before, during and after school hours (the B,D,A cycle of coaching in small groups);
- Offer lunchtime "chat and chews" where colleagues bring their brown bag lunches and engage in data dialogues, plan lesson reviews, address student needs, and/or discuss articles relevant to student achievement, etc.;
- Promote prep time content and/or skills presentations where colleagues co-plan and then co-facilitate effective instructional practices for anyone who has that prep time available to visit and view the in-school professional learning;
- Encourage prep time interdisciplinary "buddies" to meet together during their planning period to co-design an integrated approach to teaching and learning;

- Enlist colleagues to visit classrooms and support cooperative learning groups so students can rotate into different groups and other adults are available to provide support to the students; colleagues not only help students, but they also have an opportunity to visit classrooms and browse, borrow, and build on their new learnings.

Regardless of how a coach makes time to work with colleagues, be sure to plan intentional time to think and reflect **on**, **in**, and **about** what was seen in classrooms and shared with colleagues. That conversation, either virtually or face to face, will make the difference in nourishing the teachers' professional growth and reinforcing effective teaching behaviors.