

By [IU 28 PIIC Mentor Jeremy Gabborin](#)

"We like to admire our data. We collect it, pile it up, take a step back, and we *admire* it. We say 'Look at all that data...' "

That was the response I received from one of my coaches when I asked how data were being used in his school. That wasn't what I expected to hear, but as I reflected on that statement later, I realized that it is often a fair description of how we use student data. We gather our data from PSSAs, PVAAS, CDTs, Keystones, and local assessments. Maybe we bring a team together to look through it. We organize it in spreadsheets, tables, and pie charts. But oftentimes we miss the opportunity to use all these data to affect meaningful change on the teaching and learning that takes place in our schools.

According to PIIC's website, [www.pacoaching.org](http://www.pacoaching.org) , *"PIIC focuses on collecting, analyzing, and using data to identify student needs, assess changes in classroom instructional practice, and measure student progress."* As mentors, how do we help our coaches develop the tools they need to bring this idea to practice?

First, we need to understand what access coaches have to data. Are they members of the data team tasked with making school-wide decisions? Do they work with subject-area or grade level teams when they meet to make sense of their data? Do they have open lines of communication with the teachers they coach, collaborating to build meaning from the formative assessment done in class? Having this information gives us the opportunity to plan for the best ways to address the issue of data with our coaches.

One approach is to use part of our coach meetings to focus on using data with teachers. As mentors, we need to model what it looks like when two professionals pull together to collect, analyze, and use data to make meaningful decisions. Role-playing BDA cycles built around data can be a powerful piece of monthly coach meetings. This process is equally powerful when used with formative or summative assessment. It helps build a level of comfort and confidence for coaches in their ability to use this process with other teachers. Building a BDA cycle in which a coach and teacher collaborate to design a data collection method, collect the data, and then analyze it together leads naturally into the crucial "next step," which is making and implementing instructional decisions based on this analysis.

Once coaches have the knowledge and experience to guide this process, the real work of change can begin in a school. Instead of admiring our data, we can admire the improved instruction and greater achievement that we build from our data.

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