

By [IU PIIC Mentors Lori Ceremuga and Cindy Shaffer](#)

Hopefully, this summer, you were able to catch some of the excitement of the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio. The United States came home with a bundle of medals and accolades. We heard many stories about the athletes and their families, but few stories were focused on the coach. As you watched the Olympics, you probably noticed that each athlete had a coach who was watching them with a careful eye. The coach's responsibility was to help the athlete reach or exceed their potential. According to the [Olympics website](#), *"The quality of the relationship between a coach and the athlete has a crucial effect on the athlete's motivation and performance."*

An Olympic Coach's job is not unlike that of an instructional coach. We, too, are charged with helping teachers reach or exceed their full potential in the classroom. PIIC believes that the key to a successful coaching program is a trusting relationship between teachers and coaches. A large number of the teachers that you work with will embrace the concept of instructional coaching. However, you will meet a few resistors along the way. Bela and Marta Karolyi probably coached a few gymnasts through the years that caused them to reset and approach coaching from a different angle. Perhaps the "Final 5" weren't always easy to coach.

In the spirit of the Olympics, enter the new school year aspiring to earn a spot on the podium or reach your personal best. The PIIC management team has adapted a Levels of Intensity* chart originally created by Rita Bean, to guide you in reaching your fullest potential as an instructional coach (see below). In addition, you have IU mentors and RMCs to assist you in your efforts.

Level 1 (Informal; helps to develop relationships)

- Building awareness of the PIIC B, D, A cycle of coaching and 4 quadrant framework
- Talking with colleagues confidentially about educator effectiveness and identifying goals for growth, literacy learning and student needs (identifying issues or needs, setting goals, problem solving)
- Developing and providing materials for/with colleagues
- Helping teachers understand and integrate common core state standards
- Exploring the SAS portal for exemplars and using effective instructional strategies
- Participating in professional development activities with colleagues, e.g., conferences/workshops/professional learning opportunities

- Co-facilitating and/or participating in Study Groups, Book Talks, and PLO interests
- Helping teachers understand student assessment data and identifying areas of focus
- Facilitating conversations with teachers about areas of strength and areas of need
- Looking at schoolwide and classroom data

Level 2 (More formal; somewhat more intense; begins to look at areas of need and focus)

- Beginning the B,D,A cycle of instructional coaching, e.g., before meetings with teachers, etc.
- Co-planning lessons and identifying appropriate evidenced-based instructional strategies
- Facilitating team meetings (grade level or content level) to discuss student performance, literacy learning, and using data to inform instruction
- Analyzing student work and identifying areas of strength and areas of need;
- Interpreting assessment data (helping teachers use results for instructional decision making)
- One-on-one and small group support for teachers and reflecting "in" and "on" actions
- Developing professional development presentations for sustainable teacher support

Level 3 (Formal, more intense; moves interactions from general to specific)

- Co-planning, co-teaching, and debriefing lessons (B, D, A cycle of instructional coaching)
- Modeling and debriefing lesson design, instructional techniques, integration of technology
- Visiting classrooms and providing feedback to teachers
- Analyzing videotaped lessons where available and appropriate (360° cameras/iPD)
- Facilitating one-on-one and small group professional learning and scenario problem solving
- Planning and facilitating non-evaluative lesson study with teachers
- Providing whole school professional learning, e.g., establishing effective PLCs, etc.

An instructional coach can reap many rewards by pushing themselves to be their personal best. Take time throughout the year to reflect on your progress and how close you are to reaching the podium. Address those areas that are blocking your path to success. With a new coaching year upon us, the best overall strategy is to aim high and celebrate incremental progress toward

your larger goals.

*Adapted from Rita Bean: Bean, R.M. (Spring, 2004). Promoting Effective Literacy Instruction: The Challenge

The PIIC Coaching Levels of Intensity document can be found in the PIIC Instructional Coaching Resource Guide: <http://instituteforinstructionalcoaching.org/>

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