



What we've learned about instructional coaching: Ten ideas you need to know

1. Time

We knew:

- Big picture planning
- Work in the details (Covey, Merrill, & Merrill, 1996; Allen, 2002)

We've learned:

- Create a routine (Loehr & Schwartz)
- Cut stuff out
- Say No, (Ury, 2007)
- You're going to drop the ball, (Prochaska, 1994)
- So go easy on yourself

2. Relationships

We knew:

- Listening, ongoing regard, drawing the line, stories, Non-verbal communication, emotional connection (Knight, 2007)

We've learned:

- Seek out affirmation points (<http://hbswk.hbs.edu/archive/3684.html>)
- Common denominators
- Empathy & Alignment (Gottman, 2000)
- Goldsmith's (2007) listening strategy: (1) Listen with every fiber of your being; (2) Ask yourself, is it worth it before you respond
- "Let them have the conversation" (Scott, 2004)



3. Walk-throughs

We knew:

- Surface what is happening in classrooms
- Provide accountability
- Can prompt some teachers to seek out coaches
- Can reinforce an instructional framework (Danielson, 2007; Knight, 2007, instructionalcoach.org)

We've learned:

- Walk-throughs need to be tied to teaching practices
- Coaches doing walk-throughs is confusing
- Accountability is complicated (Fullan, 2007)

4. Workshops

We knew:

- Do not get implementation (Cornett & Knight, 2008)
- Aren't always enjoyed or appreciated (Knight, 2000)
- More effective when they are dialogical (Knight, 2009)

We've learned:

- They are still important
- Should involve reflection-creating communication
- Should be tied to coaching

5. Reflection

We knew:

- On action, In action (Schon, 1987)
- For action (Killion & Todnem, 1991)

We've learned:

- A defining characteristic of a knowledge worker (Davenport, 2005)
- Requires the freedom to say no
- Needs to be an unmistakable part of the way we explain teaching practices



6. Trust

We knew:

- Important
- Confidentiality is important
- Listening

We've learned:

- Credibility + Reliability + Intimacy / self-focus (Duke Corporate Education, 2006)

7. Experience

We knew:

- Modeling is very important (Knight, 2007)

We've learned:

- Experience trumps talk (Influencer)
- An emphasis on experience is central to enrollment
- Modeling should only focus on the practice being learned

8. Program evaluation

We knew:

- Needs to focus on student achievement
- Should drive program improvement

We've learned:

- Involves a lot more than achievement (Guskey, 1999; Killion, 2008)
- Should involve at least four levels
 - coaching practices
 - district/school support
 - implementation
 - student achievement



9. Teaching practices

We knew:

- Focus on content enhancement (kucrl.org)
- Focus on learning strategies (kucrl.org)
- Coaches improve by learning from each other

We've learned:

- Need high-leverage, powerful tools
- Created the big four framework of Classroom management, content planning, instruction, and formative assessment
- Instruction involves (at least) intensive-explicit & constructivist teaching practices

10. Community

We knew:

- Professional Learning Communities are well known and effective (Dufour, 2008)
- Groups know more than individuals (Surowiecki, 2005)

We've learned:

- Intensive Learning Teams (ITLs) accelerate teacher knowledge
- Coaches play a vital role
- Web 2.0 tools have great potential to accelerate professional learning