

Implementation Guide for Effective Coaching of Teachers

PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to help practitioners systematically implement effective coaching practices. Research from Implementation Science suggests that how a program, practice, or innovation is put into place affects the degree to which we can expect that innovation to achieve its intended goals (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005; Greenhalgh, Robert, Macfarlane, Bate, & Kyriakidou, 2004). Similarly, if coaching is designed to improve teaching practice and learning outcomes,¹ it is important to examine how the innovation is implemented. Fixsen et al. (2005) propose that attending to specific implementation drivers, or essential support mechanisms such as organizational structures, leadership, and the competency of personnel, is one way to create an environment that is conducive to the long-term use of any innovation.

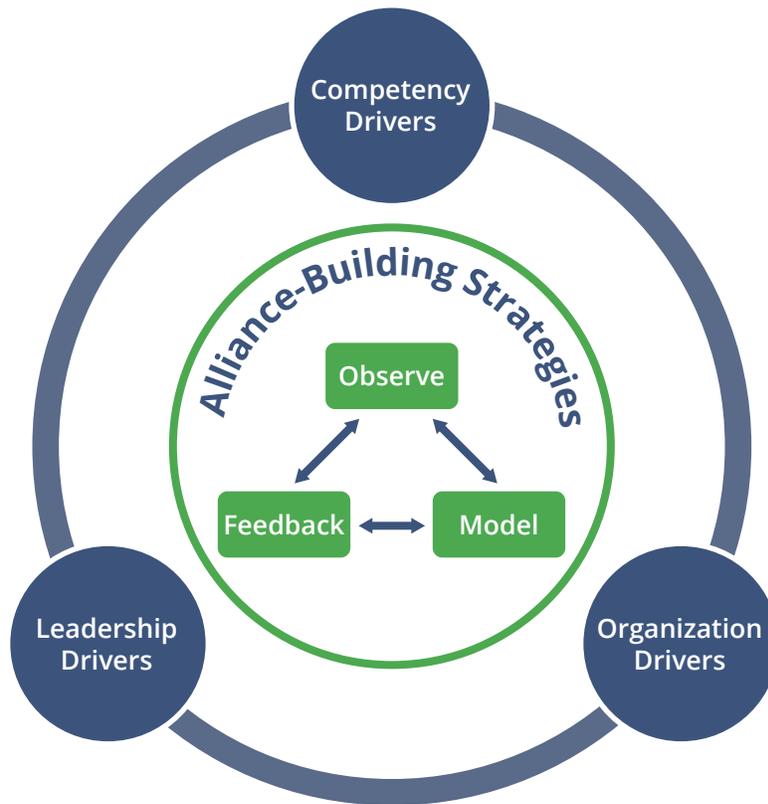
Drawing on these principles from Implementation Science, this guide outlines key questions to consider when using coaching as a pathway toward improving teaching and learning. Further, the guide specifies actions that should be taken to appropriately structure the system in which coaching occurs. **Consideration of these questions and completion of these actions may help coaching achieve its intended goals and become a sustainable component of the learning environment.**

The *Implementation Guide for Effective Coaching* is intended to be used in conjunction with two other tools: *Effective Coaching: Improving Teacher Practice and Outcomes for All Learners* and *Effective Coaching of Teachers: Fidelity Tool*. The brief synthesizes research on coaching and offers a framework of effective coaching practices. These are shown within the center circle of Figure 1 and are the recommended practices that should be central to the everyday work of coaches. The fidelity tool can be used to ensure coaching continuously consists of effective practices, occurs with sufficient frequency, and is of adequate duration and high quality.

¹Although we use “teacher” throughout this document, the term is used to denote individuals, such as early child care providers, interventionists, or parents, who work with learners in a less traditional educational setting (i.e., home). We also use the term to describe individuals, such as prekindergarten–Grade 12 teachers, who work with learners in a more traditional setting (i.e., classroom). Similarly, we use “learner” to describe the infants, toddlers, children, and youth with whom these teachers work.

However, to achieve improved teaching and learning, it is not enough to ensure that coaching occurs with fidelity. Those who rely on coaching to achieve these goals should ensure that the system is structured appropriately to support it (Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009). Therefore, as shown in Figure 1, effective coaching practices are encircled by three implementation drivers as defined by Fixsen et al. (2005).

Figure 1: Implementation of Effective Coaching



Sources: Pierce, 2015, p. 27;
Fixsen et al., 2005

STRUCTURE OF THE GUIDE

This guide presents a definition of each driver and the subdrivers that are included within the larger driver. One or more questions for consideration related to drivers are then listed. These questions help implementers to reflect on specific essential supports that should be in place if coaching is to improve teaching and learning. Finally, action steps are offered for implementers. These steps clarify the tasks that should be undertaken to create a system that supports the long-term use of coaching.

DIRECTIONS FOR USE

1. Identify relevant stakeholders to be a part of the process of using this guide.¹
2. Review the coaching brief ***Effective Coaching: Improving Teacher Practice and Outcomes for All Learners***.
3. Consider the questions and action steps within this guide.
4. Explore, if desired, additional resources regarding implementation drivers² or the implementation of coaching.³
5. Complete the tasks embedded within the Recommended Action Step column.
6. Share the progress of action steps with stakeholders within the system.
7. Create a schedule for continuously reviewing the guide, updating it as warranted, and reporting progress related to the implementation of coaching to stakeholders.

1 <http://www.ideapartnership.org/documents/NovUploads/Blueprint%20USB/NASDSE%20Leading%20by%20Convening%20Book.pdf>

2 <http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/module-1/implementation-drivers>

3 <http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/resources/lesson-5-coaching-system-development-worksheet?o=impenet>; <http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/resources/lesson-8-coaching-service-delivery-plan?o=impenet>

| Competency Drivers | Question for Consideration | Recommended Action Step |
|--|---|---|
| Selection: Qualified coaches are hired. | What are criteria for qualified coaches? | Identify, in a job description, the specific skills and knowledge expected of a qualified coach. |
| Training (what): Coaches continuously develop skills. | What are essential training topics for coaches? | Identify topics of training that improve coaches' competencies listed in the job description.) |
| Training (when): Coaches continuously develop skills. | When will initial and ongoing training for coaches occur? | Establish a training schedule and identify who will facilitate training for coaches. |
| Training (how): Coaches continuously develop skills. | How will we evaluate our training for coaches and use the data to ensure coaches receive high-quality training? | Collect data from coaches on training, and use the data to improve training sessions. |
| Coaching: Coaches receive ongoing support for their work. | What are the procedures for providing coaching to coaches to ensure continual refinement and development of their skills?) | Identify who will coach coaches, when this coaching will occur, what coach-to-coach sessions will consist of, how coach-to-coach sessions will be evaluated for effectiveness, and how these sessions can maintain over time. |
| Fidelity (what): Coaching practice is measured to ensure it is achieving its intended goals of improving teaching and learning. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What tool will be used to measure the fidelity of coaching? Does this measure capture three aspects of fidelity: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Quality</i> of coaching (i.e., degree to which it achieves its intended goals of improving teaching and learning) 2. <i>Adherence</i> of coaching to critical coaching practices (i.e., ongoing cycles of observation, modeling, performance feedback, and alliance-building strategies) 3. <i>Context</i> in which coaching occurs (e.g., small-group instruction, whole-class instruction, team teaching) | Create or use a measure of coaching fidelity that provides data on the quality of coaching, adherence to critical coaching practices, and the context in which coaching occurs. |
| Fidelity (when and how): Coaching practice is measured to ensure it is achieving its intended goals of improving teaching and learning. | Are stakeholders clear about when and how data will be collected, as well as how the data will be used to determine its effectiveness? | Clearly communicate with all stakeholders (e.g., teachers, coaches) how data from the measure will be used to understand the impact of coaching on teaching and learning, strengths of coaching practice, areas for improvement, and training needs for coaching. |

| Organization Drivers | Question for Consideration | Recommended Action Step |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Decision Support Data Systems: A system exists to ensure data related to coaching practice are collected, analyzed, shared, and used for decision making.</p> | <p>Is there a system in place for housing data related to coaching?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure a system is in place for analyzing coaching fidelity data and for using data to determine the impact of coaching on teaching and learning. • Clearly communicate with all stakeholders how data related to coaching will be used for decision making. |
| <p>Facilitative Administration: Internal organizational structures (e.g., the policies, resources, and culture within the immediate setting) support the long-term use of coaching and reduce common barriers to coaching.</p> | <p>Do the existing policies, resources, and cultural norms within the immediate setting enable the use of coaching as defined in the job description?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review, revise, and align policies • Review, revise, prioritize and align organizational structures to ensure that coaching occurs as it was designed to occur. |
| <p>Facilitative Administration (how): Internal organizational structures (e.g., the policies, resources, and culture within the immediate setting) support the long-term use of coaching and reduce common barriers to coaching.</p> | <p>How will leaders gather and use feedback from stakeholders related to coaching to reduce barriers?</p> | <p>Create opportunities for stakeholders to anonymously provide feedback about coaching. Use the feedback to reduce barriers and to celebrate successes with coaching.</p> |
| <p>Systems Intervention: Larger, external systems (e.g., state and district agencies, the community) work with smaller systems (e.g., school, district) to support the long-term use of coaching and to reduce barriers to coaching.</p> | <p>How will leaders across all levels of the system (e.g., building administrators, state leaders) “champion” coaching to ensure it occurs as it was designed to occur?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders across all levels of the system continuously communicate the goals of coaching and the components of effective coaching practice. • Leaders ensure that resources, policies, and cultural norms across all levels of the system align to support coaching. |

| Leadership Drivers | Question for Consideration | Recommended Action Step |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Technical Leadership: Leaders continually resolve less complex problems and situations that arise related to coaching.</p> | <p>How will leaders recognize and respond to such problems and situations (e.g., creating schedules and necessary supports that ensure coaches have time and resources to work with teachers or other providers; collecting timely fidelity data on coaching)?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create transparent communication channels to ensure that stakeholders can share problems and concerns related to coaching. • Provide timely and specific guidance to stakeholders about how to resolve problems. |
| <p>Adaptive Leadership: Leaders continually address more complex problems and situations that arise related to coaching (e.g., how to ensure coaches will not be perceived as evaluators; how to determine which teachers will be coached).</p> | <p>How will leaders recognize and respond to such problems and situations?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create transparent communication channels that allow stakeholders to share problems and concerns related to coaching, including those problems that may be sensitive in nature or difficult to resolve. • Continually reduce stressors that arise due to changes associated with coaching. • Work with stakeholders to identify potential solutions to problems and to build consensus for solutions. • Continually communicate how coaching aligns to the vision and goals of the organization, the purpose of coaching, and expectations for effective coaching practice. |

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CONTRIBUTORS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR EFFECTIVE COACHING OF TEACHERS

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For additional information regarding content, please contact *Ask the NCSI* at <https://ncsi.wested.org/ask-the-ncsi>. *Ask the NCSI* is a research and information service provided by the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI). *Ask the NCSI* is intended to support states to (1) obtain information about evidence-based practices; (2) develop, implement and evaluate State Systemic Improvement Plans (SSIPs); (3) learn about practices being implemented in other states; and (4) find out what current research says about “what works” to improve results for children with disabilities.

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You may contact NCSI at NCSI@wested.org or 866.664.8471.

We look forward to hearing from you!

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