

# Instructional Coaching Model

Spokane Public Schools

June 14, 2004

# Instructional Coaching in Spokane Public Schools

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# I. Introduction

## A. History and background

In the fall of 1991 the Spokane School District began a process to review the service models and inservice designs for program and basic education staff in our Title I schools. Although we were already shifting support services from a traditional pull-out model to an inclusion model, we were not finding the level of positive and sustained student performance that we had anticipated. With the influence from the research of Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers and with the early literacy focus in our district, the Title I principals, and Title I Professional Advisory Committee (Title I PAC), the District's instructional directors agreed to launch the early childhood project.

In August of 1992, two facilitators were hired and assigned to two high-need Title I schools on a pilot basis. At that time we were convinced that one semester in a school by an on-site staff developer would provide the catalyst to change instructional practices. We quickly realized that even though people initially welcomed a facilitator to the staff, the complexity of change and support needed would not occur on a short-term basis. Over the next few years, the numbers of facilitators continued to increase and the Learning Assistance Program (LAP) also shifted from resource teacher positions to instructional facilitators. Some of the original project objectives were to:

- Promote a knowledge base of effective strategies;
- Assist teachers by demonstration and modeling
- Practice strategies and provide feedback through peer coaching
- Plan with teachers
- Facilitate on-site inservices and workshops; and
- Participate in on-going and extensive professional development.

Facilitators working on-site with classroom teachers had an impact on the use of effective instructional strategies and collaboration. We realized the depth of the impact on student achievement when we analyzed reading assessment data such as Running Records, QRIs and the WASL. In fact, as the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) began to notice trends in several of our high-need schools, they sponsored a study to examine Spokane's model. The OSPI study recognized the following primary elements as major parts of Spokane's school improvement:

- Embedded professional development
- School-based facilitators
- Use of assessment data
- Principal leadership
- Active learning
- Coordinated central office support

Since we have seen a continual increase in the number of facilitators funded through a variety of sources since 1992, it is now essential to develop a clear and specific description of the instructional coaching model to build coherence across the District and within our schools.

## B. Why coaching and why now?

Part of the rationale for instructional coaching is contained in the current Spokane Public Schools Strategic Plan 2004-2007:

- Data shows that many students are not succeeding at each grade level and not graduating from high school well prepared for a variety of post-secondary pursuits.
- The most direct impact upon student achievement is the experience students have each day in over 1900 classrooms.
- Therefore, a major objective in the plan is to “equip, empower, and expect staff to implement effective instructional practices.” Instructional coaching for all teachers in all schools – along with staff collaboration – is identified as a key sub-strategy.

The second part of the rationale for instructional coaching is that *of all forms of teacher professional development, coaching is the most effective*. Repeated studies by Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers have shown that when teachers participate in standard inservice models, they apply less than 20% of their learning back in their classrooms. (Showers, Joyce, & Bennett, 1987; Showers & Joyce, 1995.) Given the diverse needs of students and the expectation that students learn an increasingly rigorous curriculum, most teachers need on-going, side-by-side support as they attempt to incorporate effective instructional practices into their classroom routines.

By developing a system wide coaching model and building on the successes of our current facilitator model, we can strengthen our commitment to quality teaching and learning by providing intentional, ongoing support to staff at the school and classroom levels. This model will also support the development of quality learning communities where continuous improvement is the norm for students and teachers alike.

### Student and School Performance Challenges from the Strategic Plan

- Of the 35 elementary schools, 6 middle schools and 6 high schools, 11 are on track to reach the 90% target in reading and 24 are on track in mathematics. (Analysis of 5-year WASL trends from 1999 to 2003)
- Achievement gains for 7th graders are behind the level being achieved by students in grades 4 and 10. (Analysis of 5-year WASL trends from 1999 to 2003)
- Of the students entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 1997, 33% were not in the Spokane system to graduate in 2001. This data mirrors state and national data, suggesting that this percentage drops out between grades 9 and 12. (October 2003 analysis of 5-year enrollment and graduation rates of entering 9th grade students)
- Of the Spokane graduates attending state community colleges, 55% require non-credit remedial mathematics classes. (“Recent high school graduates taking developmental education courses,” State Board for Community & Technical Colleges, December, 2003)
- Students express a desire for high quality, student-adult relationships. (Analysis of 2003 student exit interview results for grades 8 and 12)
- There is evidence of achievement difference between groups by socio-economic level and race. There is also evidence that some schools have mitigated the difference in achievement between groups by socio-economic level and race.

## C. The Coaching Work Team

In three public meetings (April 13, 14, 15, 2004) Superintendent Brian Benzel and Associate Superintendent Nancy Stowell sponsored the formation of an Instructional Coaching Work Team to research existing coaching models (including Spokane's own facilitator model) and develop a District instructional coaching model. The Work Team consisted of 26 members: 3 Teachers, 4 Principals, 3 Assistant principals, 2 Curriculum coordinators, 2 Special programs coordinators, 1 Special Education, 6 Facilitators, 1 Mentors, 4 Teaching & Learning administrators. (See Appendix 1 for member names.)

Drs. Benzel and Stowell challenged the Work Team to "open" its process and make its work transparent. Three steps were taken to achieve the goal of transparency:

1. The process for developing the coaching model included two times when the team "looped out" to represented groups.
2. All meetings of the Work Team were open to any district staff member who was able and wished to attend.
3. As different Work Team subcommittees began drafting their ideas, the drafts were made public via the Internet so that District staff could see the ideas being considered *even before the entire team discussed the ideas and reached consensus*.

The Work Team's biggest challenge has been to develop an instructional coaching model that addresses the need of a large "school system" for clarity and coherence and yet be flexible enough to support the specific needs of schools.

## D. Values that emerged from our work

As different Work Team sub-committees began to synthesize their learning in the form of drafts, a number of common beliefs and values appeared. Not surprisingly, these values and beliefs reflect current District initiatives for collaboration and professional learning communities.

- Student learning is at the heart of our work.
- Professional learning is about engaging in a continuous cycle of inquiry to strive to improve our capacity to increase student learning.
- All educators can and want to improve and refine their knowledge of effective teaching and learning.
- There are differences in learning needs and styles. One size does not fit all.
- Learning is most meaningful when it is embedded in an authentic context...on the job.

- The dialogue of collaboration promotes learning and assists in establishing a common vision.
- Mutual respect and relationships are keys to successful improvement.
- Learning and improvement are most likely to occur when the learner is initially given high degrees of support, then gradually assumes more responsibility for the new skills through guided practice and finally independent control of the strategy.
- Learners benefit from prompt feedback about their efforts.

## II. Coaching in the context of professional learning communities

### A. Cycle of continuous learning

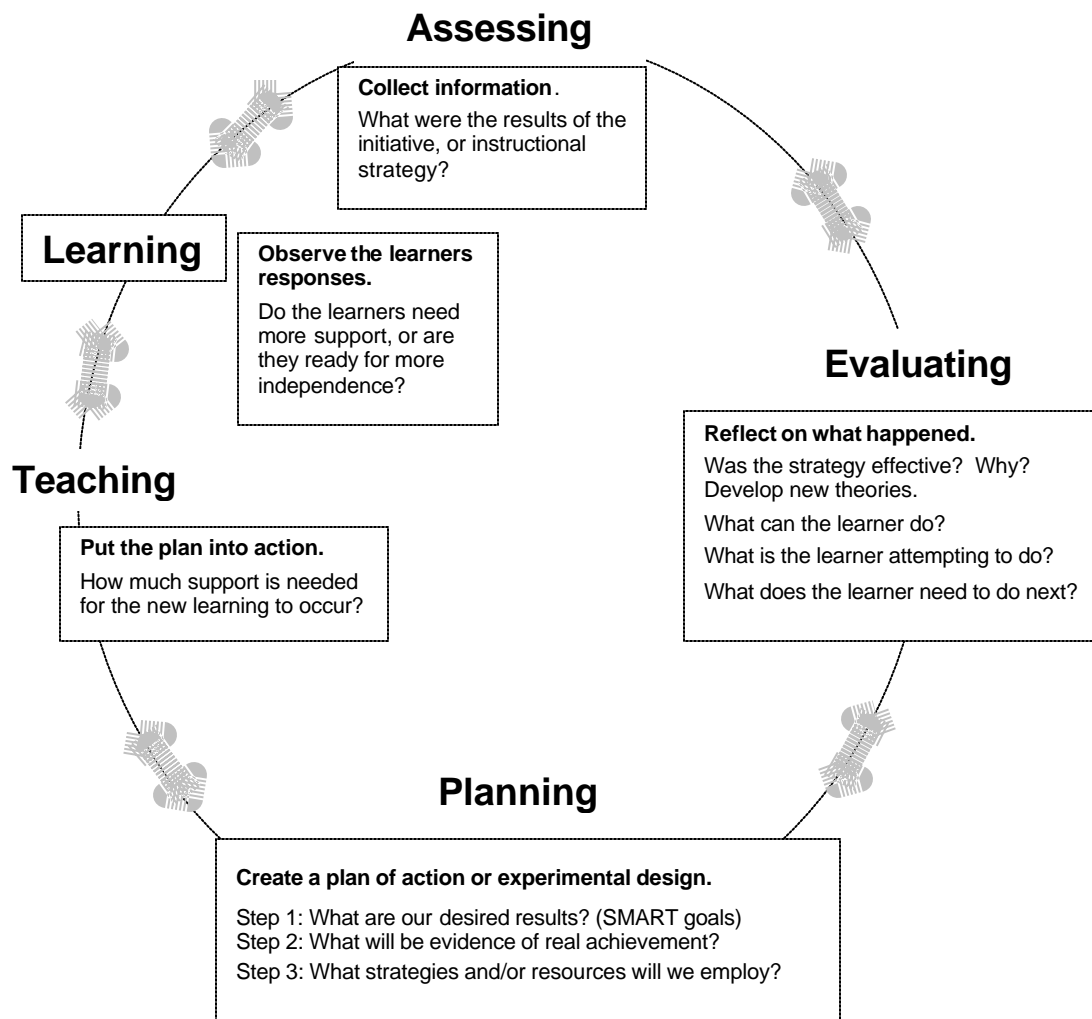
Instructional coaching is most effective when it occurs within a successful professional learning community. At the heart of this community is a belief in the need for continuous improvement, where a constant and collective search for a better way is how day-to-day business is conducted. The process of professional learning includes:

- Presentation and explanation of the theory behind the practice
- Demonstration
- Opportunities for initial guided practice
- Prompt feedback about their efforts
- Sustained coaching

(Showers, Joyce & Bennett, 1987)

See also "Learner-Centered Environments" (for Teacher Learning), p. 192-193, *How People Learn*, 2000.

Professional learning reflects an attitude of curiosity and a willingness to actively experiment with research-based practices, assess, reflect on their results, and develop new theories and practices in a continual cycle of improvement, much like this Teaching and Learning Cycle adapted from R. C. Owens.



## B. Role of choice for teacher professional learning

Within a professional learning community, the qualities of good teaching for students should also be evident in professional learning for teachers. “The attention to different learning styles, focus on authentic problems, opportunities for guided practice, and chance to work with others that reflect good teaching also reflect good staff development and are evident in the professional learning community” (DuFour & Eaker, 2000).

In her book *Pathways: Charting a Course for Professional Learning*, Marjorie Larner shares her view that relationships are a key to successful improvement efforts and that a professional learning culture must provide multiple ways or “points of entry” for teachers to learn about new teaching concepts.

The nature of the first steps and pace with which the school will move ahead in its change efforts is a delicate issue and depends on the dynamics and relationships of the people involved. Teachers asked to implement changes are like actors who are suddenly told in the middle of a performance that they must use a revised or perhaps even completely new script with many spaces for ad-libbing and improvisation, and that they must make the shift while the audience is watching. People have varying degrees of comfort with that kind of on-the-job change. While there are some people who prefer the thrill of improvisation and interactive theatre, many others need time to learn the script and understand the whole play before they can bring it to life on the stage.

For those people who want more time to think and observe, perhaps to understand, the essence of the new “script” before they try it in their classrooms, chances for success and positive experiences diminish if they are pushed to take action before they are ready. While they might appear to comply, they will not have the necessary investment to actually change their instructional practice.

Unfortunately, these people are often viewed negatively as resisters. In reality, as long as they are considering and observing and not ignoring or sabotaging, their position is not negative at all. People who question and challenge often express valid concern or the opinions of others who don’t want to speak publicly. They might be people who think very carefully and when they join, it will be with a steadfast commitment. If they are acknowledged and validated for their views, resisters often reveal where the new growth will occur. As Michael Fullan wrote in *Change Forces: The Sequel* (1999), “reform often misfires because we fail to learn from those who disagree with us.”

Points of entry for each individual will be different, so it is essential that multiple options be made available. Through discussion and/or through observation, the values and beliefs held by individuals and collectively in the school can be explicitly identified (Larner, 2004).

Larner closes her section on the continuum of participation with this sage advice for leadership teams seeking to build professional learning cultures: “The key is that everyone is included – continually aware of the new ideas, continually invited to participate (through conversations as well as distributed menus), and consistently hearing from colleagues about classroom experiences” (Larner, 2004).

Larner provides two practical instruments to assist school leadership teams in creating a continuum of participation for staff.

- Ways to Participate in Professional Development: A Menu
- Continuum of Participation (This is an individual teacher survey)

Both are included as Appendices 3 & 4. They are referenced below in Section III. “Instructional Coaching Model” and Section IV.

“Implementation of Instructional Coaching in Schools.”

Each of these instruments can be tailored by a school leadership team to more specifically focus building-based professional development options.

### III. Instructional Coaching Model

#### A. What is the purpose of instructional coaching?

Professionals in all walks of life – performing arts, athletics, law, business – strive to continually “improve their game.” To do so, they employ coaches or personal trainers. They employ the coach, decide (sometimes together) what to work on, and then begin their work together. Coaches are a set of external eyes and a quiet voice on the side. When coaching is successful, the person being coached in a sense *internalizes* the coach’s eyes and voice so that he or she can self-monitor personal performance. Thus, coaching is for growth – not correction or evaluation.

With our focus on improving the learning for all students, instructional coaching must support teachers to deepen their understanding of

- Content knowledge
- Research-based instructional strategies
- How to use a variety of assessments to monitor student achievement

Instructional coaching helps teachers build capacity for effective instructional practices *within specific content areas*. Literacy and mathematics are priority content areas. District curriculum guides increasingly integrate reading, writing, and mathematics into all other core content areas. In order to learn in core content areas – especially at higher grade levels – students must be able to comprehend complex texts and express themselves in writing. Effective instructional practices in literacy and mathematics are identified in:

- K-12 literacy and mathematics models
- Grade level curriculum guides
- Subject area program guides

At this time, instructional coaches in literacy and mathematics are a priority for the District. As additional funding sources become available, and/or refined curriculum models are developed in other content areas, additional instructional coaches will be hired.

**Coaching is for growth – not evaluation...**

An important implication of this idea is that principals must insure that coaches do not coach teachers whom they evaluate with the formal evaluation process. This would apply to coaches who may also be working as a Department Head or Principal Assistant.

By agreement with the Spokane Education Association, if a coach has evaluation responsibilities for a teacher, then they will only coach that teacher if the teacher is using the PGP process (June 2, 2004).

## B. The role of instructional coach

### Guiding principle

**The overarching role of the coach is to build teacher capacity to implement effective instructional practices to improve student learning and performance.**

Essential to a successful coaching model is the building of collegial relationships between coaches, teachers and principals. Collegial relationships support a Coaching Continuum, which provides multiple points of entry for teachers. This continuum focuses on the working relationship between a teacher and coach in order to increase the teacher's capacity to:

- Plan lessons based on the systematic study of student needs
- Think about the intentional choices they make moment-by-moment in the classroom
- Reflect with the coach on lessons as they implement effective instructional practices

The process is cyclical and characterized by teachers and coaches working at various levels within the continuum based on student and staff needs.

### Coaching continuum

Instructional coaches will spend the majority of the time engaging with teachers in one-on-one coaching. This new emphasis will focus the instructional coaching to more of a professional learning model where one-on-one coaching is at the center. Instructional coaches will use the coaching cycle to assist teachers in implementing the GLEs through the use of research based best practices as outlined in the strategic plan. Many of the supportive tasks that were done for principals and teachers in the past may have to be assumed by other staff members or be eliminated. This transition will take time to implement, and be supported through the on-going training with principals and coaches.

The following pages describe and illustrate an Instructional Coaching Continuum (page 11.) The purpose of this coaching continuum is to offer a framework that describes the relationship between the instructional coach and the teacher as they work together to implement effective instructional practices. As the coach and teacher progress along the continuum, the coach reduces the level of modeling and support as the teacher implements new practices. This process is known as the gradual release of responsibility. The teacher assumes the responsibility for implementing the new learning while the coach provides honest, direct feedback on issues identified by the teacher. As new learning takes place based on research and best practices, teachers and coaches may find themselves working at several levels of the continuum at once. Entry points along the continuum will vary according to teacher needs

## **Building blocks of the Instructional Coaching Continuum**

(To better understand the illustrated continuum (Page 11) begin at the bottom and work upwards.)

The continuum begins with developing a professional learning relationship between the coach and the teachers through building a common experience and knowledge base. This foundational work is an on-going part of a professional learning community. This knowledge base creates a common vocabulary among staff and promotes the articulation of ideas for improving instruction. The focus for professional learning is based upon collaboratively established building priorities. **(See page 11 - A. Building Common Knowledge and Experiences)**

Commitment to a professional relationship between a coach and an individual teacher takes the work of common experiences to deeper levels of collaboration. At the beginning, the building of congenial relationships begins with shared knowledge and new understandings for change in practices. After providing background content and context, the coach and teacher begin to collaboratively articulate purpose for new teaching practice, assess need using student assessment, and make plans for implementation. At this stage the coach develops and models the lesson as the teacher observes. This provides common ground for discussions on specific instructional strategies and their impact on student learning. Demonstration lessons could also include co-planning with the teacher and debriefing the lesson. The teacher has multiple opportunities to see instructional demonstrations and modeling of new strategies. **(See B. Committing to a Professional Learning Relationship)**

The coach and teacher continue to build upon demonstration lessons and grow into a co-teaching relationship. At this point in the relationship the coach and teacher co-plan the lesson, the coach teaches the lesson with the teacher assisting, and both coach and teacher reflect and debrief the lesson together. **(See C. Coach/Teacher Build a Co-Teaching Relationship)**

Building upon co-teaching experiences, the coach supports the teacher through guided practice as he/she takes on the responsibility of the teaching. As the teacher teaches, the coach assists. Both the teacher and the coach participate in the planning, reflecting and debriefing of the lesson. **(See D. Teacher Transition to Guided Practice with Coaching Support)**

At this stage of the coaching continuum, the teacher plans instruction based on assessment data, participates in a pre-conference with the coach, and determines the focus of observation by the coach. The instruction is conducted by the teacher while the coach observes. Then the teacher debriefs with the coach, and plans for further instruction. **(See E. Teacher Refines Implementation of Instruction with Coaching Feedback)**

# Instructional Coaching Continuum for Coach/Teacher Engagement

Coach provides less support as teacher implements new practice



## E. Teacher Refines Implementation with Coaching Feedback

- **Use the Coaching Cycle** : Prebrief → Observation of teacher by coach → Debrief
- Plan and help implement classroom based action research with teacher
- Participate in reflective lesson planning by teacher
- Use data to guide individual teacher instruction
- Assist teacher with implementation of his/her identified focused of learning
- Sustain and deepen collaborative/reflective relationships

## D. Teacher Transitions to Guided Practice with Coaching Support

- **Use Coaching Cycle** : Prebrief → Guided Practice (teacher teaches – coach assists) → Debrief
- Assist in refinement of instruction by implementing district researched best teaching practices
- Set goals and plan lessons with teacher based on analysis of student assessment data
- Sustain collaborative/reflective relationships as coach/teacher engage in learning focused conversations

## C. Coach/Teacher Build a Co-Teaching Relationship

- **Use Coaching Cycle** : Prebrief → Co-Teaching (Coach teaches – teacher assists) → Debrief
- Use formal/informal assessment to plan intentional lessons that support student learning
- Assist in development of learning focused plans the coach and teacher will follow
- Continue developing collaborative/reflective relationships

## B. Committing to a Learning Relationship

- **Use Coaching Cycle**: Prebrief → Model Lesson ( Coach teaches – teacher observes) → Debrief
- Model and demonstrate lessons while the teacher observes
- Establish collaborative/reflective relationships with grade level teachers and coach

Teacher assumes primary responsibility for the on-going implementation of the new practice

## A. Building Common Knowledge & Experience – The on-going foundation for a professional learning community

- Work with teachers to align instruction to GLEs
- Facilitate inter-visitations to see & learn from other classrooms (within and between schools)
- Organize study groups, on site workshops, and book studies
- Work with collaborative groups to examine student work and plan instruction
- Read and provide research to staff
- Establish common vocabulary, background knowledge and experiences, and collaborative relationships

## **What else do instructional coaches do?**

In addition to the types of work identified above, coaches have important additional responsibilities.

- Meet with the school administration and leadership team on a regular basis to examine school data and assist in school-wide planning (including professional development.)
- Network with other instructional coaches and buildings.
- Carry out responsibilities required by various funding programs.  
NOTE: Program administration responsibilities need to be reexamined and realigned with the purpose and intent of instructional coaching in our District. (See Part VII. Additional recommendations, Recommendation #5.)

## **What don't instructional coaches do?**

The role of the coach does not include:

- Evaluating teachers
- Providing information that would be used in evaluating
- Serving as a substitute teacher
- Serving as the principal designee
- Taking primary responsibility for the instruction of a specifically assigned group of students
- Performing clerical duties outside the primary job performance criteria
- Developing or preparing school budgets
- Disciplining students in an administrative capacity

The practice of having instructional coaches serve in multiple capacities in a school can be problematic: it can cause coaches to feel fragmented, and it can lead to additional times during the year when a coach must be out of the building. Over time, schools should consider involving staff members other than instructional coaches in the following capacities:

- Teaching & Learning cadre member
- Lesson study contact person
- Department head
- Building assessment coordinator
- School data analysis expert
- Math Helping Corps professional development
- Book room and resource coordinator

## C. The role of the teacher in the instructional coaching model

### Guiding principle

In order to improve student learning teachers must be learners who are continually engaged in the study of teaching and curriculum.

In order to improve student learning, teachers must be learners too. They must set their own learning goals and be active participants of professional learning communities engaged together in the continuous cycle of inquiry to promote the academic, social and emotional growth of students.

Fundamental to the instructional coaching model is the idea that teachers must have choices about how to engage with instructional coaches. (See "Role of choice for teacher professional learning," page 7.)

As part of the implementation of the coaching model...

- Each school will review relevant data and planning documents in order to determine its yearly focus for student learning and professional development.
- Based upon this analysis, schools will develop a menu of professional learning options from which teachers make choices.

### Teacher commits to:

- Participating in the school-wide review of relevant data and the school improvement plan (SIP) to determine the building focus for both student learning and staff professional learning.
- Responding to the school professional learning options survey to identify one or more specific ways to engage with the instructional coaching model. Many teachers will want to go beyond simply responding to the survey and develop a Learning Focus Plan or a PGP. These plans can more specifically identify how teachers and coaches work together.
- Deepening the commitment to professional learning and moving along the coaching continuum. (See Coaching Continuum, page 11.)
- Maintaining professional rapport and collaborative relationships.

"Basically there is nothing you can do that is as powerful for raising student achievement as investing in what teachers know and can do" (Darling-Hammond, 1998).

### Professional Learning Options Survey...

Appendices 3 and 4 include examples of a professional learning menu and survey that a school's distributed leadership team can tailor to focus on more specific priorities. Priorities are established through the review of relevant data and the school improvement plan. (SIP) Appendix 5 is an example of a Learning Focus Plan.

## D. Role of the principal in supporting coaching within a professional learning community

### Guiding principle

The principal and administrative team intentionally structure a professional learning community, share responsibility in leading and learning, and support instructional coaching.

### Principal commits to:

- Fostering and promoting educational leadership and collaborative relationships within staff.
- Collaborating regularly with coaches and other teacher leaders to monitor and adjust building instructional goals and strategies based on data.
- Creating a continuum of professional learning opportunities in using the instructional coaching model for professional growth. (See Appendices 3 & 4 for survey instruments that can be tailored to align with building needs and priorities.)
- Promoting and expecting staff participation in professional learning opportunities and implementation of effective practices in the classroom.
- Leading/participating in study groups, book studies, collaborative training in building.
- Attending common professional learning opportunities with coaches and teachers, and using information gained to implement continuing improvement in the building.
- Supporting the gradual release of responsibility model as it applies to the learning process for adults.
- Collaborating in hiring, observation, and support of instructional coaching staff.
- Structuring building's academic schedule/calendar to support coach's on-going professional development in/out of building.
- Meeting regularly with instructional coaches to establish coaching priorities and to monitor and sustain the effectiveness of the coaching model.

"[The principal] communicates the importance of the model at every opportunity" (Symonds, 2003).

"When a school has a strong, focused, experienced, creative principal willing to empower others, help staff grow and change appropriately, and demand better results for the school, a school-based staff developer's chances for success appear much greater" (Richard, 2003).

**E. Scope – To whom does this model apply?**

This instructional coaching model applies to all school based staff developers whose primary work is described in the section above on coaching roles *regardless of the source of funding and regardless of what the person may be called* (coach, facilitator, rover, etc.). Several scenarios are possible and various components of this model must be adjusted accordingly.

Scenario 1: Person is funded by a state/federal program with local design options for professional development. (Title I, Title V, LAP, CSR, 728)

Scenario 2: Person is funded by a locally written grant with mandated use of coaches. (Reading First)

Scenario 3: Person is funded by a locally written grant with the mandated use of outside coaches. (Math Helping Corps)

Scenario 4: Person is funded through a locally written and externally funded grant lasting several years. (SHAPeS, Small Learning Communities, NSF)

Scenario 5: A building reconfigures its basic education budget to create a part or full time instructional coach.

<b>Scenario</b>	<b>Hiring and supervision process</b>	<b>Involvement in District training &amp; support for coaches</b>
Scenario 1	Hiring and supervision process described in this model applies.	Participate in district training and support described in this model.
Scenario 2	Hiring and supervision process described in this model applies.	Participate in district training and support described in this model.
Scenario 3	Hiring and supervision process is external.	Participate in district training and support described in this model.
Scenario 4	Hiring and supervision process described in this model applies.	Participate in district training and support described in this model.
Scenario 5	Hiring and supervision process described in this model applies	Participate in district training and support described in this model.

Regardless of the funding source or what the position is called, the School District has an interest in the selection and on-going training for people who work in an instructional coaching capacity.

# IV. Implementation of instructional coaching in schools

To promote a shared understanding of instructional coaching throughout the school system, each school will participate in a three part implementation process:

- A. Readiness activities – so staff knows the rationale for coaching and the role expectations.
- B. Actual implementation that provides professional learning options for how staff engages with the coaching model.
- C. Annual assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness of coaching.

### Enduring Understanding

Improving student achievement by utilizing the coaching model is ultimately determined by the readiness of the culture\* of both the district and building.

\*Culture refers to the existing philosophies, beliefs, relationships, and practices within a building in regards to teaching and learning.

## A. How does a school establish readiness for implementing the coaching model?

### Guiding Principle

Participation in the instructional coaching process is most effective when the “why” of instructional coaching as well as the roles of coaches, principals, and teachers are clearly articulated and communicated.

### Role of the coach

- Provide job-embedded, on-going professional development by engaging with staff in the Coaching Continuum (See page 11.)
- Build capacity for best practice to increase student achievement

### Role of administration

- Support the implementation of the instructional coaching model
- Provide vision for and participate in continuous professional learning

### Role of the teacher

- Engage with instructional coaches as part of building-focused professional learning (See Coaching Continuum, page 11.)
- Implement effective practices

**Schools establish the readiness to implement instructional coaching through a process such as the following:**

1. Administrative team and/or distributive leadership team share with staff the “why” and the roles of instructional coaching and how the coaching model supports the school mission, vision, and decision-making process. (See Page 3 for “Why Coaching and Why Now.”)

“A strong administrative presence and clearly defined roles helped staff developers build and sustain confidentiality and trust” (Galm & Perry, 2004).

“To encourage shared leadership schools should develop a culture of inquiry that includes a continuous cycle of reflecting, questioning, gathering evidence, and planning improvement.”

(Lambert in *Learning Along The Way*, Sweeney, 2003).

2. All instructional staff review relevant data and school improvement plan to determine building focus: State, district, building, and classroom assessments, staff survey, asset map, school improvement plan (SIP), grade level expectations (GLEs).
3. All coaches and administrators participate in district trainings relevant to instructional coaching including processes for rolling out instructional coaching in each building.

## B. How does a school implement the coaching model?

### Guiding Principle

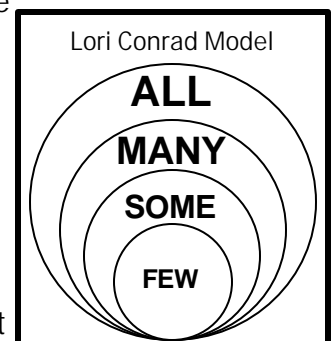
**While honoring the existing expertise within buildings, all instructional staff will participate in the instructional coaching model and progress along a continuum of professional growth toward independence to improve student learning and performance.**

### Schools implement instructional coaching through steps such as:

4. Distributive Leadership Team and instructional coaches collaboratively establish and communicate a menu of professional learning opportunities based upon building needs and priorities.  
Appendices 3 & 4 are survey instruments that a leadership team could adapt and use so that the range of options provided to staff supports the building focus.
5. Each staff member responds to the professional learning options survey and identifies one or more specific ways to engage with the instructional coaching model (see Coaching Continuum, Page 11 and Appendices 3 and 4). Staff members may choose to use a more elaborate form of documentation such as the PGP process or a Learning Focus Plan (see Appendix 5).
6. Based upon the survey results and building priorities, the Distributive Leadership Team prioritizes professional learning for the school using the Lori Conrad model. What professional learning is for **all**, for **many**, for **some**, or just for a **few**?
7. Distributed leadership team establishes a calendar for professional learning (whole group, small group, individual conferring within the coaching cycle, i.e. pre-briefing and debriefing). Learning Improvement Days, collaborative time, extended day times, and sub out days are considered.

"Every school community that I have watched successfully implement new practice has been willing to acknowledge and grapple with cultural habits and relationships. If they don't work, ingrained dynamics of mistrust and opposition will deflect forward movement and ultimately sabotage any efforts to progress" (Larner, 2004).

"Points of entry for each individual will be different so it is essential that multiple options be made available" (Larner, 2004).



**C. How does a school annually assess and evaluate the progress of the instructional coaching model and develop plans to improve and sustain it?**

**Guiding Principle**

The instructional coaching model is most effective in improving student learning when assessment data (student, building, district, state) is used to determine the instructional focus, the coaches' work and professional development options.

**Schools assess and evaluate instructional coaching and sustain implementation through the following:**

8. Distributed leadership team assesses and evaluates formal and informal staff feedback about the instructional coaching using self assessment tools: coaches, teachers, administrators.
9. All instructional staff analyze and share student performance data as it relates to the SIP.
10. All instructional staff assess and evaluate their own professional learning and use the Teaching and Learning cycle to plan future work as it relates to the instructional coach (See Teaching & Learning Cycle, Page 7).
11. All instructional staff share successes and challenges.

"If we don't figure out how to sustain each step forward toward best most effective instructional practice, the money and time spent on professional development is basically thrown away. The answer lies in the capacity to gather and present evidence of results for students tied to specific instructional practice - in one word - assessment" (Larner, 2004).

# V. Training and support for instructional coaches

## Guiding principles

- Coaches require a professional learning community of their own to continually increase their knowledge and skill in order to build the capacity of teachers for quality teaching and learning.
- Spokane Public Schools values and is committed to the initial and ongoing training of coaches as required of this position.

## A. Knowledge and skills: What do coaches need to know and be able to do in Spokane Public Schools?

1. Coaches need to understand and integrate district initiatives that support quality teaching and learning. While all coaches are expected to have working knowledge of the following topics, it is understood that new coaches may need initial training in some areas. As well, all coaches will need continued opportunities to deepen their knowledge and proficiency in these areas. When new building and district initiatives are presented, coaches will need to be included early on in the training for these initiatives in order to be able to assist with the changes they may require.

“...coaches require professional development of their own so that they can improve their knowledge and skill to tailor their coaching to the needs of the teachers and schools with which they work. They need to understand organizational development and instruction, and they need considerable facility in working with adult learners in a coaching relationship”  
(Neufeld and Roper, 2003).

- Curriculum frameworks (K- 12)
- Teaching and learning cycle
- Understanding by Design
- Professional Learning Communities
- Lesson study
- Mentoring Matters
- Principles of learning (How People Learn)
- Adaptive Schools
- Appropriate use of technology in the classroom
- Learning needs of special populations
- State and district assessments
- Program documentation and record keeping
- Other future district initiatives

2. Coaches need to be knowledgeable about quality teaching and learning in their district curriculum and program areas, including:

- Content and processes
- Instructional strategies
- Instructional resources
- Assessment tools/processes
- Use of results to inform instruction
- Current research

3. Coaches need to understand the essential elements of adult learning and organizational development to build teacher and school capacity for growth.

- Goal setting
- Building trust and group development
- Learning focused conversations with inquiry and reflection to guide learning
- Continuum of coaching interactions – consulting, collaboration, coaching
- Classroom observation and teacher feedback
- Gradual release of responsibility with adults
- Change theories
- Effective presentations & Processing protocols
- Working with a variety of learner and/or social styles

**B. Infrastructure: What time and organizational structures will be provided for the on-going professional learning for coaches?**

1. One day at the beginning and end of the school year
  - Coaches may meet in content/instructional level groups or a k-12 group depending upon the district and program needs.
  - Goal setting, review and reflection.
  - Review and/or presentation of district/program initiatives and expectations.
2. Two Friday afternoons per month
  - Coaches meet in content/instructional level learning communities (e.g. primary literacy coaches, intermediate literacy coaches, middle school/high school coaches, K-6 math coaches, mentors, instructional technology coaches).
  - Groups may be combined when working on common training content.
  - Engage in professional learning and collegial problem solving.
3. Coaching Triads
  - ½ day per month to be arranged with a coaching triad from the content/instructional level group.
  - One triad to be arranged with a coaching colleague or principal from within the coach's own building. This can be arranged at any time during the month.
  - Coaches will have a voice in the creation of their coaching triads.
  - Coaching triads will include coaches with various levels of expertise.
  - Coaching triads will engage in the coaching cycle.
  - Coaching triads meet at building sites.
4. One, ½ day per quarter: October, January, March, May
  - K-12 curricular content learning communities (e.g. K-12 literacy coaches, K-12 math coaches).
  - Cross grade level conversations to promote systemic curricular alignment.
5. Coaches will attend regional and national conferences/workshops as appropriate, and with the agreement of their principal and supervisor.
6. Training will be scheduled to avoid taking coaches out of their buildings during the weeks when the WASL is administered.
7. Effort will be made to utilize time during elementary parent conference week for coaching training and support.

Coaching Cycle
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pre-planning conference</li><li>• Observation (e.g. collaborative planning, model lesson, conferences with teacher)</li><li>• Post-conference</li></ul>

**C. Differentiation: How will professional learning for coaches accommodate the different learning needs of individual coaches?**

1. Orientation will be provided for new coaches prior to the start of school.
  - Mentoring Matters
  - Overview of district initiatives
  - Overview with district curriculum coordinators
  - Time with principals and program supervisors to clarify role expectations
2. All coaches will be given opportunities to self-assess and have a voice in selecting their own learning topics.
3. All coaches will meet with their principal and program supervisor for revisiting role expectations, goal setting, and reflection.
4. Professional learning topics/agendas/schedules will be communicated to principals with an open invitation to attend any coach training they feel would be helpful to their own professional learning.

**D. Planning and coordination: Who will collaborate to coordinate the professional learning for instructional coaches?**

- District Professional Learning Department
- Principals
- Curriculum coordinators
- Special Program coordinators
- Individuals from within each of the coach learning communities
- Each coach learning community will have a professional learning committee (e.g. primary literacy facilitators, intermediate literacy facilitators, middle school/high school facilitators, K-6 math facilitators, mentors, tech facilitators) to collaboratively plan their professional development with the leaders of their coaching group.
- Coach leadership team
  - Representative from each of the content/instructional level learning communities
  - Increase communication between coach communities.
  - Assist with planning when groups are combined to work on common training content
- Consultants as appropriate

# VI. Hiring, selection and supervision

## A. The hiring and selection process

The hiring and selection process is based on guiding principles that are aligned with the intent of the philosophy and mission of Spokane Public Schools.

- The hiring and selection process is collaborative. (See below, B. Selection Committee).
- Instructional coaching qualifications focus on in-depth knowledge of the process and content of:
  - a. Literacy (the process of reading and writing), mathematics, and/or hiring purpose (e.g., science concepts and processes, etc.).
  - b. Instructional practices and strategies that are research-based and preferred by Spokane Public Schools.
- Instructional coaching qualifications also focus on evidence of the following (e.g., using references, letters of recommendation, interview questions and process):
  - a. Effective interpersonal communication skills;
  - b. Knowledge of adult learning processes and the gradual release of responsibility;
  - c. Knowledge of the teaching and learning cycle; and
  - d. The ability to work with and support teachers through the coaching cycle [pre-brief, lesson, debrief];
  - e. For further qualifications see current facilitator job descriptions

## B. The selection committee

The hiring and selection of instructional coaches is a collaborative process. A hiring/selection committee, inclusive of the members listed below, will hire all instructional coaching positions regardless of funding source (e.g., Title I, LAP Title V, 728, CSR Grant, etc.).

- Files are screened collaboratively by the co-evaluators or designees.
- Interview questions and look fors will be developed by a team of principals, central office curriculum coordinators, and central office program administrators.
- Members of the hiring/selection committee include:
  - a. The building principal where there is an opening
  - b. Central office program administrator (Title I, LAP, etc.)
  - c. Central office curriculum coordinator
  - d. Currently employed facilitator(s)/coach(es)
  - e. Teacher(s)

### **C. Transfer policy**

Transfer policy is part of the collective bargaining agreement; contract language will be followed.

- Current district facilitators [e.g., Title I/LAP set-asides] do not have to re-apply for their current positions in their current buildings.
- The voluntary transfer policy will be followed according to the collective bargaining agreement.

### **D. Interview process**

Due to the varied nature of the coach positions, all interviews for these positions will include a variety of venues to gather information about the candidates' knowledge, strategies, and skills. Venues include the following.

- Question and answer [45 minutes]: questions include scenarios; look fors provided.
- Lesson presentation [15 minutes]: teach a strategy lesson to teachers; look fors provided.

### **E. Evaluation/supervision**

The blending of content, process, and interpersonal skills demands an evaluation process that is collaborative for all of the instructional coaching positions. The particular supervision scenario and process is chosen collaboratively.

A number of different scenarios exist:

- The principal and central office program and/or central office curriculum coordinator may act as co-evaluators.
- The principal may be the primary and the central office program and/or central office curriculum coordinator may be contributing.
- The central office program and/or central office curriculum coordinator may be the primary and the principal may be contributing.

## VII. Additional recommendations

The Instructional Coaching Work Team encountered several important issues during its work that it did not consider during its initial work. These issues should not be overlooked; therefore, the Work Team recommends that:

1. Coaching becomes a way of working throughout all levels of the system. For example,
  - a. The Principal Design Team could organize coaching triads for principals.
  - b. Teaching and Learning Services could organize coaching triads for all centrally based Teaching and Learning administrative staff.
  - c. School Support Services, Human Resources and the Superintendent's Staff could also establish peer coaching practices.

Just as coaching for teachers will become increasingly effective as it permeates the culture of the entire school district, coaching across all levels of the district could become a system-wide indicator that Spokane Public Schools is becoming a learning organization.

2. The Superintendent's Staff identifies funding strategies in order to provide coaches to all schools. Currently, 3 high schools and 6 elementary schools lack instructional coaches. In addition, most of our current coaches are funded through grants and entitlements.
3. The Work Team convenes no later than April, 2005, to review—and possibly—revise the current model.
4. Further examination of instructional coaching in the high school context be conducted.
5. Special Programs examine the traditional responsibilities given to and/or taken on by instructional facilitators and determine the specific program responsibilities of instructional coaches in realignment with the purpose and intent of instructional coaching in our district.
6. The role of mentors and their relationship to instructional coaches is examined. Questions have been raised about the similarities of responsibilities, length of work year and pay issues.
7. An examination of inequities between coaching groups in funding for materials and supplemental pay is addressed.
8. A formal evaluation of the effectiveness of instructional coaching is completed by 2007, the ending date for the current Strategic Plan.

## **VIII. Appendices**

1. Work Team Members
2. Research base
3. Ways to Participate in Professional Development: A Menu
4. Continuum of Participation
5. Learning Focus Plan
6. Instructional Coach Selection

# Appendix 1: The Instructional Coaching Work Team

REPRESENTED GROUP	MEMBERS	LOCATION/PROGRAM
Elementary Principals	Pat Lynass Cris Welch Rona Williams	Adams Linwood Roosevelt
Middle School Principal	Roberta Kramer	Glover
Curriculum Coordinators	Sharon Becker Pat Mainella	Teaching & Learning Teaching & Learning
Special Programs Coordinators	Kathy Rogers Linda Takami	Special Programs Special Programs
Special Education	Cindy Vig	Special Education
Primary Facilitator	Julia Lockwood	Audubon
Intermediate Facilitator	Molly Bozo	Bemiss
Mathematics Facilitator	Brent Perdue	Holmes
Middle School Facilitator	Deb Cox	Chase
High School Facilitator	Howard De Leeuw	Havermale
High School Assistant Principal	Mike Malsam Wendy Watson	Lewis & Clark North Central
Middle School Assistant Principal	Rob Reavis	Sacajawea
Professional Learning Facilitator	Karen Bialozor	Professional Learning
Director	Irene Gonzales	Teaching & Learning
Teachers	Marion Bageant Michelle McKenzie Christy Mengert	Garfield Logan Lewis & Clark
Mentor	Pat Vacha	Mentor Program (Holmes)
Work Team Facilitators	Dale McDonald Carol Olsen Tim Riordon	Special Programs Professional Learning SHAPeS

## Appendix 2: Research base

### Books

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Hightower, Amy. "San Diego's Big Boom: District Bureaucracy Supports Culture of Learning." Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington. January 2002. [depts.washington.edu/ctpmail/Reports.html#SanDiego](http://depts.washington.edu/ctpmail/Reports.html#SanDiego)

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# Appendix 3: Ways to Participate in Professional Development: A Menu

## Learning from Colleagues

- Observe in each other's classrooms
- Plan and debrief with colleagues
- Look at student work together using protocols
- Eat lunch together to talk about what you've done in your class and what you're thinking
- Try things in your classroom and talk with colleagues

## Study Groups

- Professional literature: articles or books
- Personal reading: articles or books; fiction or non-fiction
- Burning issue or common theme
- Regular team meetings around topic or reading

## Practicing in Your Classroom

- Explicitly focus on strategy throughout classroom
- Teach strategy during reading instruction: Use instructional model; gradual release of responsibility
- Notice your own reading strategies and share with students
- Try strategies in other subject areas

## Working with Staff Developers or Coaches

- Observe demonstration lessons in your own or other classrooms
- Consult on planning
- Co-teach

## Networking

- Visit other schools or classrooms
- Attend labs
- Attend classes or seminars

## Going Public

- Share what you've done that worked or about which you have questions
- Provide demonstrations for colleagues
- Display student work in public spaces
- Present student work for focused discussion

## Assessment

- Journal of your own thinking and learning
- Running records
- Regular conferencing with students
- Asset map
- Portfolios: student, teacher, school
- Anecdotal observations of children's progress

(Adapted with permission from Marjorie Larner, *Pathways: Charting a Course for Professional Learning*)

# Appendix 4: Continuum of Participation Survey

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Our student learning focus this year: \_\_\_\_\_

Our building professional learning focus for this year: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to participate in professional learning in the following way(s):

## Read and discuss

- Articles
- Book(s)

## During

- Already scheduled faculty meeting time
- After school meeting

## Observe

- Demonstration lessons at school
- Classrooms at other schools
- Attend lab (4 visits to the same classroom over the year)

## Implement new instructional strategies in my classroom

- Staff developer demonstration lessons in my classroom
- Plan and co-teach with an instructional coach

## Ongoing Collaborative Learning

- Peer observations
- Critical Friends Group looking at student work and instructional practice

## What instructional practice or strategies are you particularly interested in learning more about?

- Reading comprehension
- Gradual Release of Responsibility (modeling/think - aloud, scaffolding for guided and independent practice)
- Workshop structure for classroom
- Specific subject area: reading, writing, math, science
- Experiential concept-based curriculum planning and instruction
- Other

## Additional ideas, questions, requests

(Adapted with permission from Marjorie Larner, *Pathways: Charting a Course for Professional Learning*)

# Appendix 5: Learning Focus Plan

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

School goal for student learning \_\_\_\_\_

School goal for professional learning \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Goal

What do I want to learn about?

## 2. Inquiry

What do I already know?

What questions do I have?

What question will I pursue?

What resources might I use?

## 3. Reflection

What are my new learnings?

How will my new learning impact my teaching?

# Appendix 6: Instructional Coach Selection

**Guiding Principle: The hiring and selection of instructional coaches is a collaborative process.**

- A hiring/selection committee includes: Principal, program administrator, central office curriculum coordinator, facilitator(s), teacher(s).
- Files are screened collaboratively by the co-evaluators or designees.
- Interview questions and look-fors will be developed by a team of principals and central office curriculum & program administrators.

	<b>Applicants for a position must apply per the posting requirements and go through interview process.</b>			
<b>Tasks</b>	<b>(1) Site "reassignments" (teacher applies only for school in which s/he teaches)</b>	<b>(2) In-district applicants who specify a site in their application.</b>	<b>(3) In-district applicants who does not specify a school.</b>	<b>(4) Outside Applicants.</b>
Initiates the posting of facilitator positions	<i>Positions posted with agreement between the respective principal(s) and program/curriculum coordinator(s).</i>			
Sets up screening (times and dates with Norma)	Set up by program and/or curriculum coordinator. Principal participates in screening.	Set up by program and/or curriculum coordinator. Principal participates in screening. (This may include several principals for efficiency)	Set up by program and/or curriculum coordinator. All principals with open positions participate in screening process.	Set up by program and/or curriculum coordinator. All principals with open positions participate in screening process.
Determines presentation directions for applicant: Teach a strategy lesson	Program and/or curriculum coordinator	Program and/or curriculum coordinator	Program and/or curriculum coordinator	Program and/or curriculum coordinator
Sets up interview and interview team (times and dates with Norma)	Program and/or curriculum coordinator in coordination with principal	Program and/or curriculum coordinator in coordination with principal	Program and/or curriculum coordinator in coordination with all principals with open positions.	Program and/or curriculum coordinator in coordination with all principals with open positions.
Creates/modifies interview Questions	Program and/or curriculum coordinator with draft reviewed by principal	Program and/or curriculum coordinator with draft reviewed by principal	Program and/or curriculum coordinator with draft reviewed by principal	Program and/or curriculum coordinator with draft reviewed by principal
Coordinates materials for the interview team	Program and/or curriculum coordinator	Program and/or curriculum coordinator	Program and/or curriculum coordinator	Program and/or curriculum coordinator
Conducts the interviews	Principal, program/curriculum coordinator, facilitator, and a teacher, if appropriate.	Principal, program/curriculum coordinator, facilitator, and a teacher, if appropriate.	Principals, program/curriculum coordinator, a facilitator, and teacher, if appropriate—may need to be done with partner school(s) if the interview team becomes too large.	Principals, program/curriculum coordinator, a facilitator, and teacher, if appropriate—may need to be done with partner school(s) if the interview team becomes too large.
Coordinates all selection materials to be returned to Norma	Program and/or curriculum coordinator	Program and/or curriculum coordinator	Program and/or curriculum coordinator	Program and/or curriculum coordinator
Completes reference checks when appropriate	Principal	Principal	Principal	Principal