

Noyce Foundation
Every Child a Reader and Writer

Literacy Coaching in Support of Writers Workshop

Introduction: The Every Child a Reader and Writer Initiative seeks to assure the development of competent readers and writers by promoting effective instructional practices. Literacy coaches play a leading role in assisting teachers to implement powerful writing workshops within their classrooms. The Noyce Foundation includes all levels of the district and school system in the project design, based on the premise that important, sustainable improvement in classroom instruction requires the collaborative efforts of all players. This document describes the assumptions implicit in the coaching model for ECRW, and articulates the role of the key players in supporting literacy coaching – that of the teacher, the coach, the principal and the district.

Assumptions

- The coaching relationship is based on a mutual desire and agreement to improve literacy achievement for all students.
- All individuals within the system – teachers, coaches, principals and district administrators - work to create a learning team to increase the capacity of all.
- The coach has participated in literacy professional development above and beyond that typically provided to classroom teachers, and utilizes this well of information and understanding to support and assist teachers as they work to improve their classroom practice.
- Effective coaching is provided within a context of sustained interaction between the coach and the teacher, working toward jointly established goals.
- Effective coaching is provided within a broader system of professional development.
- Time constraints necessitate that coaches, teachers, principals and district administrators prioritize the tasks articulated in this document - an ideal model that is difficult to fully implement.

Structural Definition: Cycle of Coaching

- Includes weekly or more frequent sessions over a 6-week period or longer
- Includes classroom observations
- Includes pre and post-conferences (which sometimes can be combined)
- Includes pursuit of a goal or ‘line of coaching’

The Role of the Coach

Collaborative Planning and Leadership: To work collaboratively with the school leadership team and the principal to

- establish a common vision, with long and short-term goals for professional development and student achievement.
- formulate and implement plans for necessary professional development.
- determine a coaching plan for the school, based on the needs of the teachers.
- visit classrooms with the principal.
- meet with the principal on a regular basis to plan and harmonize their complementary roles.
- advise the leadership of resources that would be helpful.

Support for Individual Teachers: To work in partnership with individual teachers by

- observing classroom practice and assisting the teacher to reflect on strengths and needs.
- looking at student work with the teacher to assess student strengths and needs, and instructional implications.
- planning instruction with the teacher.
- providing demonstration lessons and debriefing with teacher observers.
- providing direct instruction or explicit information for the teacher in areas of mutually identified need.
- assisting the teacher in establishing a literate learning community within the classroom (tone, habits of discourse, relationship, a physical environment which supports student self-management).
- co-teaching with the teacher and reflecting on the practices.
- assisting teachers to match appropriate resources, materials and tasks to student needs
- utilizing a variety of strategies selectively, in order to assist individual teachers.

Support for Groups of Teachers: To work collaboratively with groups of teachers by

- observing, planning, modeling lessons and reflecting with groups of teachers working on a common goal.
- providing professional development workshops in areas of common interest and need.
- leading groups in studying professional literature and looking at student work.
- meeting with grade levels and study groups and providing support for the work of the group.

The Role of the Teacher

Typically, a teacher will work with the coach for a sustained period of time while receiving coaching assistance. During this coaching cycle, the teacher will

- demonstrate willingness to be a learner and to add to his/her instructional repertoire.
- meet with the coach regularly to debrief, reflect on practice and set goals.
- welcome the coach into the classroom and work in partnership with the coach to define goals and devise the coaching plan.
- follow through on commitments.
- take notes and monitor own progress toward goals.

Activities might include: watching demonstration lessons; shadowing the coach and discussing observations; being shadowed by the coach and receiving feedback; being observed by the coach and receiving feedback; reviewing student work with the coach; co-teaching with the coach; planning lessons or units of study.

The Role of the Principal

Work collaboratively with the school leadership team, the coach and individual teachers to

- establish a common vision, with long and short-term goals for professional development and student achievement.
- formulate and implement plans for necessary professional development.
- determine a coaching plan for the school.
- visit and observe in classrooms.
- meet with the coach on a regular basis to plan and harmonize their complementary roles.
- obtain needed resources to promote coaching activities (i.e. classroom coverage, books and articles).
- communicate the appropriate roles of all in supporting effective coaching in the school.
- provide space for the coach to work.

The Role of the District Office

Work collaboratively with the district literacy leadership team to

- plan strategically for deployment of coaching resources within the district.
- establish structures and practices which support successful coaching to improve instructional practices.
- ensure that coaching is fully integrated into the district's professional development program
- manage the distribution of resources necessary to support successful coaching practices (i.e., materials, substitutes).
- develop a common district vision for coaching
- communicate the role of coaching and its importance to the Board and the public.
- balance competing demands so that current priorities receive sufficient emphasis to be successful, and other important issues aren't abandoned.