

## Beliefs about Instructional Coaching in EL Schools

### **Purpose of Instructional Coaching**

Instructional coaching in EL schools increases the achievement and engagement of every student by bringing out the best performance of every teacher. Coaches use both student-centered and teacher-centered methods to help teachers improve the decisions they make about their instruction.

**1. Instructional coaching is focused on supporting the learning, growth and achievement of students and is most often linked to a school's improvement priorities.**

Student growth and achievement should be at the center of all instructional coaching. Formal coaching cycles are guided by goals articulated by the teacher and informed by the school's larger professional development and EL work plan goals.

**2. Student-centered or teacher-centered methods of coaching are strategically selected based on individual teacher needs.**

Student-centered coaching focuses on the analysis of student learning through data and student work in order to inform decisions about instruction. In contrast, teacher-centered coaching focuses on the implementation of specific practices or curricula with an emphasis on teachers' actions. The method of coaching to be used with teachers will depend upon their skills and needs. In general, teacher-centered coaching is appropriate when teachers are working to adopt new practices such as workshop model instruction or assessments for learning strategies. However, coaches should move along the continuum toward student-centered practices as soon as appropriate, since student-centered coaching better supports teachers in aligning their instructional choices with the outcomes for students. (Sweeney, 2011)

**3. Instructional coaching is most effective when it occurs in cycles.**

Coaching cycles involve goal setting, learning, feedback, and reflection. These cycles are designed to improve the decisions teachers make about their instruction in order to improve student achievement and engagement. Research indicates that coaching increases the likelihood that teachers adopt new teaching practices at a higher degree of quality compared with teachers who do not receive coaching support following professional development. (Knight & Cornett, 2008) Other school structures such as professional development, peer observations, and team planning may complement coaching cycles and increase the likelihood of improving teacher competency and student achievement.

**4. Instructional coaching is rooted in relational trust and effective communication.**

Successful coaching is dependent on the components of trust: competence, integrity, respect, and personal regard for others. Clear communication about roles, responsibilities, and processes also facilitate effective instructional coaching.

#### 5. **Consistent structures, systems, and internal capacity support instructional coaching.**

Sustainable coaching is grounded by school-wide structures and systems. Teachers and coaches know what to expect and become proficient and efficient over time at using adopted tools. Ideally, coaching schedules include coaching for every teacher, every year. While school designers often help set up and deliver some coaching, it is important for schools to develop internal capacity for coaching. This role may be filled by an instructional guide or a lead teacher. It may also be supported through structures like peer coaching.

#### **Role of School Designers in Supporting Coaching**

Most often, the EL school designer supports the school with developing or refining a coaching system and associated structures. In addition, the school designer provides school or district coaches with professional support and feedback.

Often, school designers provide direct coaching to a limited number of teachers. This practice can be effective for modeling coaching practices for site-based staff. However, the school must determine how it will build internal coaching capacity, since using a school designer as the primary coach is not sustainable over a long period of time.

#### **Recommended Reading**

Cornett, J. & Knight, J. (2008). *Research on Coaching*.

[http://www.instructionalcoach.org/tools/Cornett\\_Knight\\_2008.pdf](http://www.instructionalcoach.org/tools/Cornett_Knight_2008.pdf)

Knight, J. (2007). *Instructional coaching: A partnership approach to improving instruction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Sweeney, D. (2011). *Student-centered coaching*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.