

PIIC News

The Pennsylvania Institute for Instructional Coaching

Inside...

- Letter from the Executive Director, p. 2
- Book Review: Teach, Reflect, Learn: Building Your Capacity for Success in the Classroom, p. 2
- Coaching to Break the Data Barrier, p. 3
- Policy Makers Take Notice, p. 4

December 2015
Volume 6 - Issue 2

The Gift of Data

By Katie Bungo and Lisa Freidhoff, Indiana Area SD Instructional Coaches

With the holiday season quickly upon us, this time of year serves as a reminder that we are almost at the halfway point of the school year. It is only a matter of time before an administrator asks you as a coach to schedule a data day with your teachers. With so many instructional minutes being committed to various assessments, the expectation for teachers to read, analyze, and use student data in their instruction is greater than ever.

A coach is an important part of the data analysis team, which first begins by clearly determining the purpose and goals for looking at data. By collecting, analyzing, and using data, Quadrant 2 of the PIIC 4 Quadrant framework, conversations between the coach and teachers can lead to instructional changes in the classroom.

Just like receiving a present, data comes in all shapes and sizes. Will you first open the largest box containing PSSA and PVAAS data? Maybe you're the type to go for the middle-sized box containing CDT, DIBELS, or other benchmark assessment. We know that good things come in small packages, so maybe you are wanting to unwrap your daily formative assessment, whether it is a bell ringer, seventh-inning stretch, or your ticket out the door.

During a one-on-one conference between the coach and the teacher, coaches have the opportunity to lead teachers through a myriad of data by asking specific questions at various points in the Before-During-After (BDA) cycle:

1. When you look at data broadly, such as the PSSA or PVAAS, what grade-level

curriculum gaps do you see?

2. When you narrow your focus on diagnostic assessments, what strands indicate overall students' strengths and weaknesses?
3. When you drill down into a specific student's data, what plan can be put into place for small group instruction, differentiation, enrichment, or remediation?

Whichever box is opened first, rest assured the coach's greatest gift will be helping the

teachers better understand their learners and assist in making professional decisions about their students' instructional path to success.

For more information, please contact:
Katie Bungo, kbungo@iasd.cc

"By collecting, analyzing, and using data, Quadrant 2 of the PIIC 4 Quadrant framework, conversations between the coach and teachers can lead to instructional changes in the classroom."

Professional Learning Opportunity Dates

January 11-13, 2016
Penn Stater
Conference Center
State College, PA

May 2-4, 2016
Penn Stater
Conference Center
State College, PA

More information available on our websites:
www.pacoaching.org

www.instituteforinstructionalcoaching.org

www.cultureofcoaching.blogspot.com

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter @PIICcoach!

*Dishing you a very
happy and healthy
New Year
See you in 2016!*

PIIC'S MISSION: To support instructional coaching which helps teachers strengthen instructional practice, increase student engagement, and improve student learning.

Letter from PIIC's Executive Director

"Data, I think, is one of the most powerful mechanisms for telling stories. I take a huge pile of data and I try to get it to tell stories" so says economist, Steven Levitt. Those numbers tell the stories and we need them in order to amass a comprehensive look at students, educators, and systems.

So much of what instructional coaches and mentors do revolves around our data quadrant: *focusing on collecting, analyzing, and using data to assess student needs*. Our data collection is intended to support a continuous improvement strategy necessary to build an effective instructional coaching model. But more than that, collecting data gives us a deliberate and defined purpose and goal, keeping us moving in the right direction.

In the *Standards for Professional Learning* from Learning Forward, the data standard indicates that, *"Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning."* We can collect formal data on student achievement, e.g., standardized test scores, and school wide performance as well as the data on student attendance, graduation rates, discipline referrals, AP and IB course participation, etc. Together, these are the essential data

needed to help inform the professional development decisions for the teaching staff so that the varied requirements of a diverse population are met. All of these data help teachers recognize where teaching and learning fit into the broader picture of school improvement.

That means both student and educator data need to be collected, analyzed, and applied for continuous improvement. "Educators need to care for students, but they also need to help students get better in the one thing that can serve them for life – their day-to-day learning" (Sharratt & Fullan, 2012). These authors go on to say that, *"All this information goes for naught unless educators can put faces on the data at all points on the learning continuum and know what to do to help the children behind the statistics."*

School administrators, legislators, and other educational "investors" want to know about assessing student needs and collecting the data that indicate student achievement. We collect formative and summative data from a variety of sources: PVAAS, PSSA, Classroom Diagnostic Tools, Keystone Exams, Project Based Assessments, and others. But, how effective are these collection tools if we do not make a focused and intentional decision to work with teachers so that they understand not only what the data tell us and how to use it but also the multitude of data

they can collect to assess student achievement, teacher capacity, and effective professional learning?

Instructional coaches change teacher practice. They create an environment for teacher collaboration where professional conversations about student achievement, educator needs, and system wide improvement take place. In this era of responsibility and accountability, we acknowledge that collecting evidence is the data that we need to bring to the table. Teachers and coaches work together in the *"before"* to decide what data to collect; they engage in cooperative and collaborative teaching and learning in the *"during"* and then debrief in the *"after"* where timely, specific, and descriptive feedback is offered by both parties. Teachers and coaches need to use the evidence (data) they collect in the BDA cycle so they understand more about the impact of their work on each other and their students. We want them to know *"how they are doing"* and what kind of difference they are making in the lives of the students they teach. We want them to collect what they need and use what they collect. That makes a difference.

Sincerely,



**PIIC has expanded to 24 of 29 Intermediate Units across the state for the 2015-16 school year!
Go to www.pacoaching.org to read more!**

Teach, Reflect, Learn: Building Your Capacity for Success in the Classroom

Book Review by Traci Uhrich, East Pennsboro Area SD Instructional Coach

Merriam Webster defines self-reflection as "careful thought about your own behaviors and beliefs." It offers synonyms such as self-contemplation, self-examination, self-observation, self-questioning, and self-reflection. In education, just how often do we do this? It's so easy to get caught up in the everyday organized chaos that surrounds

us. This makes it difficult to take the time needed to self-reflect on the impact we have on student achievement.

"Even in a world of online and virtual classes, the need to build relationships, develop quality authentic learning experiences, provide timely feedback, and develop a lifelong love of learning is a necessity."

In Pete Hall and Alisa Simeral's book *Teach Reflect Learn: Building your Capacity for Success in the Classroom*, readers are guided through a process on how to refine their ability to self-reflect. The

Continued on page 3, Teach, Reflect, Learn

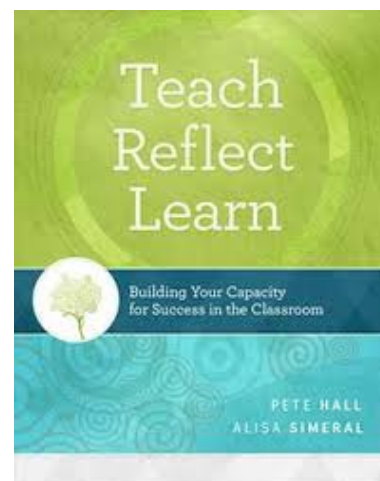
teacher is the number one determining factor for student success; this is a very powerful piece of data. So, how do we make sure we are making the right type of impact? We take the time to self-reflect. Even in a world of online learning and virtual classes, the need to build relationships, develop quality authentic learning experiences, provide timely feedback, and develop a lifelong love for learning is a necessity.

This book offers ideas and strategies to nurture our teachers in the act of self-reflection. First, a self-assessment is provided to gauge self-reflective tendencies. Next, a continuum on self-reflection is offered that contains four stages to contemplate in your practice: are you in the Unaware, Conscious, Action or Refinement stage? Finally, a Reflective Cycle is explained that will act as the vehicle that moves you forward in the practice of self-reflection. Throughout the book are “Tales from the Trenches.” These are anecdotes and insights from teachers in the classroom and how they go about refining themselves as self-reflective educators.

You may be asking yourself, how do we as coaches support this growth for teacher reflection in their practices? It’s simple! Just follow the PIIC four quadrant framework: *one-on-one and small group support; collecting, analyzing, and using data; using evidence-based literacy practices; and utilizing reflective and non-evaluative practices.* Following this framework allows coaches to develop relationships necessary to encourage self-reflection among teachers. We need to listen and provide feedback, utilize

strategies, and reinforce structure to guide teachers toward achieving their goals as educational professionals in the Before-During-After (BDA) cycle. This will help teachers make the greatest impact on student achievement.

For more information, please contact:
Traci Uhrich, tuhrich@epasd.org



“Growth, improvement, progress, and development don’t just happen overnight, and they typically don’t happen accidentally. They’re a result of intentionality, planning, conscious effort, and thought.”
Teach, Reflect, Learn: Building Your Capacity for Success in the Classroom

Coaching to Break the Data Barrier

By Michele Lasko, New Kensington Arnold SD Instructional Coach

Element 2 of the PIIC 4 Quadrant Framework focuses on *collecting, analyzing, and using data* to identify student needs, assess changes in classroom instructional practice, and measure student progress. The recent transition to the PA Core aligned state assessments has caused coaches working through the PIIC model to carefully consider how they can move classroom teachers forward in the analysis of data and ultimately impact student achievement.

It is important for coaches to embed the professional development they receive from monthly PIIC coach networking meetings, the PIIC Professional Learning Opportunities (PLO), and IU sponsored data trainings, coupled with the knowledge gained from resources provided on *The Instructional Coaching Resource Guide* website (www.instituteforinstructionalcoaching.org) so that teachers have a foundation

for understanding the data. Coaches can provide guidance in accessing the right data through planned professional development days, after school sessions, chat and chews, and individual planning sessions.

Conversations in the Before-During-After (BDA) cycle focused on data between a coach and a teacher allow

“It is important for a coach to embed the professional development they receive... so that teachers have a foundation for understanding the data.”

for a deeper understanding of the data that guide the teacher to make effective instructional decisions. This year, the PVAAS Core Team developed a resource, *Digging Deeper into Content Areas*, to assist coaches and teachers in examining data to guide the process of reflection and to answer the “root

cause” or the “why.” The resource provides guiding questions for reflection around Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Organization (CIAO). It is through this purposeful reflection that coaches and teachers can identify areas of concern and develop next steps for addressing student needs.

Traditionally, districts focus on data in the fall of the school year and accountability for sustained reflection seems to fade as the year progresses; however, a coach’s role is to provide ample opportunities for data dialogues and sustain those opportunities for appropriate reflection on data throughout the entire school year by using the BDA cycle of inquiry in all coach and teacher interactions.

For more information, please contact:
Michele Lasko, mlasko@nksd.com

Policy Makers Take Notice

By PIIC Management Team (Adapted from October 2013 JSD Article)

It is not difficult to persuade school leaders and teachers that instructional coaching represents an important alternative to traditional teacher professional learning. Many recognize that job-embedded professional learning in the form of instructional coaching, aligned to a clear set of research-based practices, is non-evaluative, and, if provided with regularity, can help teachers become better at their craft. Real-time, side-by-side support is infinitely more effective than drop-in or drive-by professional learning that offers no opportunity for collaboration and collective problem solving.

There may be general agreement on this point, but that is not enough. In fact, a very important constituency — policymakers — may not be enthusiastic about the promise of coaching. Why is that? Policymakers want to see evidence that coaching makes a difference for teachers and students. To this group, making a difference means improving performance on standardized tests. In our world, we know that making a difference begins with the population that is closest to the end result... the teachers who are supporting student learning.

Unfortunately, in the current fiscal climate, leaders want to know not only that their return on investments are based on firm grounds theoretically, but also that instructional coaching works. It's challenging, if not impossible, to show immediate results for students with a range of skills and a variety of needs. And, there are many variables in schools that contribute to the growth of students. Evaluated over a period of time, school communities must decide the efficacy of the initiatives implemented in their schools. Instructional coaching, however, is not an initiative or an intervention. It is a job-embedded, differentiated teacher professional development model that supports consistent, persistent, and insistent professional learning designed to build teacher capacity, increase student engagement, and influence student learning.

A report in the December 22, 2015 Education Week issue,

indicates that the RTT funding “has triggered a national conversation in which teacher development; high-quality standards and assessments; support for struggling schools; and the use of data to drive decisions are no longer seen

as separate components of an effective school system.” Every teacher deserves a coach and that coaching helps teachers improve their practice, meet the diverse needs of their students, and address all the component parts of school

wide improvement. Moving the dial on student outcomes, however, is difficult and that only with good data and thoughtful assessments can we assure funders and those participating in our work that instructional coaching is a worthy teacher professional learning investment.

For more information, please contact:

Info@pacoaching.org

“In our world, we know that making a difference begins with the population that is closest to the end result... the teachers who are supporting student learning.”

The PIIC 4-Quadrant Framework

PIIC advocates ***one-on-one and small group support*** for teachers, coaches, and school leaders using the ***BDA cycle of consultation***.

PIIC focuses on ***collecting, analyzing, and using data*** to identify student needs, assess changes in classroom instructional practice and measure student progress.

PIIC emphasizes the use of ***evidence-based literacy practices***.

PIIC supports ***reflective and non-evaluative*** practices.

The Holly Building
104 1/2 Forrest Avenue
Suites 21-24
Narberth, PA 19072
484-278-4147 (O)
484-278-4148 (F)
info@pacoaching.org
www.pacoaching.org
www.instituteforinstructionalcoaching.org



The Pennsylvania Institute
for
Instructional Coaching

Staff
Executive Director
Ellen Eisenberg
Associate Director
Bruce Eisenberg
**Communications
Coordinator & Editor**
Erin Saunders