



# *Instructional Coaching Model*

Spokane Public Schools  
April, 2010

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## Section 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. Since that time, instructional coaches have been a part of our district's program in differing roles (Early Childhood Facilitators, Instructional Coaches, Facilitators, etc.). In 2004, an *Instructional Coaching Model* was developed in order to bring coherence to the differing roles. The objectives of the first *Instructional Coaching Model* 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 professional learning
- Participate in on-going and extensive professional development

Since the amount of research into instructional coaching has continually increased, it is now essential to develop a clear and specific description of the *Instructional Coaching Model* to build coherence across the District. In early 2007, the Professional Development Advisory Committee, composed of administrators, teachers and instructional coaches, began to work on updating the *Professional Learning Framework* (see appendix). In 2008, the committee began work on revising the coaching model.

### Committee members

|                           |  |                         |
|---------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Jenny Rose, Co-Chair      | President, Spokane Education Association | SEA                     |
| Sharon Robinson, Co-Chair | Director, Professional Learning          | Central Administration  |
| Barb Knauss               | Math Instructional Coach                 | Longfellow Elementary   |
| Barbara Vally             | Title I Instructional Aide               | Regal Elementary        |
| Bridget Lewis             | Executive Director                       | Central Administration  |
| Carol Kaplan              | Science teacher                          | Rogers High School      |
| Christie Mengert          | Math teacher                             | Shadle Park High School |
| Debra Oakley              | Coordinator, Elementary Math             | Central Administration  |
| Gwen Harris               | Principal                                | Bryant School           |
| Heather Miciak            | Literacy Instructional Coach             | Regal Elementary        |
| Idalia Apodaca            | Teacher, ELD                             | Shaw Middle School      |
| Irene Gonzales            | Executive Director                       | Central Administration  |
| Jerry Johnsen             | Math facilitator                         | Central Administration  |
| Lydia Fesler              | Coordinator, Elementary Literacy         | Central Administration  |
| Kathy Williams            | Principal                                | Ridgeview Elementary    |
| Linda Takami              | Coordinator, Special Programs            | Central Administration  |
| Maureen Ramos             | President, Spokane Education Association | SEA                     |
| Paula Ronhaar             | Principal                                | Sacajawea Middle School |
| Rebecca Franklin          | Language arts teacher                    | Sacajawea Middle School |
| Scott Hunter              | Instructional Coach                      | Audubon Elementary      |
| Tami McCracken            | Math Instructional Coach                 | Rogers High School      |
| Tracy Williams            | Director, Special Programs               | Central Administration  |

## B. The Purpose of Instructional Coaching

**The purpose of the *Instructional Coaching Model* is to help close the student achievement gap and accelerate learning for all students by building teacher capacity through implementation of effective instructional practices (Casey, 2008).**

The coaching model recognizes the needs of each individual teacher and is tied to a School Improvement Plan (SIP) and the District's Strategic Plan. In this way effective collaboration can result in the ultimate goal of improved student performance.

"Instructional coaching is fundamentally about teachers, teacher leaders, school administrators and central office leaders examining practice in reflective ways with a strong focus on student learning and results as the ultimate barometer of improvement" (Annenberg Institute for School Reform).

## C. Rationale

Instructional coaching is an action step in the current Spokane Public Schools Strategic Plan (2007-2010). Coaching can be instrumental in helping to:

- Meet Adequate Yearly Progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science in all schools and at the District level
- Increase high school graduation rates
- Provide a clear and specific connection between student achievement data, the School Improvement Plans (SIP) and the District Strategic Plan
- Encourage equitable student participation to be disaggregated by ethnicity, gender and socio-economic status in all programs and student discipline data

Support for the coaching model is cited in *Professional Development Keyed to the Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools* (OSPI, 2006). In the references at the end of the *Professional Learning Framework* there are additional research documents to support the current model.

## D. Guiding principles emerged from our work relative to coaching-teacher professional learning teams

- Student learning is at the heart of our work.
- Professional learning emerges from mutual respect, collegial relationships and a shared responsibility for student learning.
- Multiple entry points in the coaching continuum (see pages 8-9) provide team members the opportunity to engage in professional learning.
- Job embedded learning provides authentic context.
- Learners benefit from descriptive feedback relevant to their professional goals.
- Gradual release of responsibility supports student and adult learning.

## Section II – The *Instructional Coaching Model*

### A. The Roles of Instructional Coaches in the *Instructional Coaching Model* (roles are not in any priority order)

#### **Role #1: *Classroom Supporter***

**Purpose:** To increase the quality and effectiveness of classroom instruction based on using the gradual release model and may include but is not limited to:

- Collaborating
- Co-planning
- Modeling
- Co-teaching
- Provide descriptive feedback based on teacher-requested observation

#### **Role #2: *Instructional Supporter***

**Purpose:** To support the implementation of effective instructional strategies including but not limited to:

- Assessment for learning
- Differentiation of instruction
- Standards based grading
- Building teacher capacity by working with intervention groups for short periods of time in elementary classrooms

#### **Role #3: *Curriculum or Content Facilitator***

**Purpose:** To promote implementation of state standards through adopted curricula including but not limited to:

- Increasing teacher content knowledge
- Facilitating a better understanding of the structure of the written, taught, and tested curriculum
- Dissecting standards to guide identification of essential knowledge and skills

#### **Role #4: *Data Coach***

**Purpose:** To facilitate conversations using data to drive instructional decisions including but not limited to:

- Collaborating with teachers to analyze formative and summative student achievement data
- Assisting teachers with the use of data to improve student learning

#### **Role #5: *Facilitator for Change***

**Purpose:** To engage teachers in reflective thinking while looking at their own instructional practices critically and analytically including but not limited to:

- Fostering a safe, trusting environment for teachers
- Introducing alternatives and refinements for teacher instructional practices

#### **Role #6: *Learner***

**Purpose:** To engage in continuous learning in order to keep current including but not limited to:

- Engaging in professional development opportunities and professional reading
- Practicing and reflecting about what is learned

**Role #7: Professional Learning Facilitator**

**Purpose:** To design and facilitate effective professional learning opportunities based on SPS *Professional Learning Framework* (see appendix) including but not limited to:

- Providing professional development
- Facilitating other forms of professional development (e.g., bringing in consultants)

**Role #8: Resource**

**Purpose:** To identify a variety of resources to enhance classroom instruction and student achievement including but not limited to:

- Identifying instructional and assessment resources requested by teachers
- Sharing research and instructional best practices

**Role #9: School Leader**

**Purpose:** To support and communicate the school and district initiatives with the school community including but not limited to:

- Involving stakeholders in the implementation of the School Improvement Plan
- Connecting with community stakeholders by sharing instructional practices that impact students
- Acting as a strong advocate for student learning

**B. The Roles of the Principal in the *Instructional Coaching Model***

**Role #1: Communicator**

**Purpose:** To build understanding of the interconnectedness of the coaching model, school improvement plans, and district initiatives including but not limited to:

- Articulating the purpose and components of the coaching model to staff
- Leading and communicating to staff about the district and building initiatives in relation to the coaching model
- Maintaining the fidelity of the *Instructional Coaching Model*

**Role #2: Facilitator**

**Purpose:** To collaboratively plan and coordinate professional learning including but not limited to:

- Fostering a safe and trusting environment
- Aligning professional learning with the building's SIP (School Improvement Plan)
- Facilitating access to the coaching model process

**Role #3: Instructional Leader**

**Purpose:** To support coaches and teachers in the coaching model including but not limited to:

- Implementing the school and district initiatives
- Meeting with school coaches and leadership team on a regular basis to examine school data and assist in school-wide planning (including professional learning)
- Acting as a strong advocate for student learning based on data used to inform instruction
- Sharing best practices research
- Committing to meet regularly with coach or coaches to support their roles

**Role #4: Learner**

**Purpose:** To promote and model professional learning including but not limited to:

- Engaging in professional reading and learning opportunities
- Participating actively in the teaching and learning cycle (pg. 9)

**Role #5: Evaluator**

- The Principal is responsible for evaluating the coach.

## **C. The Roles of the Teacher in the *Instructional Coaching Model***

**Role #1: Instructor**

**Purpose:** Reflect, refine and implement effective instructional practices to increase student achievement including but not limited to:

- Aligning instruction to standards (written, taught, and tested curricula)
- Advocating for their students' learning needs
- Collaborating with coach

**Role #2: Learner**

**Purpose:** To engage in continuous learning including but not limited to:

- Choosing learning opportunities, supported by the instructional coach, e.g. book studies, collaboration time, site based workshops, one-on-one coaching, co-planning
- Creating learning goals consistent with School Improvement Plan
- Exploring, implementing, reflecting, and adhering to best practices
- Learning and implementing intervention strategies in the classroom

**Role #3: Learning Partner**

**Purpose:** To engage in professional collaborative relationships including but not limited to:

- Fostering a safe, trusting environment
- Participating actively in the Coaching Continuum (pg. 9)

**Role #4: Assessor**

**Purpose:** To participate in data conversations that influence instructional decisions including but not limited to:

- Analyzing formative and summative assessment
- Using assessment data to inform instruction

## D. Coaching Continuum

### Building blocks of the Instructional Coaching Continuum

(To better understand the illustrated continuum (pg. 9) begin in the middle and work outwards.)

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 pg. 9 –*Develop a professional learning relationship*)

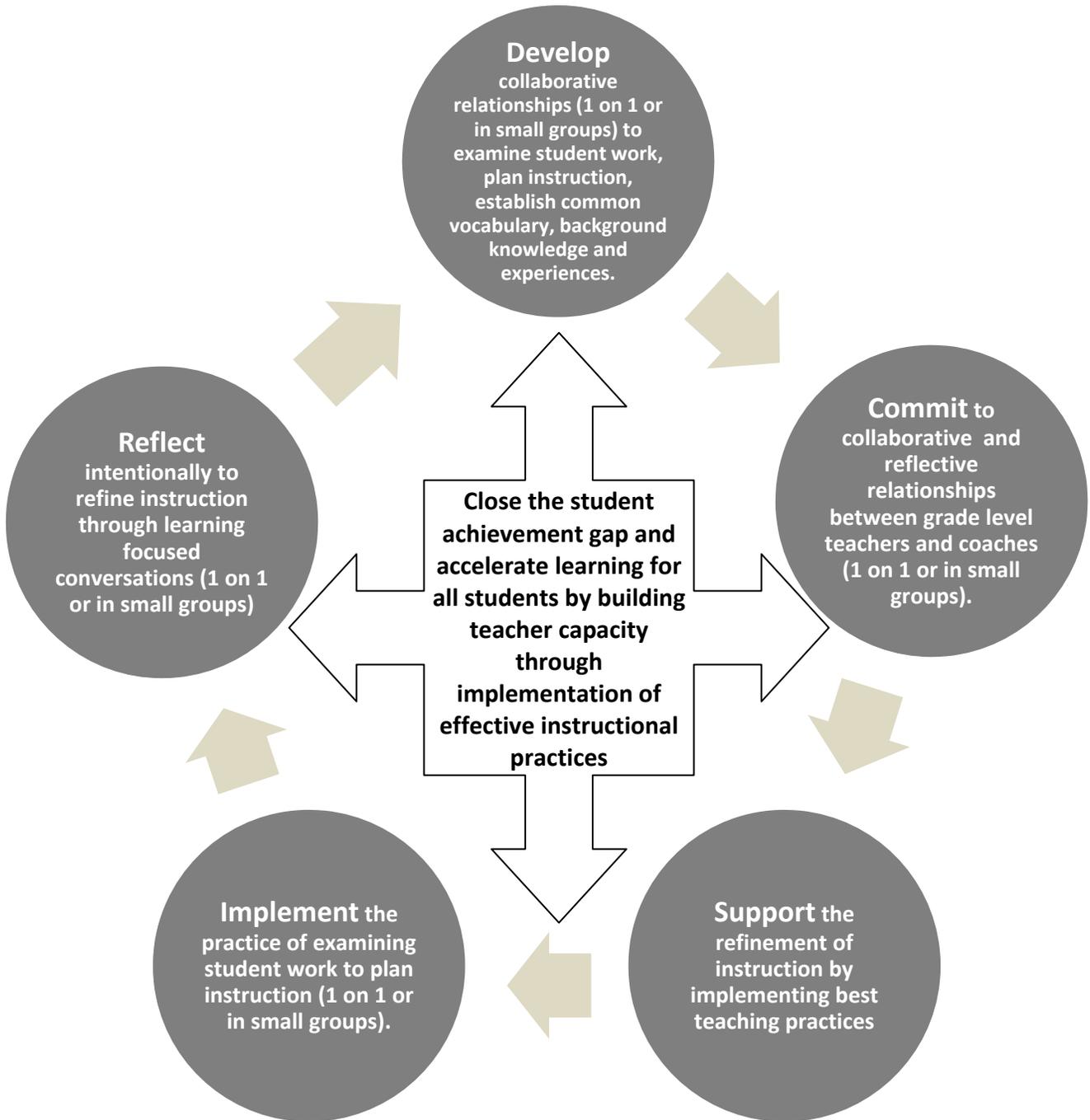
Commitment to a professional relationship between a coach and an individual teacher or small group of teachers takes the work of common experiences to deeper levels of collaboration. At the beginning, the building of congenial relationships begins with shared knowledge and new understandings for change in practices. After providing background content and context, the coach and teacher(s) begin to collaboratively articulate purpose for new teaching practice, assess need using student assessment, and make plans for implementation. At this stage the coach may develop and model the lesson as the teacher(s) 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 pg. 9 - *Commit to a Professional Learning Relationship*)

The coach and teacher(s) continue to build upon demonstration lessons and grow into a co-teaching relationship. At this point in the relationship the coach and teacher(s) 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 pg. 9 - *Support Teachers' professional learning through coaching roles*)

Building upon co-teaching experiences, the coach supports the teacher(s) through guided practice as they takes on the responsibility of the teaching. Both the teacher(s) and the coach participate in the planning, reflecting and debriefing of the lesson. (See pg. 9 - *Implement professional learning through coaching roles*)

At this stage of the coaching continuum, the teacher(s) plans instruction based on assessment data, participates in a pre-conference with the coach, and determines the focus of the classroom visit by the coach. Then the teacher debriefs with the coach, and plans for further instruction. (See pg. 9 - *Reflect on practices to refine implementation*)

# Coaching Continuum



## E. The role of the coach does not include:

- Evaluating teachers
- Providing information that would be used for evaluation
- 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. Coaches who also have administrative duties (ex. Principal Assistants, department heads) may feel fragmented. Principals need to clearly communicate the division of duties so that teachers do not feel that they are being evaluated by someone serving as their coach.

## Section III. Implementation of the *Instructional Coaching Model* in schools

### Essential Understandings

- **Instructional staff will have options about how to participate in the coaching model.**
- **Participation in instructional coaching is most effective when the purpose of instructional coaching as well as the roles of coaches, principals and teachers are clearly articulated and communicated.**
- ***Instructional Coaching Models* are most effective in improving student learning when assessment data is used.**

To promote a shared understanding of instructional coaching throughout the school system, each school beginning or reviewing their implementation of the coaching model will participate in a three part implementation process of readiness, implementation and assessment.

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

1. Administrative team communicates with staff the purpose and the roles of instructional coaches and how the coaching model supports improvement of student learning.
2. Instructional and administrative staff review relevant data and school improvement plan (SIP) to determine building focus for coaching through the decision making process.

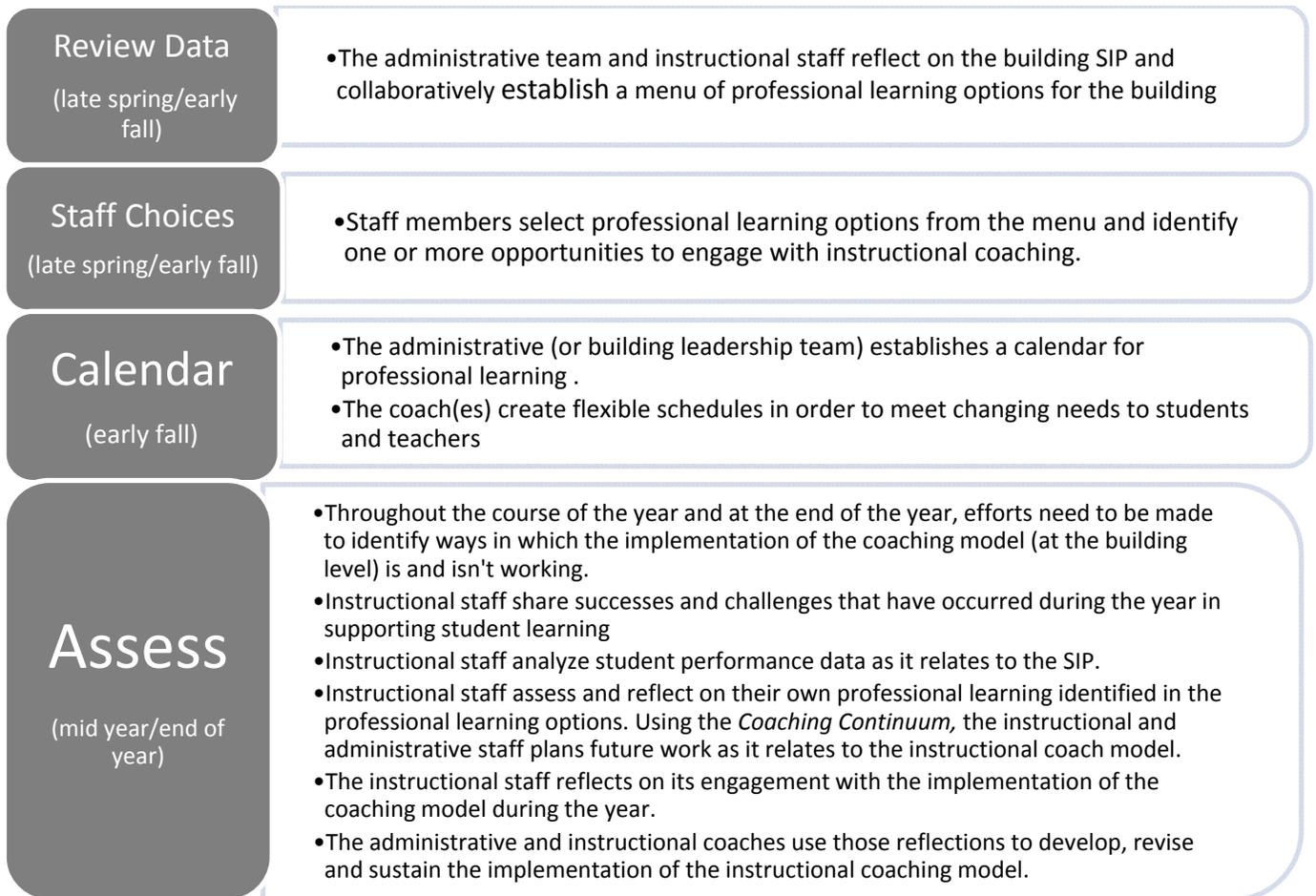
3. Coaches and administrators participate in district trainings relevant to instructional coaching including the processes for determining readiness and implementing the *Instructional Coaching Model* in each building.

**A. How does a school implement the coaching model? How is the implementation assessed?**

The on-going foundation of a professional learning community is essential for building a common knowledge and experience around the written, taught and tested curriculum. Throughout the implementation of coaching in a school, coaches are able to:

- Work with teachers to align instruction to state standards
- Facilitate inter-visitations to see and 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
- Attend coaching trainings and bring information and strategies back to building staff
- Help to establish common vocabulary; background knowledge and experiences; and collaborative relationships.

Schools implement instructional coaching and assess that implementation through a process best fitting the school culture. One suggestion of a process is illustrated here:



## Section IV - Training and support for the *Instructional Coaching Model*

### 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. (*Spokane Schools Professional Learning Framework* 2008); *Improving Instruction Through Coaching* (OSPI & CSTP, 2007); *Taking the Lead* (Killion, 2005)

### 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 best practices to support quality teaching and learning.

A. Training for new coaches should focus on overviews of the following:

- *Instructional Coaching Model*
- District initiatives
- *Mentoring Matters*
- *Professional Learning Framework*

B. On-going training will be provided centrally on a three to five year cycle. Topics will include, but not be limited to, the following: (see Appendix for more specifics).

- Coaching foundations
- Curriculum and assessment,
- Pedagogy
- Professional learning communities
- Social justice
- Use of data to inform instruction

2. Coaches need to understand the essential elements of adult learning

- Creating a safe and supportive environment
- Goal setting
- Group dynamics
- Learning focused conversations
- Balancing the continuum of coaching interactions – consulting, collaborating, coaching
- Facilitating collaborative reflection and problem solving
- Gradual release of responsibility
- Change theories
- Planning and giving effective presentations & processing protocols
- Learning styles

3. Coaches need to understand how to support teaching practices and student learning within the classroom in order to:
  - Respect and honor the culture and practices of the individual teacher's classrooms
  - Collaborate with teachers to plan, teach, and debrief lessons

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

1. One full day during the first month of school and one full day during the last two weeks of the school:
  - Coaches may meet in content/instructional level groups or a K-12 group
  - Coaches will participate in goal setting, review and reflection.
  - Review and/or presentation of new district/program initiatives and expectations.
2. Friday afternoon trainings (bi-monthly per group)
  - 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).
  - Groups could be combined when working on common training content.
    - 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.
  - Coaches will engage in professional learning and collegial problem-solving.
  - Coaches will be given opportunities to have a voice in selecting their own learning topic
3. Training will be scheduled to avoid taking coaches out of their buildings during the weeks when the state assessments are administered.
4. Coach-to-coach mentoring for new coaches is available.
5. Effort will be made to utilize time during elementary and middle school parent conference week for coaching training and support.
6. Coaches will meet regularly with their principal to focus their work in support of the school improvement plan.
7. Coaching Training agendas, schedules, minutes and evaluations will be communicated to principals with an open invitation to attend any coach training they feel would be helpful to their own professional learning

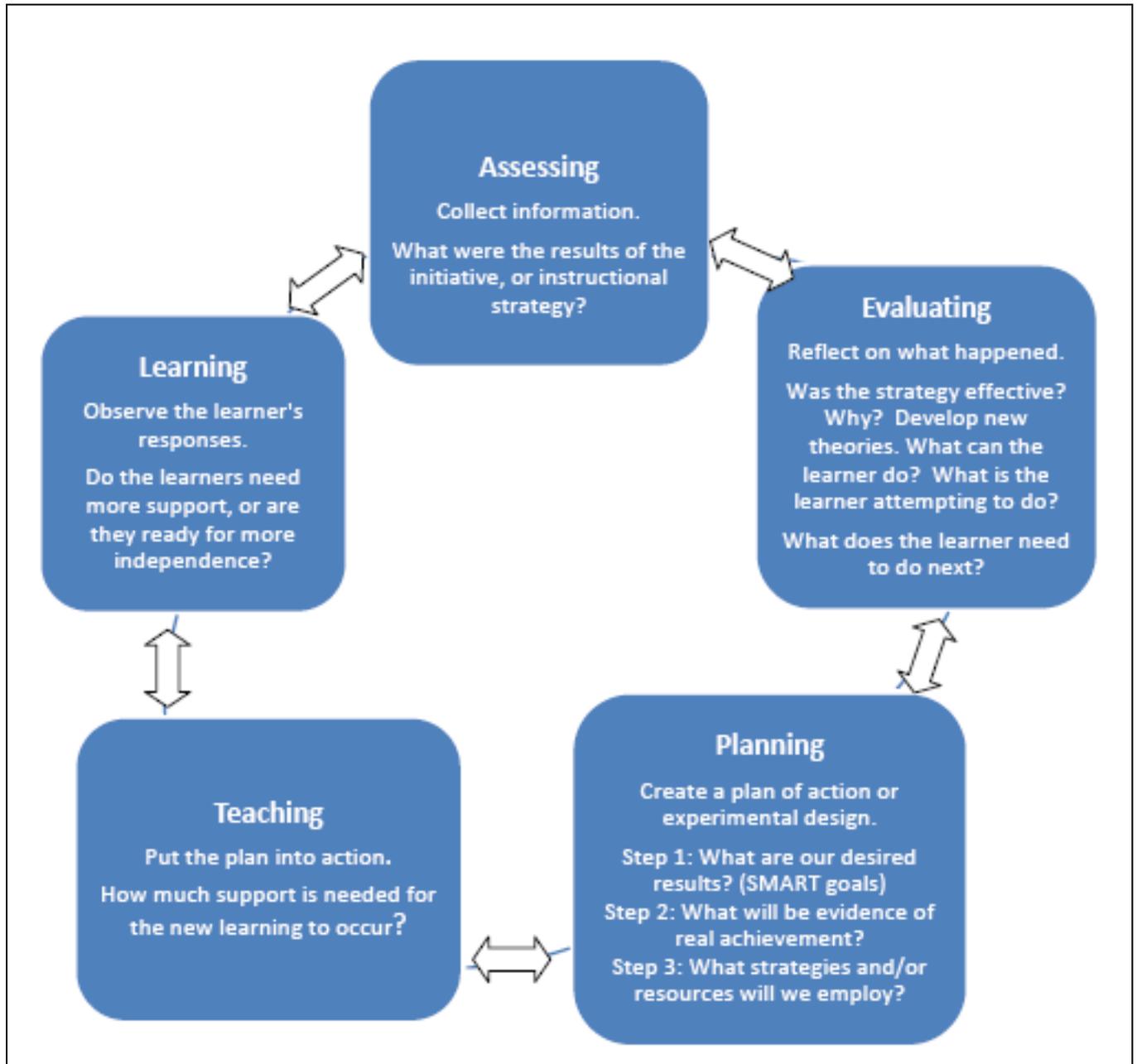
**C. *Planning and coordination:* Who collaborates to coordinate the professional learning for instructional coaches?**

- Cadre of Coaches
- Special Programs Department
- Professional Learning Department
- Principals
- Curriculum coordinators
- Consultants as appropriate

## Appendix

- A) Teaching and Learning Cycle
- B) Specific Topics for 3-5 year training cycle for coaches
- C) Coaching bibliography

### TEACHING AND LEARNING CYCLE



## Specific Topics for 3-5 year training cycle for coaches

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Coaching Foundations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mentoring Matters</li> <li>▪ Program documentation and record keeping (where applicable)</li> <li>▪ Protocols</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Curriculum and Assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Written, Taught and Tested Curriculum</li> <li>▪ State and district assessments</li> <li>▪ Standards Based Grading and Reporting</li> <li>▪ Assessment for learning</li> <li>▪ Review of Student Work</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Pedagogy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teaching and learning cycle</li> <li>▪ Understanding by Design</li> <li>▪ Principles of learning (How People Learn)</li> <li>▪ Differentiation</li> <li>▪ Lesson study</li> <li>▪ Appropriate use of technology in the classroom</li> <li>▪ Social Support</li> </ul> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Professional Learning Communities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Adaptive Schools</li> <li>▪ Peer Learning Labs</li> <li>▪ Coaching Continuum</li> </ul>                     | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Social Justice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Achievement Gap</li> <li>▪ White Privilege</li> <li>▪ Culturally Inclusive Strategies</li> </ul>  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Use of Data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data Driven Dialogues</li> <li>▪ Data Walls</li> <li>▪ Interpretation of student data</li> <li>▪ SIP Data</li> <li>▪ Disaggregation</li> <li>▪ SLP</li> <li>▪ Using Data to Inform Instruction</li> </ul>  |

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