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RELATIONSHIPS! RELATIONSHIPS! RELATIONSHIPS!

By Nancy Sadaly, Principal, East High School, Erie, Pennsylvania

As a high school administrator, my time is a precious commodity, and it is challenging to prioritize the events in my day. However, the time that I spend building relationships with the coaches and teachers in my building reaps multiple rewards in terms of improved instructional practice and development of a collaborative culture.

I consider myself a life-long learner, and this helps to establish positive relationships with coaches and teachers. In my role as an evaluator, I feel that it is critical that I understand and support the model of instruction that our coaches are striving to promote. I am constantly engaging in professional reading to have an enriched understanding of best practices in teaching and coaching.

When I visit classrooms and see instruction becoming more engaging and students becoming more reflective, I let teachers know that I recognize and applaud changing practice. Also, I allow teachers the luxury of taking a risk despite having a less than desirable result. I encourage them to learn from the experience and try again.

I participate in PLN sessions and attend as many professional development sessions, lesson planning ses-

sions, scoring sessions, and study groups within my building as time permits. Participating in these sessions helps me to develop a common language with the teachers and to understand their personal challenges and concerns. As principal, I want to send a strong message to teachers and coaches that their work is valued. I make every attempt to allocate two important resources at my disposal - time and money - to meet the growing needs of the teachers as they become more knowledgeable.

Finally, I consider myself a partner and problem-solver as we embark on the coaching journey, and as such, count every positive relationship as a step in the right direction.

As Jim Knight states, "The instructional coach can be and should be the right-hand person of the principal when it comes to instructional leadership in schools, but the principal must remain the instructional leader. No matter how much a coach knows, and no matter how effective a coach is, the principal's voice is ultimately the one most important to teachers."

POINTS TO PONDER:

STUDY ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

English language learners (ELLs) are at risk for failure for performing considerably below basic reading and comprehension levels required to pass high school. According to 2005 Reading Scores from the National Assessment for Education Progress, 71% of ELL eighth-grade students tested scored at a below basic level. Only 4% of the same ELL students tested scored at proficient or advanced levels. (*Double the Work*, Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

MARCH 20 PAHSCI Advisory Board Meeting

APRIL 12 Foundations Leadership Mentor Meeting

APRIL 13 Foundations Mentor Meeting

Check our website for PLN course dates at www.pacoaching.org

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING THROUGH PLN

By Joetta L. Britvich, Principal, Albert Gallatin Area High School, Uniontown, PA

The Pennsylvania High School Coaching Initiative (PAHSCI) has provided Albert Gallatin Area High School (AGHS) with a true “win-win” situation. Not only has our repertoire of classroom strategies increased, but also our relationships at the school have become stronger. When discussing classroom strategies and the changes that have been made at our school as a direct result of PAHSCI, teachers are quick to point out the many benefits and great relationships that have resulted.

Sherry Williams, a first-year English teacher at AGHS, stated, when working with her coach, April Serock, “April took the Penn Literacy Network (PLN) strategies out of the abstract and put it into the concrete.” Without April and PLN, Sherry would second guess herself, not knowing which strategies to use that were most effective in various classroom situations. April, who is currently in the PLN 2 program, made Sherry’s job easier by giving her a person to bounce ideas from and by giving her a second set of eyes in her own classroom.

Another teacher with a positive relationship to report is teacher of the gifted, Mary Ann Hughes, one of our pioneer teachers in the PLN program. She talks specifically about the PLN strategy called “Ticket Out the Door.” Mary Ann notices students are taking this practice in classrooms “seriously.” Moreover, she states that she is building more relationships with her students based upon their own thinking when using this PLN strategy. “Students are being more metacognitive in their

thinking,” according to Mary Ann.

She claims to be building relationships in a much more powerful way, uncovering what students are confused about more easily, and also revealing students “eureka” moments in a much more effective manner. “Ticket Out the Door” strategies are used often in many classes throughout AGHS. As a result, more teachers are expressing the same thoughts about the positive impact of PLN strategies on relationship building with students.

The math and literacy coaches in our building state that the PLN strategies have given our staff a “central focus.” Our language and our techniques are becoming more universal throughout the school. Students know the expectations, and teachers use the strategies of engagement cycles, which help them to prepare their lesson better and make learning more meaningful to our students.

Anne-Marie Layhue, math coach states, “The PLN strategies raise the bar as to what students are expected to do. I’ve even heard teachers say that the students complain about doing all the work. The ownership of the learning process is on them. They are discussing more about the subject, writing more, and applying the knowledge in a more globalized manner.”

Stronger positive relationships and more effective teaching and learning through an initiative that is founded in research-based strategies - that is what PAHSCI is all about. Talk about your ‘win-win’ situations!

“Not only has our repertoire of classroom strategies increased, but also our relationships at the school have become stronger.” - JOETTA L. BRITVICH, PRINCIPAL, ALBERT GALLATIN AREA HIGH SCHOOL

PLANNING FOR YEAR 3 PLN COURSES IS UNDERWAY

As a number of Penn Literacy Network (PLN) Regional Courses conclude throughout PAHSCI participating districts for Year 2, PLN is planning ahead toward Year 3 courses.

PLN will offer a range of courses for the Initiative’s third year which include: PLN 1; PLN 2; PLN 3 - Adolescent Literature; PLN 5 - Information Reading and Writing; PLN 9 - English as a Second Language (ESL); PLN 12 - Special Needs; PLN 20 - Curriculum Backmapping; and PLN Math 3 - Notemaking in Math.

PLN has restructured the Year 3 Math course as a response to an increased need for professional development in math. This course will be taught as a study group and will provide secondary mathematics educators an opportunity to take an in depth look at research-based,

professional text and videos that focus on best practices for the delivery of mathematics content. Participants will engage in meaningful book talks and discussions about the learning and teaching of mathematics. The course will be held in both the Eastern and Western regions.

PLN continues to develop and refine its third year courses to meet Initiative needs using feedback from an interest survey distributed to PLN 2 Regional Course participants. The survey feedback will be used to determine class content, numbers of facilitators needed, and course locations. PLN is also using final course evaluations to refine courses, where necessary, and allocate course facilitators appropriately.

BECOMING A SENIOR AMONG PEERS: A COACH'S PERSPECTIVE

By Diane Hubona and Lisa Hartsock, Coaches, Bellwood-Antis High School

When transitioning from teachers with 16 and 23 years experience to our roles as coaches, we moved into the eye of the hurricane of change but were not surprised by the tumultuous weather we encountered.

Peer relationships change when you step into the coaching role. Teachers-turned-coaches need to also understand that any change that occurs may be attributed to them, even if they are not the impetus behind it. Some teachers believe coaches are aligned with administrators rather than teachers. Lastly, coaches need to accept there may be envious peers who view coaches as having to do less work than teachers.

It takes tremendous courage to admit that to be effective as a coach, you often feel isolated. However, the built-in collaboration with your coaching partner and networking opportunities can alleviate the feeling of isolation.

It is possible to maintain a positive outlook even though some friendships become strained. We both have friendships with teachers who can offer insight

into unavoidable tensions that may surface as teachers are encouraged to develop student-centered, engaging environments. Teachers who may first resist the wave of change can be the same individuals who become your greatest allies as they see the benefits of the coaching model.

Neither one of us will claim coaching is a paved path without obstacles. Coaches need to keep in mind that rising to a senior among your peers requires time, patience, and personal sacrifice. However, the benefits far outweigh the cost.

“Teachers who may first resist the wave of change can be the same individuals who become your greatest allies as they see the benefits of the coaching model.”

- DIANE HUBONA AND LISA HARTSOCK, BELLWOOD-ANTIS HIGH SCHOOL

COACHES' AND MENTORS' LOGS PROVIDE FEEDBACK

Foundations' Mentors and PAHSCI's instructional coaches observe and document school practices using logs. These logs have multiple purposes in assisting schools to improve student achievement and build teacher capacity. One of their purposes is to provide information that helps determine how instructional coaching and the PAHSCI model are impacting student learning.

The logs provide a tool for instructional coaches to document first-hand observations on classroom practices and the implementation of PLN strategies on a daily basis. Coaches also produce summary logs of these observations twice a year.

Mentors use the logs to work with coaches in their ongoing discussions on helping teachers help students. Mentors also maintain logs which provide monthly summary reports to Foundations and partner organizations of mentors' first-hand observations and information gleaned from the coaches' summary logs.

Using logs, mentors and coaches have observed and documented the following changes thus far in school practices:

- Significant implementation of specific PLN strategies, such as “Please Do Now,” “Pair Share,” “Ticket Out the Door,” and “Word Splash”;
- Increased teacher collaboration;

- Implementation of study groups;
- Interaction between teachers and coaches using a “Before, During, After” (BDA) process, where coaches meet with teachers before, during, and after class sessions to prepare and debrief instructional effectiveness;
- Application of administrative “Walk Throughs”;
- Increased teacher conversation about data and student performance;
- Enhanced use of “cooperative learning” with an increased emphasis on authentic student engagement.

Foundations continues to use the feedback from logs to help the Initiative impact student learning and change school practices.



Phillip Enso, Burgettstown High School administrator, speaking with Ann Ritchie, Literacy Mentor, in Intermediate Unit 1.

LETTER FROM: PAHSCI'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues,

In a recent interview, University of Pittsburgh's Dr. Rita Bean, a colleague on the statewide Collaborative Coaching Board and a member of the PAHSCI Advisory Board, asked me what I thought was one of the most important qualities possessed by instructional coaches. My answer was the ability of the coaches to develop trusting relationships.

Instructional coaches partner with teachers and cultivate relationships around common goals. They have a shared vision and a common language that speaks to adopting an instructional model that focuses on helping to improve student performance. Teachers, administrators, and coaches are teammates in the change process. Not surprising, to accomplish this process, these relationships must be built on trust and confidentiality.

Malcolm Gladwell's book, *The Tipping Point*, states that "Ideas and products and messages and behaviors spread just like viruses do" (p.7). The ideas and messages of instructional coaching develop contagious behaviors that are spread through the relationships built by coaches. A circle of informal communication begins

as coaches, teachers, and colleagues work and talk with one another. It is through the teacher/coach and teacher/teacher relationships that the word spreads and a community of practice is created.

Building trusting relationships helps teachers and administrators collaboratively plan practical problem solving strategies to improve teaching and learning.

Sincerely,



Ellen B. Eisenberg
Executive Director, PAHSCI



Coaches plan together at a Training Session in Intermediate Unit 1.

PENNSYLVANIA HIGH SCHOOL COACHING INITIATIVE

Instructional coaching has emerged as a promising strategy for increasing student achievement and affecting education reform nationwide. In 2005, The Annenberg Foundation partnered with the Pennsylvania Department of Education to implement the Pennsylvania High School Coaching Initiative (PAHSCI). Funded by The Annenberg Foundation, PAHSCI is a three-year, \$31 million instructional coaching initiative. Four additional partner organizations provide support for program implementation: Foundations, Inc., Penn Literacy Network from the University of Pennsylvania, Research for Action, and The Philadelphia Foundation. Research support is also provided by the Center for Data Driven Reform in Education from the Johns Hopkins University and by MPR Associates, Inc.

The PAHSCI model is designed to provide trained teacher-leaders, or coaches, to schools and school districts. The Initiative places one literacy and one math coach for every 600 students in 26 high-need high schools located in 16 school districts across Pennsylvania, with a total enrollment of over 32,000 students. Instructional coaches sustain ongoing, site-based, job-embedded professional development for teachers and administrators. They also facilitate in-class coaching and modeling, peer collaboration, and teacher training in order to improve learning at participating schools.

We're on the web!

www.pacoaching.org

PENNSYLVANIA HIGH SCHOOL COACHING INITIATIVE

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