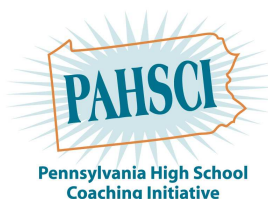


January 2007



The PassKey

Mark Your Calendar

- March 8 - Foundations Leadership Mentor Meeting
- March 9 - Foundations Mentor Meeting
- March 20 - PAHSCI Advisory Board Meeting
- Check our website for PLN 1 and PLN 2 course dates at www.pacoaching.org

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Instructional Coaching Initiative Has Provided Time

By Dorothy Wood and Dr. Deb Carr
Hazleton Area School District

The Pennsylvania High School Coaching Initiative (PAHSCI) has provided the Hazleton Area School District with a valuable gift - the gift of "time." In education, time is a precious and ever decreasing commodity. Deadlines, problems that needed to be solved yesterday, are often set aside until someone finds time to address them. The addition of the coaches themselves - coaches who now find time to plan, to think, and most importantly, to interact with colleagues - has enabled the Hazleton Area High School/Hazleton Area Career Center faculty and administration to identify, prioritize, and move forward on issues that we never seemed to have the "time" to sufficiently address.

The coaching initiative at Hazleton Area School District has compelled professionals to find time to go deeply into instructional practices. For example, faculty discussions frequently identified the need to add more opportunity for writing across the curriculum. While teachers accepted the need, they were reluctant to dedicate precious class time to writing and were unsure of their ability to assess writing. The Penn Literacy Network (PLN) framework and PAHSCI have helped teachers find time to meet this need. Literacy coaches developed a matrix

of implementation expectations for John Collins Writing for all content areas. The matrix outlines types of writing and frequencies of use. Now every class, every content area incorporates time for an opening 'Please Do Now' and a 'Tickets Out the Door' at the end of class. Time is now needed to better develop the comprehension techniques in the middle of that class time. Given time, this too will evolve. The embedded staff development provided by the coaches and the mentors will provide for this next instructional progression.

Another gift provided by the coaching initiative is time dedicated to PLN professional staff development courses. During prep periods and before and after school, teachers and coaches find time to meet to develop and refine instructional practices.

This year, the coaching initiative has provided time to read and reflect within a framework of study groups to seek solutions and to create pathways for growth.

Finally, the Hazleton team finds time once a week to meet, to regroup, to plan and to stay connected. This time reaffirms our purpose, our vision, and sometimes reaffirms our own sense of self-worth. Although not easily quantified by data, the depth of the professional discussions that have evolved over this time has been priceless.

Points to Ponder: Does Coaching Lead to Implementation?

Jim Knight of the Center for Learning and Research at the University of Kansas has researched teacher implementation rates of new instructional strategies for those who have had instructional coaches. His research indicates "that coaching does lead to successful adoption and effective use of proven instructional methods, with one crucial caveat: the right conditions - in the form of administrative support and qualified coaches - must be in place." (*Stratenotes*, Volume 13, Issue No. 3, University of Kansas, Center for Research on Learning)



Teacher and Coach collaborate in Pittsburgh.

*“What the participants
in our PLN seminars*

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understand is the

*importance of inviting
and maintaining student*

engagement...”

Joe Ginotti,

Penn Literacy

Network

Engaging Students in Active Learning

By Joe Ginotti, Penn Literacy Network

“We doing anything today, Mr. G?” A mystifying question that I heard far too often and for far too many years. “Of course we are!” was my frequent response; “When don’t we?” Today in the PAHSCI Penn Literacy seminars, teachers nod and smile in recognition, but the irony lay in what that question really asks: “Who’s doing the work today – you or us?” Sadly, before implementing the framework and strategies that PLN commends, I gave my high school students far too much “time off.” What the participants in our PLN seminars come to quickly understand is the importance of inviting and maintaining student engagement, of providing opportunities and strategies for students to take responsibility for making meaning in every content area, and of structuring lessons that make learning viable, visible, and accountable. In short, building student-centered, active learning communities.

In building and maintaining engagement, teachers grasp quickly the purpose and practicality of ‘Please Do Nows’ and ‘Tickets

Out The Door.’ The rewards of a bell to bell structure of involving students in purposeful, reflective activities extend to both better learning and behaviors. Building the habit of “thinking through the pencil” to build schema, connection, and relevance is a tremendous benefit to the practice of ‘Please Do Nows’, and the attention to providing a time for reflection in ‘Tickets Out The Door’ lends an immediacy to student learning, questioning and retention.

Teachers also find that the practices of ‘Text Marking’ and ‘Notemaking’ build on and extend engagement and provide important tools for students to make meaning. The practical methods presented help teachers establish a focus on strategies and routines that can be quickly implemented in all classrooms and help teachers to observe and reward constructive and active learning behaviors that help students learn how to learn.

The benefit of these strategies? To never hear the question again. Building and maintaining student engagement is key!

Foundations Supports Schools to Implement PAHSCI

Foundations, Inc., mentors collaboratively support coaches and administrators in their implementation of PAHSCI. During January, Foundations worked to build capacity by guiding the Implementation Grant process in schools and building awareness of data collection and analysis and using data to inform instruction.

Foundations refined and supported schools in the application process for PAHSCI Implementation Grants and formed a committee to review and approve fund allocations. Examples of how funds were distributed include: professional development sessions and conferences, study groups, reference books and materials, as well as memberships in professional organizations.

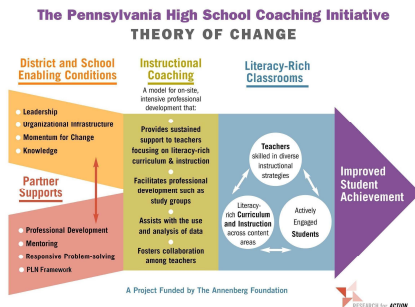
Data that informs instruction has arisen nationally as a prevalent topic in education reform. PAHSCI supports using data to

inform instruction which will help improve student achievement, meet national No Child Left Behind (NCLB) standards, and make gains in Adequate Yearly Progress. Coaches, administrators, and teachers have expressed an interest in learning more about data collection and analysis, and how to use data to inform instruction, as they become aware of the need to base instruction around data. PAHSCI schools collect data on standardized testing and classroom practices around PLN content. PDE collects data on attendance rates, promotion rates, graduation rates, and dropout rates for each district.

Foundations’ mentors assist coaches in collaboratively planning data-informed units of study, study group opportunities, and ongoing professional learning opportunities with teachers.

PAHSCI's Theory of Change

By Diane C. Brown, Ed.D.
Senior Research Associate, Research for Action



A program's theory of change explains the rationale for the program components and predicts the programs' desired outcomes. PAHSCI's theory of change identifies the enabling conditions, partner supports, aspects of instructional coaching, and components of literacy-rich classrooms which will lead to improved student achievement and strengthen students' literacy.

All of the enabling conditions listed in the model help to build the capacity of a school or district to fully implement the Initiative. PAHSCI stresses the importance of leadership development across school roles and requires administrators' participation in PAHSCI training and networking events.

A distinctive feature of PAHSCI is that coaches focus on particular content: the Pennsylvania Literacy Network (PLN) framework. The PLN framework supplies participants with a shared language for talking about instruction and student learning, thus helping to build collaborative professional learning communities.

Another distinctive feature of PAHSCI is mentoring. Foundations, Inc., provides leadership and content mentors who visit

districts and provide training to coaches and school leaders in instructional coaching and also facilitate other opportunities for school-based educators to reflect upon and refine their instructional practice.

Instructional coaches help to implement the PLN framework by providing many forms of professional development. They work one-on-one with teachers in their classrooms, model lessons, and conduct structured classroom visitations. Coaches also work with groups of teachers, planning and facilitating whole faculty training sessions, focusing on the PLN framework and the analysis of student performance data. Coaches work with administrators to integrate coaching into the school culture and provide job-embedded professional development leading to teachers skilled in diverse instructional strategies.

PAHSCI develops classrooms where students are engaged in literacy-rich curriculum and instruction across content areas.

The PAHSCI Theory of Change assumes that supporting teachers to improve their practice is directly linked to strengthening students' engagement and leads to improved student outcomes.

Students attain high levels of literacy, complete high school, and are ready for the next steps to their futures.

Research for Action's (RFA) evaluation of PAHSCI employs this theory of change model to examine if instructional coaching supports high school reform and positively influences student achievement through improvements to: School Leadership, Professional Community, and Literacy-Rich Instructional Practices.

"Students attain high levels of literacy, complete high school, and are ready for the next steps to their futures."

Diane C. Brown, Ed.D.

Research for Action

Points to Ponder: National Study

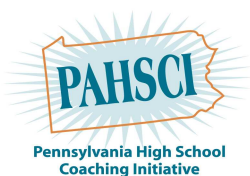
A three-year national study shows that "Professional development focused on specific, higher-order teaching strategies increases teachers' use of those strategies in

the classroom."

("Does Professional Development Change Teacher Practice? Results from a Three-Year Study," Porter, Garet, et al. AIRBS, Washington, DC., 2000)



Pat Jacobs, Literacy Coach, helps teachers help students in Lancaster.



HELPING TEACHERS HELP STUDENTS

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We're on the web!
www.pacoaching.org



Bill Neely, Math Coach, leads a professional learning opportunity at the white board in Lancaster.

The 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.

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.

Letter from PAHSCI's Executive Director

Dear Colleagues,

"They say that time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself." (Andy Warhol)

Coaches are change agents. They are the catalysts for growth and change in their schools. They help teachers and administrators shift their beliefs and create an atmosphere for reflection, collective inquiry, and collaborative problem solving. A coach is the vehicle that promotes learning and growth as structured routine practice.

When I became a literacy coach for the Johns Hopkins University's Talent Development High School model, I assumed that everyone I encountered would welcome me with open arms. After all, I was a former Department Head of English for the School District of Philadelphia and aware of adult learning strategies. I spent my entire teaching career in an urban

setting, clearly understanding the needs of urban youth and the teachers who taught them. What I did not understand was that my role as a coach was not to "fix" anyone; my role as coach was to help others recognize their own strengths and potential for growth. My role was to help teachers and administrators understand through reflection and collaboration, their need to change.

My experiences as a coach taught me that some people felt anxious, fearful and overwhelmed when faced with change. Some felt out of control because they were asked to do something new and were not sure of the outcomes. PAHSCI instructional coaches have bridged that gap and helped others become comfortable with change.

Sincerely,

Ellen B. Eisenberg,
Executive Director, PAHSCI