

by [IU PIIC Mentors Jen Herncane and Diane Hubona](#)

PIIC nourishes collaboration and communication in every aspect, so when we were asked to co-author this blog, we brainstormed, “What are three purposeful steps to foster success in coaching programs in schools?” We both agreed, without much debate, to thrive in coaching there are three key goals:

1. Establish a clear coaching focus.
2. Focus on student learning.
3. Develop collaborative professional learning opportunities for coaches as well as teachers.

Establishing a clear coaching focus is multi-faceted. The effectiveness of a coaching program depends on the coaches’ relationship with colleagues in the school building initially. In addition, for a school to grow their coaching program, the administration must show support and understand the role of the coach and shared leadership to successfully determine the coaching goals for the year. It’s integral that the coaching goals provide a balance in the school culture where coaches are partnering with teachers to support them while also nurturing a growth mindset for teachers, students, administrators, and themselves.

Maintaining the focus on student learning as our primary goal also ensures coaching success. PIIC coaches and mentors work to build teacher capacity with the focus always on student achievement. Coaches and teachers work through the BDA cycle to continually improve teacher practice which leads to an increase in student achievement.

PIIC coaches have a unique support system in place. Participation in PIIC and collaboration with the IU mentor as well as other school coaches, helps to support and further the coach in his or her instructional coaching journey. Coaches have to epitomize lifelong learning, and PIIC's ongoing, embedded professional development helps in this pursuit.

While structures need to be in place to promote collaboration, PIIC's BDA Cycle of Coaching is essential for teacher improvement as well. Continual growth is encouraged with other steps, such as the development of professional learning communities that can sustain and increase both coach- to- teacher as well as teacher- to- teacher collaboration.

Coaches all have days where navigating the myriad of duties seems overwhelming, and this is to be expected; however, when coaches, administrators, and teachers work together with the common goal of student learning and engagement, everyone reaps the benefits!