



Thank you for your request to our REL Reference Desk regarding evidence-based information about methods to evaluate instructional coaches. Ask A REL is a collaborative reference desk service provided by the ten regional educational laboratories (REL) that, by design, functions much in the same way as a technical reference library. It provides references, referrals, and brief responses in the form of citations on research based education questions.

The information below represents the most rigorous research available. Researchers consider the type of methodology and give priority to research reports that employ well described and thorough methods. The resources were also selected based on the date of the publication with a preference for research from the last ten years. Additional criteria for inclusion include the source and funder of the resource

Question: *What researched based methods exist for evaluating instructional coaches?*

Search Process

Key words and search strings used in the search: *evaluation tools AND instructional coach; evaluating OR assessing AND instructional coach; evaluating methods AND instructional coach*

Search databases and websites:

- Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.com>)
- ERIC (<http://www.eric.ed.gov>)
- JSTOR (<http://www.jstor.org/action/showAdvancedSearch>)
- Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Resources: <http://ies.ed.gov>
- What Works Clearinghouse: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/> The What Works Clearinghouse provides an overview of rigorous research standards and evaluation methods.

Results:

Below are some resources to guide your search for information on research based methods for evaluating instructional coaches.

Sample Citations Retrieved (NOTE: Abstracts and executive summaries are copied directly from the reports when possible to ensure accuracy):

Abraham, A. & Collins, D. (1998). Examining and extending research in coach development. *Quest*, 50(1). doi: 10.1080/00336297.1998.10484264

Summary/Abstract: Research to date provides two approaches to assessing coaching expertise. The first is behavioral assessment and the second is to assess coaches' knowledge base. However, we contend that both approaches are flawed due to their inability to adequately



improve coach development by failing to answer three fundamental questions: What knowledge should be taught to novice coaches? What is the optimal method for teaching this knowledge? And how should we assess to encourage learning? Cognitive psychology has demonstrated that someone with expert cognitive skill is characterized as having expert declarative and procedural knowledge. Experts are further characterized by having greater organization of this knowledge. Thus the expert is able to apply expert knowledge in a more expert manner to solve complex problems in a specific domain. Properly exploiting ideas such as these can help direct future research to provide answers to the questions posed above.

Chalfant, P., Plasschaert, C., Madsen, K., & McCray, E. D. (2011). Is hiring a literacy coach worth the investment? Addressing common assumptions. *ERS Spectrum*, 29(3), 1-10.

Summary/Abstract: This article discusses assumptions often made by principals in K-12 schools regarding the role of literacy coaches and the presumed effects that coaching will have on teacher knowledge and practice as well as on student achievement. For the purposes of this article, a literacy coach is a content-area expert who assists teachers with instruction in literacy, which includes all the components of reading and writing, as opposed to a reading coach who assists teachers only in the processes of reading. Common assumptions are presented, followed by research that either confirm or refute the conventional wisdom. In addition, evidence-based recommendations are provided to assist school leaders in making informed decisions about how to employ a literacy coach in the most effective way possible to obtain the best return on their investment.

Denton, C. A., & Hasbrouck, J. (2009). A description of instructional coaching and its relationship to consultation. *Journal of Educational & Psychological Consultation*, 19, 150-175. doi: 10.1080/10474410802463296

Summary/Abstract: In large numbers of elementary and secondary schools across the United States teachers are being called upon to provide support to colleagues through a process called "instructional coaching." Despite widespread implementation of this role, resulting in part from federal initiatives, there is little consensus regarding its operational definition and little empirical research related to it. Following a brief description of the evolution of coaching along with a descriptive discussion of its implementation in schools, the authors describe various implementations of coaching, concluding that there is a need for fully-articulated theoretical and operational models of instructional coaching. The authors compare various coaching approaches to instructional and collaborative consultation and suggest that there is good reason for active communication and collaboration between consultants and coaches operating within the same schools. Finally, they describe current trends and needs related to professional development of instructional coaches and articulate a research agenda related to the field. (Contains 1 table.)



Knight, J., Bradley, B. A., Hock, M., Skrtic, T. M., Knight, D., Brasseur-Hock, I., & Hatton, C. (2012). Record, replay, reflect: Videotaped lessons accelerate learning for teachers and coaches. *Journal of Staff Development, 33*(2), 18-23.

Summary/Abstract: New technologies can dramatically change the way people live and work. Jet engines transformed travel. Television revolutionized news and entertainment. Computers and the Internet have transformed just about everything else. And now small video cameras have the potential to transform professional learning. Recognizing the potential of this new technology, researchers at the Kansas Coaching Project at the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning conducted a three-year study to analyze what happens when coaches and teachers watch themselves on video. The results of this study show why these cameras are important and how they can be used by instructional coaches, individual learners, and teachers in the classroom and in study groups.

Knight, J. (2009). Coaching: The key to translating research into practice lies in continuous, job-embedded learning with ongoing support. *Journal of Staff Development, 30*(1), 18-20.

Summary/Abstract: In the past decade, interest in the form of professional learning loosely described as coaching has exploded. This growing interest in coaching is likely fueled by educators' recognition that traditional one-shot approaches to professional development--where teachers hear about practices but do not receive follow-up support--are ineffective at improving teaching practices. Much more support is needed to help teachers translate research into practice, and for many districts, that support is coaching. In this article, the author defines three coaching approaches that are especially common in today's schools--literacy coaching, cognitive coaching, and instructional coaching--and identifies several commonalities of these three approaches. He also discusses certain factors that are critical for coaching success and cites some studies that demonstrate the positive impact of coaching on teaching practices.

Matsumura, L. C., Garnier, H. E., & Resnick, L. B. (2010). Implementing literacy coaching: The role of school social resources. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 32*(2), 249-272.

Summary/Abstract: This study investigates the influence of a school's pre-existing social resources on the implementation of a comprehensive literacy-coaching program (Content-Focused Coaching [CFC]). Elementary schools were randomly assigned to receive a CFC-trained coach (n = 15 schools) or to continue with the literacy coaching resources that are standard for the district (n = 14 schools). Ninety-six fourth-and fifth-grade teachers participated in the study (n = 63 CFC and n = 33 comparison). Survey results indicate that teachers in the CFC schools



participated more frequently in the coaching activities that emphasized planning and reflecting on instruction, enacting instruction, and building knowledge of the theories underlying effective reading comprehension instruction compared to teachers in the comparison schools. After 1 year, teachers strongly believed that CFC coaching helped improve their instructional practice. Principal leadership was the key resource supporting implementation of the program positively predicting greater teacher participation in coaching activities and perceived usefulness of these activities along with coaches' training in the CFC program and less experienced teachers. Unexpectedly, a school's pre-existing culture of teacher collaboration negatively predicted teachers' coaching experiences. CFC coach interviews contribute to understanding the interactions of social resources within schools that facilitated or hindered program implementation. Implications for the design and implementation of effective instructional coaching policies in districts are discussed.

Referrals

Organizations:

- International Reading Association: <http://www.reading.org/>
- The National Council of Teachers of English: <http://www.ncte.org/>
- Reading Rockets: <http://www.readingrockets.org>
- Council of Chief State School Officers: <http://www.ccsso.org/>
- Kansas Coaching Project, KU Center for Research on Learning: <http://www.instructionalcoach.org/>

Federally Funded Resources:

- US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Resources, <http://ies.ed.gov>
- What Works Clearinghouse, <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

Disclaimer:

This Ask A REL response was developed by REL-SE under Contract ED-IES-12-C-0011 from the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. The content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.