

Chapter 65: Instructional Coaching

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1 Introduction

Most teachers want to improve their teaching skills, but it is difficult for them to find a way to re-educate themselves. Most school administrations in Saudi Arabia are currently focusing more on evaluating teachers than guiding them to develop their skills. As a consequence, teachers often face stressful situations while being evaluated, or are even forced to use methods that they do not think are effective, only to impress the administration. In my school, for example, some of the teachers feel pressured when receiving feedback from those who have the power to evaluate them and sometimes there is a delay in receiving feedback. In the United States, there is a technique of teachers' development called "coaching," by which a coach has the ability to assist teachers and provide help for them without sharing any information with the administration; and the coach keeps all conversations private, so nobody can use the information to evaluate the teacher or judge their work. Other fellow instructional coaching is an excellent way that Saudi schools can equip teachers to improve their teaching skills, get support in a non-stressful and timely way, and as a result, students benefit greatly.

Context: Why Saudi's schools need Instructional Coaching?

Teachers in Saudi Arabian schools have four visits per semester by the school administration, a high number of observation for evaluation of skills, and two for evaluation to decide merit of ability to advance in their career. These visits create five major issues. First, teachers are under a tremendous amount of stress. Second, the performance is not an accurate reflection of their real skills and the teachers cannot focus on improving their performances. Third, the teacher cannot focus on supporting students' achievement. Fourth, teachers cannot expect immediate feedback because the administration is occupied with other executive duties, which sometimes leads to providing unrealistic, outdated advice. Finally, some educators are afraid of asking for help from others since they are embarrassed to show their weaknesses to their colleagues.

I believe that teachers need fresh, yet professional eyes whose opinion is reliable from the outside of the group that has the authority of evaluation. In addition, educators want to get quick feedback about what they do inside the classroom and take guidance on what they need to lead the classroom more effectively. To solve the issues created by the current evaluation system, instructional coaching could be used to support educators in achieving specific personal and professional goals. The coach provides advice on training and guidance, spanning from syllabus design and pedagogy, to classroom management such as conflict resolution.

Start the idea:

There are three kinds of coaching: Content-focused coaching, Cognitive coaching, and Instructional coaching. Content-focused coaching is based on planning together. Cognitive Coaching, according to *Garmston, Linder and Whitaker*, "is a process during which teachers explore the thinking behind their practices."

Instructional Coaching is called a partnership approach to improving instruction (Knight, 2007) whereby the lead teacher gives feedback for other colleagues. It is a way of improving the quality of teaching by the coach giving weaknesses and strengths in a polite and friendly way. Coaching can improve a teacher's ability to help others become more effective and also give them the opportunity to discover their talents and enhance critical thinking characteristics.

This idea of coaching first caught my attention in a series of Coaching Workshops at the University of Delaware, when Professor Faith Muirhead introduced different techniques of "coaching," including instructional coaching. During immersion at William Penn High School, I sought out meeting with other coaches, and met Katy Sabol, a math coach. Ms. Sabol explained how coaching has helped teachers and her process of coaching.

This technique starts before the class begins when the teachers talk about the lesson plan for the class. Katy diagnoses existing and potential problems while observing the classroom and might help by also co-teaching with the other colleagues to help students when they are in need. She gives feedback immediately if correction is needed during the class or will wait until the class is over and address the outlined issues. One of the duties of the coach is to continue to support and follow up with teachers in the school. Sometimes the teachers want the coach to come back to visit the class to assess a new strategy or if they want new suggestions. The coach can help all teachers in the building, not just in those in the same field.

The characteristics of a good coach are: a coach has a good trusting, safe relationship with teachers who work with them; a coach is not just an observer or coteacher; he must be a catalyst to help others try new things; a coach must keep all details private and must not share any information about suggestions or teacher performance with administrator; a coach should be sensitive to a teacher's feelings and use diplomatic words (Knight 2011).

Benefits of Instructional Coaching for Teachers and Student:

In this quote, Knight summarized the essence of coaching:

"A coach is a trusted friend to educators, a colleague, a sounding board, and a witness to the good. These days can be difficult for educators, with increased expectations, decreased funding, more pressure and less encouragement. Coaches provide an incredibly important service by listening, empathizing, and encouraging their colleagues respectfully and nonjudgmentally."

The Annenberg Foundation for Education Reform reported in 2014 that helpful coaching enhances practice that is both collaborative and reflective. In addition, instead of working alone, coaching gives a teacher more chances to use their knowledge intensely, richly, and consistently. Instructional coaching encourages teachers to progress their ability to think deeply and use their learning to their work with learners and with their colleagues (Aguilar 2013).

Another benefit from the Annenberg report is that the impact of coaching is not limited to teachers' performance but also extended to all members of the educational community. Because the relationship of teachers greatly influences school atmosphere, the coaching reflects a good model for students about their teachers' relationship with each other that will have a positive impact on the students' behaviors (Aguilar 2013).

Another benefit of using instructional coaching is that students improve their grades and interactions with one another. Researchers have found that when the teacher has

confidence, it reflects positively on his students (Wang, 2016). The master teacher can cause students to feel more accomplished (Wang, 2016). Research has shown if teachers feel supported and encouraged, they can give support and encouragement to students. If students are encouraged, they progress in their studies.

(Wang, 2016).

Barriers to Implementation:

To start a new technique in the Saudi current system, there are some barriers that might be faced in our schools. The first obstacle is that our system does not have any coaching support organizations to provide help for coaches if they have concerns or need guidance. Another difficulty is changing the thinking of teachers because some teachers think they know what to do and they do not want anyone to help them. Furthermore, lack of experienced coaches also leads to pressure on the teachers and coach to complete all their tasks together on time.

Solutions:

Step by step	Time line	who	Limitation	Impact evaluation	who	How	when
1-Prepare Translate proposal and all resources to Arabic	Mar-Jul 2019	Saliyah	No advisor to help ask questions	Get approval to start the coaching	District administration	Ask schools if they want to try this idea	Before the semester starts
2-Make a PowerPoint							
3-Get approval:(set up meetings, explain Instructional coaching, present PowerPoint) -Administration meeting, present coaching to district administration	Aug 2019	Saliyah + District administration + Principal + Supervisor	Trouble setting a meeting with principal	Get approval to meet with my principal Get approval to start with teachers	Administration	Approval form	After meeting but before classes start
-Set up a meeting with my principal and supervisor to Explain instructional coaching							
-Present slides about the advantages and facts about coaching							
Step by step	Time line	who	Limitation	Impact evaluation	who	How	when

There are some solutions to overcome previous barriers. The educational community cannot start a new idea without having a physical result, so I will provide a summary of research that reinforces the importance of coaching. Also, I will make a regular monthly meeting to let other coaches transfer their experiences to promote the idea of coaching and give the benefits of using this method. After the success of the first phase, I can establish a specialized coaching organization and be the source for the coaches joining it as well as the departments in other districts. Also, this organization can provide coaches to schools that are in need of them.

Conclusion

Instructional coaching is a wonderful method to enhance a teacher's performance by focusing on the strengths and weaknesses in the teacher's skills, besides helping them to overcome the challenges in their classes.

Implementation plan and Impact evaluation:

The following table illustrates how I will prepare to start coaching in our education system. It has the action plan and the impact evaluation.

Implementation Plan and Impact Evaluation

4-Set up workshop with different teachers in my school to introduce the idea by PowerPoint presentation about the advantages of using coaching	Sep 2019	Saliyah + All teachers (20)	Difficult to change thinking of teachers; This is not a full-time job there is no funding (yet). So, participants will be volunteers	Observe how the educators interactive with coaching concept	The principal + supervisor	Attendance sheet + Observation + Survey	Before And after workshop + Measure the satisfaction
5- Collect applications for matching teachers sign up for program Question • what they expect/hope to get out of the experience	Sep 2019	Saliyah + Minimum (6 teachers)	Cannot accept more than 10 members	Sign up to have a coach	Saliyah	Application form	After workshop

6-Start coaching with teachers	Oct - May 2019	Saliyah + Minimum (6 teachers)	Partners might not work well together	How well do the teacher grades improve in performance evaluations? -Measured the result of using coaching by the end of semester	Saliyah	Observation + Private survey	In the classroom
Step by step	Timeline	who	Limitation	Impact evaluation	who	How	when

7-Make available to other/ different teachers in the same school; original partners continue or re-mach	Dec - End of 2nd semester 2020	Saliyah + Teachers	Lack of coaches	Have a new group in coaching	Coach + Principal.	Observation + Private survey	After first pilot
8- Extend the plan to other schools	20202021 school year	Saliyah + District administration + Principals + Supervisor + Teachers	Time to train coaches	Accept other schools which want a coaching program	District administration	Observation + Workshops + Meetings	Adminis tration building

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