

School Instructional Coaches & the Coaching Academy **(2007-2008)**

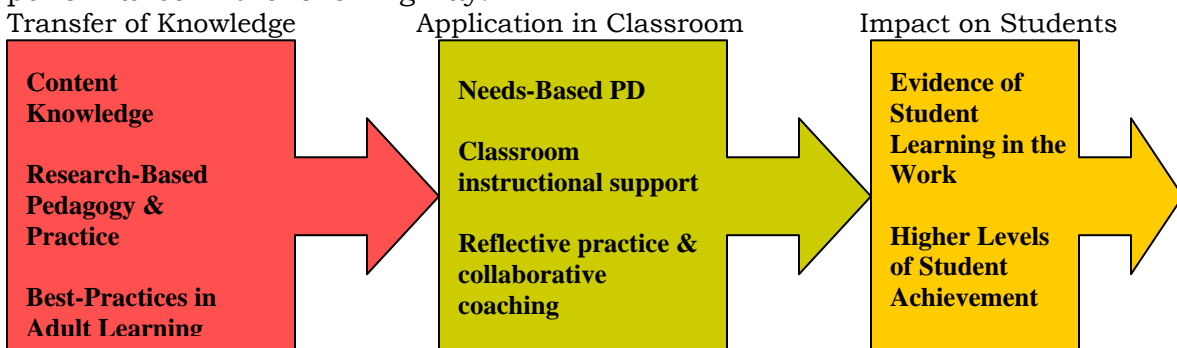
Executive Summary

What is the Coaching Academy?

School Instructional Coaches (SICs) fulfill a key instructional role as *teacher leaders* who work to ensure the successful and effective implementation of instructional programs in schools by providing knowledge, skill, and support to teachers. The program being evaluated this year (2007-08) was not *the work* of School Instructional Coaches themselves, but rather the success of monthly academies, provided centrally by the Schultz Center, to prepare school instructional coaches for the challenging role they have in schools. Because the role and degree of district-based support for this school-based position was being re-examined for the 2008-2009 school year, certain aspects of the evaluation was also aimed at determining perceived needs of schools in knowledge and skill areas necessary for high performing school instructional coaches, particularly in instructional areas other than Literacy, which has, in the past, defined the role. The objective for evaluation this year (2007-2008) was to determine the extent to which monthly coaching academies were able to support school instructional coaches (SICs) in their expanded role, and in turn, the extent to which coaching academies were able to address the content, instructional strategies, and adult learning needs of *school instructional coaches* in order to better prepare them to carry out their roles as defined in schools.

How does the Coaching Academy work?

Based on the Schultz Center's *theory of action*, which serves as the basis for all programs designed and delivered through the Center, we believe that if teachers are provided with deep, focused professional development around research-based practices, delivered with fidelity to the program, and ample opportunities for reflection and personal growth on the part of teachers, that this will lead to excellent instruction and therefore, to student achievement. In graphic form, changes in teacher knowledge and skill will translate to student performance in the following way:



We know that coaching is time and resource intensive, and that we are accountable for the resources expended and the results achieved. Data collection systems in the program were designed to accurately and validly document information necessary to inform the process, and to provide evidence that our *theory of action* is sound. Data was collected on time spent in types of coaching activities, and feedback on training needs in the areas of subject area knowledge, instructional skills and practices, and adult learning theory principles were collected for use in ongoing needs assessment, program planning, and program evaluation.

What did we evaluate?

The evaluation of SICs and the monthly coaching academies for school year 2007-2008 was based on two primary data sources: 1) direct feedback from surveys of principals and school instructional coaches themselves, and 2) data collected by program staff to document ongoing coaching activities provided to schools in the form of monthly activity logs.

Who was involved?

Electronic surveys of all principals and School Instructional Coaches were distributed in May, and approximately 2/3 of each group responded, providing sufficient information to project with confidence that the opinions and attitudes reported were representative of groups as a whole.

Survey Groups	# Distributed	# Responded	% Responding
Principals	153	103	67%
Coaches	165	105	64%
Schools Reporting by Both (Coach & Principals)	84 (55%) to allow comparisons within and across schools in some cases		

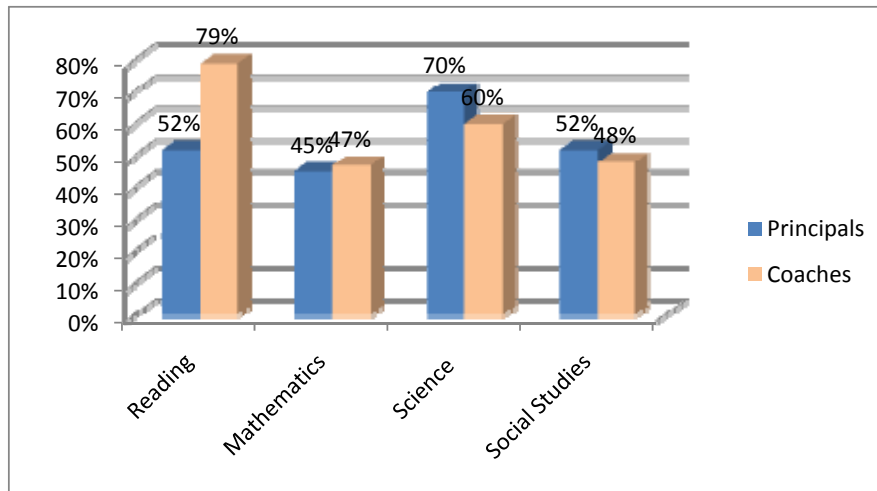
What were the training needs?

From feedback provided by principals and coaches, we determined the highest priority training needs for supplementing the knowledge of coaches in subject matter knowledge and helping them with skills to assist teachers with improving their instructional practice. The top areas of need identified by principals for assisting teachers were:

-using formative assessment to guide instruction (79%)
-planning for differentiated instruction (78%)
-planning based on data (76%)
- developing rigor in lesson planning (74%)
-with knowledge of ESE processes & procedures (72%)
-with knowledge of specialized instruction, strategies and interventions (71%)
-effective lesson planning (70%)

Both principals and coaches were asked about levels of need that coaches currently have for training in specific subject area content. In some cases there appeared to be a “perception gap” between perceived needs for subject matter training between the views of principals and coaches. Coaches

still perceived Reading to be the subject area of highest importance, while principals saw other subject areas rising in importance. For principals, the priority areas were Science, followed by Reading, Social Studies, and Mathematics. For coaches, the order was Reading, followed next by Science, Social Studies, and Mathematics. The graph below illustrates the discrepancies reported by principals and coaches in reporting the greatest need for training in subject areas.



Adult learning skills were not reported by either group (coaches or principals) as particularly high priority areas where there was concern for the ability of coaches to work effectively with teachers. Only one area was reported as a high-level need by more than 50%: principals listed “implementing change” as an area of need for training in coaches.

How successful was the work?

Has the work of School Instructional Coaches and training provided through the monthly *Coaching Academy* proven to be successful? The training of school instructional coaches is based heavily on concepts and terminology found in the Boston Collaborative Coaching Model. In addition to defining nine specific roles of instructional coaches, four of these roles were identified as categories of activity which were based on best-practices evidence, and linked to student achievement. These *high leverage* roles were **classroom supporter**, **instructional specialist**, **curriculum expert**, and **data coach**.

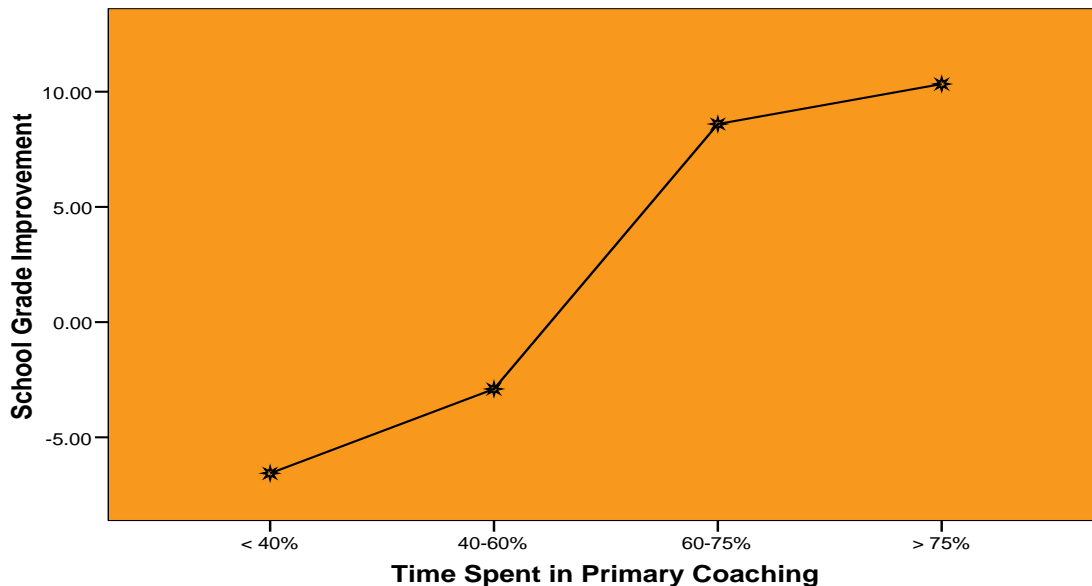
Data was collected from all school instructional coaches in the form of monthly activity logs reporting the number of hours coaches spent in various forms of activities. If our theory of coaching is correct, then a greater concentration of coaching time spent in high leverage roles of **classroom supporter**, **instructional specialist**, **curriculum expert**, and **data coach** will be linked to higher levels of student achievement. An analysis of reported coaching hours submitted for 2007-2008 resulted in a determination that *high leverage roles* were emphasized heavily in the work of school instructional coaches. The table below lists all categories of coaching roles used in the reporting system for 2007-2008 and the proportion of hours recorded in that reporting category in order of magnitude (most frequently recorded to least). The

identified *high leverage* roles are shown in **red text** in the table below, so it is clear that these preferred roles are more prevalent in the higher listed coaching roles listed in the table below:

Coaching Roles	% Time Reported
Classroom Supporter	22%
Learning Facilitator	12%
School Support	10%
Instructional Specialist	9%
Learner (Coaches' Training)	9%
Data Coach	8%
School Leader	6%
Curriculum Specialist	5%
Other (?)	5%
Resource Provider	5%
Accountability	3%
Catalyst for Change	3%
Mentor	2%
All Reported Coaching Hours	100%

Evidence of Impact

Our theory of action proposed that time allocated, and spent, in high leverage coaching roles, would lead to improved teacher skills and practice, and these benefits would lead to improved student achievement. All schools were categorized by the amount of time spent in high leverage coaching roles. These categories were defined as *less than 40%*, *40-60%*, *60-75%*, and *>75%* of time spent in these roles. In the line graph shown below, as time allocated to primary coaching roles in schools increases, there is a recognizable increase in the gains made in school improvement.



Feedback from surveys and coaching data verified that the work of school instructional coaches continues to be highly valued as critical to the success of all school instructional programs.

For more information or questions, please contact:

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