



Hands-On Literacy Coaching

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Hands-On Literacy Coaching describes the role of a literacy coach, especially the responsibility of being the specialist or “expert” to peers. It guides the coach with strategies for working with teachers to help them reach a higher level of proficiency in literacy, management, applications, protocols and the interventions necessary to improve instruction.

Hands-On Literacy Coaching is a guide for coaches, specialists, administrators and especially teachers who strive for excellence in developing literacy experiences for children. This book uses reflection, questioning, and coaching scenarios to provide insights and resources for effective literacy coaching.

About the Study Guide

This guide is designed to facilitate professional development in a collegial book study atmosphere. Four professional development sessions include discussion points, guiding questions, workshop activities, and classroom applications. To create a successful professional development experience, consider the following tips:

- Before you begin, seek input about teacher schedules and preferences. Try to arrange your professional development so that participants will be able to attend every session.
- Provide copies of *Hands-On Literacy Coaching* for all participants. Meaningful application of the skills and activities discussed at each meeting depends upon access to the resource between meetings.
- Provide discussion questions ahead of time and encourage participants to become familiar with the material covered in each session prior to the meeting.
- Provide time between each meeting session to allow teachers the opportunity to apply the skills and be prepared to share their successes and challenges in implementation.
- At each meeting, allow for discussion before beginning the planned workshop activities. Teachers will gain understanding by articulating their successes and challenges faced when implementing the skills.

Session One

Understanding Literacy Instruction (Chapters 1-2)

- The Literacy Context: Classroom Environment and Classroom Management
- Setting the Stage for Literacy Learning

Guiding Quote:

“Rigorous teaching and learning are characterized by curriculum and instruction of breadth and depth, where expectations are high for all students.” (page 13)

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the “three minute classroom walk through?” Why is it important?
2. How does room arrangement affect literacy learning?
3. Why is effective classroom management important to the learning process?
4. What do good teachers do to activate background knowledge? Why is this important?

Workshop Activity:

1. Divide the participants into six groups and assign each of the six groups a number from 1-6. Have each group turn to the study questions on pages 17 and 26.
2. Each group will identify the questions that correspond to their group number and read in the chapters to be able to answer the questions.
3. Each group will share their study questions and answers with the rest of the group. Participants should be prepared to lead the discussion of each question and answer.
4. Discuss solutions to any concerns or questions the group may have regarding the classroom walk through, classroom environment, building background, and teaching objectives.

Classroom Implementation:

Review the information discussed in this session. Plan for implementation of the instructional model given and gather needed materials. Survey the chapters for strategies, activities, and lesson ideas to effectively plan for instruction.

Looking Ahead:

Look at the checklist on page 101. Use the checklist to identify areas needing improvement and to identify strengths already in place. Make an appointment to review the checklist in a teacher/coach conference prior to the next session.

Session Two

Understanding Literacy Instruction (Chapters 3-4)

- Building Knowledge
- Reinforcing Knowledge

Guiding Quote:

“Good teachers somehow navigate this labyrinth of possibilities and design applications that are not only connected to the text for whole-class or small-group instruction, but differentiated according to individual student needs.” (page 46)

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the three components of building knowledge?
2. What are the similarities and differences between guided practice and independent practice?
3. Why is it important to reflect on learning? How can teachers help students to be reflective?
4. What is differentiated instruction? Why is it important?

Workshop Activity:

1. Divide the participants into six groups and assign each of the six groups a number from 1-6. Have each group turn to the study questions on pages 17 and 26.
2. Each group will identify the questions that correspond to their group number and read in the chapters to be able to answer the questions.
3. Each group will share their study questions and answers with the rest of the group. Participants should be prepared to lead the discussion of each question and answer.
4. Discuss solutions to any concerns or questions the group may have regarding explaining, modeling, bridging, guided practice, independent practice, and reflection.

Classroom Implementation:

Review the classroom environment checklist on page 108 and the classroom management checklist on page 109. Use the checklist(s) to identify areas needing improvement and areas of proficiency. Use the checklist(s) to determine strategies and other needs in order to improve the literacy environment for instruction.

Looking Ahead:

Be prepared to discuss the challenges and successes of working with a literacy coach. Encourage teachers to meet with the literacy coach and review the checklists to facilitate discussion at the next session and to plan for authentic implementation.

Session Three

Understanding Coaching (Chapters 5-6)

- When and How to Intervene
- The Coach/Teacher Dynamic

Guiding Quote:

“Sometimes instruction that has been good enough for the past two decades no longer makes the grade as literacy standards become more stringent” (page 86)

Discussion Questions:

1. What do teachers need to understand about literacy content, instruction, or assessment when working with a literacy coach?
2. How does the coach know when to intervene?
3. How can the administration in a school support both the teacher and the coach to implement effective interventions?
4. What traits or skills make a literacy coach effective and helpful to teachers?

Workshop Activity:

1. Divide the participants into groups or partners. Assign each group one of the thirteen problems and suggested interventions from chapter 5.
2. Have each group read and discuss their assigned problem identifying key points and strategies. Be sure to include reference to the checklists where applicable.
3. Have each group report on their problem and possible interventions and share specific skills, lessons, or ideas that would be beneficial when implementing a solution.

Classroom Implementation:

Encourage teachers to read about the four types of teachers (pages 83-88) and complete the teacher behavior chart (page 90). Encourage teachers to meet with the literacy coach to complete a coaching plan of action (page 102) and look at their schedules to begin to address the plan.

Looking Ahead:

Be prepared to discuss the successes and challenges of implementing these ideas and interventions. Encourage teachers to work with the literacy coach to identify literacy needs and to develop a plan for working together.

Session Four

Understanding Coaching (Chapters 7 and 8)

- Principles and Protocols of Effective Literacy Coaching
- Applying What You Know

Guiding Quote:

“We should continuously analyze our practice so that how we teach tomorrow is always a little better than how we taught today.” (page 92)

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the role of the administrator in literacy coaching?
2. How does the coach know how much time to spend with each teacher?
How does the coach initiate the interaction?
3. Which protocols can be used immediately to begin the coaching process?
4. How does the coach handle a teacher who is resistant to the coaching process?

Workshop Activity:

1. As a group, review the instructions about the scenarios and application of knowledge found on page 123.
2. Divide the participants into three groups. Assign each group one of the three scenarios from chapter 8.
3. Have the groups review the teaching scenarios and be able to discuss their findings and interventions with the whole group. Be prepared to answer questions and lead the discussion.
4. Discuss the challenges in working with the three scenarios and the benefits to implementing the interventions chosen.

Classroom Implementation:

Participants should plan for continued review of materials and peer support to effectively work with the literacy coach. Use checklists and strategies from the resource to assist with the process. Maintain active communication between the literacy coach and the teachers.

Looking Ahead:

Review the Bibliography of Professional Resources in the back of the book. Identify desired resources, materials, and literature that are not available at your site and explore funding sources you can use to acquire these resources.