



MAKING IT REAL

One of the major themes that surfaced when we interviewed instructional coaches for this book was the importance of having a professional learning community of other coaches to help them deepen their knowledge and skills. That community can be an especially powerful way for coaches to deepen their knowledge of teaching strategies and improve their ability to describe and model those strategies.

Creating checklists with a team of colleagues can quickly deepen coaches' knowledge of practices. I suggest when coaches come together to create checklists, they develop one checklist at a time, with each coach creating his or her own checklist, sharing it with the group, and then discussing with the group what should and should not be on the checklist. Inevitably, people identify different elements, and the ensuing discussion around what is and is not essential for the checklist compels everyone to think deeply about what matters most for a given teaching strategy.

Coaches can improve their ability to describe strategies by video recording themselves using checklists to describe strategies and then analyzing the video to check the simplicity, clarity, and completeness of their explanations. Again, this activity may work best with a team. Everyone can be paired up with a partner, video record themselves describing a strategy to their partner, review their video, and then discuss their video with their partner and the group. Of course, it can be extremely valuable for coaches to review video of themselves explaining strategies to teachers in real coaching sessions.

Finally, teams can be great settings for improving how to model teaching practices. Coaches can video record themselves modeling teaching practices in triads, review their video, and then discuss what they saw on the video with their group. Again, coaches can bring real video of modeling to their team to share the video and ask for feedback. My book *Focus on Teaching: Using Video for High-Impact Instruction* (Knight, 2014) contains many suggestions for how to set up effective video learning teams, and forms that teams can use can be downloaded for free at corwin.com/focusonteaching.

TO SUM UP

- Instructional coaches need to understand a number of high-impact teaching strategies that address many different aspects of teaching.
- Many coaches benefit from creating instructional playbooks that summarize the teaching strategies they share with teachers.
- Instructional playbooks contain (a) a one-page list of all the teaching practices in the playbook, (b) one-page summaries of each of the teaching strategies, and (c) checklists coaches may use with teachers when explaining teaching strategies.
- Instructional coaches should be precise but provisional when they share strategies with teachers.
- Teachers get deeper understanding of teaching strategies when they see them modeled.
- Modeling can be done (a) in teachers' classrooms with their students present, (b) in teachers' classrooms without their students present, (c) co-teaching, (d) visiting another teacher's classroom, and (e) watching video.

GOING DEEPER

As mentioned earlier, the most thorough discussion of the power of checklists is Atul Gawande's *The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right* (2010). You can read a shorter description of Gawande's ideas about checklists by searching online for Gawande, checklists, *New Yorker*. To read Gawande's article about coaching, "Personal Best," see *The New Yorker* (2011, October 3).

Joseph Grenny, Kerry Patterson, David Maxfield, and Ron McMillan's *Influencer: The New Science of Leading Change*, 2nd Edition (2013) provides a great explanation of the importance of modeling as a part of change and learning.

Thousands of books about instruction may be used to create instructional playbooks. I will mention a few that I have found to be especially helpful. John Hattie's research provides the most comprehensive assessment of the research on teaching, and I find his *Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning* (2012) to be his most accessible book. While Robert Marzano's many books on instruction are very helpful, I have found his *The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction* (2007)

to be especially helpful. Finally, John Saphier, Mary Ann Haley-Speca, and Robert Gower's *The Skillful Teacher: Rebuilding Your Teaching Skills*, 6th Edition (2008) is a tremendously valuable resource for any teacher.

Randy Sprick has been a long-term partner with the Instructional Coaching Group, and all of his books are very useful for coaches wanting to learn about classroom management. His book *CHAMPS: A Proactive and Positive Approach to Classroom Management*, 2nd Edition (2010) is a great introduction to his work. Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe's *Understanding by Design* (2005) is the classic work on designing curriculum. Finally, Jan Chappuis's *Seven Strategies of Assessment for Learning*, 2nd Edition (2014) is a great introductory work on formative assessment, which she, along with her longtime colleague Rick Stiggins, refers to as *assessment for learning*.



Video 4.5

Crysta's Learn
Stage—Complete



Video 4.6

Cat's Learn
Stage—Complete

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