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instructional coaching scale:

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF COACHING INTERACTIONS



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Instructional Coaching Scale

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF COACHING INTERACTIONS

The Instructional Coaching Scale is designed to help professional developers and Instructional Coaches measure the impact of their coaching on the teachers with whom they interact. It is not intended to measure teacher implementation, but rather the effects that an Instructional Coach or some other person working in a close 1:1 capacity with teachers whose job it is to facilitate change in instructional practice. Instructional coaching is an expensive proposition, but if its effects can be documented, the practice may be more readily accepted. Schools and school districts spend a large amount of money on professional development. In traditional professional development, very little implementation generally occurs. With instructional coaching, implementation rates can be significantly increased. To date, it has been difficult to measure coaching efforts. This scale is intended to provide some documentation on the impact coaching is having on groups of teachers.

Administrators have a responsibility to be fiscally conservative. They are keepers of the public trust. Sometimes making the decision to hire an instructional coach or to contract for coaching for follow-up of professional development is a tough decision. Dollars spent for coaching means that those dollars won't be spent on something else. Documenting the impact of coaching (or lack of it) is the first step to good decision making. Data collection and examination of that data is an important step in determining impact. Coaches themselves can begin to look at patterns, successes, and difficulties to make necessary adjustments in what they are doing. Bottom line, coaches are hired for the express purpose of increasing implementation and facilitating change with those with whom they work.

One of the fundamental ideas in Instructional Coaching is confidentiality. This scale should never be used to report individual scores. The intention is never to do this, although this data is a great record for the coach to keep track of individuals with whom they interact. It can be very motivating to document the change. Administrators may ask for this data. If there is any question of that, the coach should discuss this type of data collection with his or her supervisor before documenting. The coach and the coach's supervisor should be in agreement with how this data will be used. Using the data in this way could certainly destroy the coach's credibility and ability to coach effectively. If there is a chance that this may occur, it is recommended that this scale not be used. Trends and aggregate scores are reportable. A coach should be very careful to keep these records confidential. (A sample aggregate report that may be helpful to administration can be found in Appendix A – "How to Track and Report Data.")

Individual scores can be used to record the impact the coach is having on the collaborating teachers. It is not a measure of the teacher, but rather more of a measure of the coach. Using

this scale has certain obvious inherent risks. However, when coaches use common sense, it can be a valuable tool.

I would very much appreciate coaches trying this scale and sending me feedback on its use. Any helpful suggestions, stories on its use, and personal thoughts would be most appreciated. Please email me at: swoodruf@comcast.net.

INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING SCALE

Instructions for Use

Using a regular schedule, decide which activity most closely describes the teacher/coach interaction. Several data points must be collected before determining a trend. (At least three) Consider the following continuum of what potentially occurs in a coaching session. Record which number best describes the interaction that occurred. (See Appendix A for scoring instructions.)

0	Did not see – Teacher may have been absent or an unforeseen event may have occurred (such as a tornado drill, school cancellation, assembly, etc.)
1	Enrollment Conversation – No implementation yet – dialogue about instructional practice or innovation is initiated by the coach.
2	Change Conversation – Focused dialogue about use of new practice or innovation initiated by teacher.
3	Implementation Conversation – Evidence of the new practice, curriculum, or technique being used; dialogue about its use occurs.
4	Preconference – A conversation in preparation for going into a classroom to conduct a model lesson or observe a teacher. An observation form may be co-constructed during this conversation.
5	Model Lesson – Done by coach in the classroom on an agreed upon technique, practice, or content.
6	“Co-Taught” Lesson – This is usually a scaffold to the observed lesson.
7	Observation & Feedback Conversation (Low Fidelity) – Coach observes teacher conducting lesson on a coachable practice
8	Observation & Feedback Conversation (High Fidelity) – Coach observes teacher conducting lesson on a coachable practice
9	Strategic Integration – Lesson observed is highly developed – Ex: multiple techniques developed and infused with “real” content
10	Refocusing/Adaptation – Teacher analyzing what students need and asking for it. This could be someone who tweaks the new practice or technique while maintaining the integrity of it.

Category Descriptions

This scale was developed for use by coaches to monitor progress over time. It can be used by a coach to monitor individuals to keep track of individual coaching relationships, and it can be used to monitor a group's progress over time. It is intended to be a reflective tool for the instructional coach to help guide future sessions. Through analysis and reflection, the coach can determine the best possible approach to the teachers she or he is working with.

A little more explanation about each stage...

0 A zero is neutral. It implies neither positive nor negative comments. It is meant specifically to indicate that for some reason, the coach had no contact with the teacher even though the time was planned ahead and both parties were aware of the session. While a teacher could be avoiding collaboration with the coach, it could also be something as simple as an ill child or school assembly. If a pattern is noted over time (especially in the beginning of the relationship), it may indicate avoidance. This would be a situation that the coach would need to reflect on and take some kind of action on. It could also indicate a possible problem with the relationship. Since relationships are at the heart of coaching, it is critical that the coach understand the issue. This does not mean that the coach should “badger” the avoiding teacher. By all means, respecting the teacher’s right of choice is imperative in this situation.

1 Enrollment Conversation. A one is recorded when the teacher has not yet implemented a coachable practice. Record a one if the coach has initiated this conversation. This will likely happen when a coach is onsite prior to any professional development occurring. This could also occur when a coach goes into a building intending to coach on a specific practice, but the teacher has not yet begun.

2 Change Conversation. A two is a coaching conversation prior to getting into the classroom as well, but it is more focused. This conversation focuses on the new innovation, technique, or practice. The teacher may have questions or wish to know more about HOW to begin. The coach may hear “change talk” by the teacher. At this point, the teacher is contemplating changing what he or she is doing in the classroom and beginning to think about engaging in the new practice.

3 Implementation Conversation. In this situation, there is evidence that the teacher is using the new practice or technique. The teacher has examples and anecdotes about what happened. The coach can have a conversation about student work products and teacher reactions, but has not yet seen the teacher directly engaging in the new practice.

- 4** Preconference. This is a conversation in preparation for going into the classroom to either model or observe the specific practice or technique. An observation form may be co-constructed during this contact.
- 5** Model Lesson. At this point in the coaching relationship, it is critical that things go well. Many teachers gain enormously from model lessons, and for many it will be a jump start to their own implementation. Ideally, the coach and teacher should have time to prepare the lesson before the coach models rather than the coach having to “wing it.” The teacher may answer a question occasionally related to content or outcomes; the teacher should be watching and listening to the model lesson.
- 6** “Co-Taught” Lesson. At this stage, the coach and the collaborating teacher share equal roles. Co-teaching is often a nice way to ease a reluctant or nervous teacher into use of the innovation or practice.
- 7** Observation and Feedback Conversation (Low Fidelity). At this point, the teacher is ready to conduct the lesson with the coachable practice. Prior to the lesson, it is most helpful if the coach and teacher construct a checklist of what the teacher wants the coach to look for. The coach must be careful to not make assumptions about teacher behavior, and instead ask questions for clarification. A rating of “7” indicates that the teacher was using the practice in his/her classroom but with low or moderate-low fidelity. There are identifiable disconnects and the teacher would benefit from a feedback conversation that includes specific constructive feedback, as well as positive feedback.
- 8** Observation and Feedback Conversation (High Fidelity). An “8” indicates that an observation and conversation occurred as stated above, but the teacher used the practice with high fidelity.
- 9** Strategic Integration of Lesson – When teachers begin to exhibit fluent use of past and newer practices and/or techniques infused with relevant curriculum, the teacher is truly becoming strategic. Teachers need to analyze what is required, what is difficult about the content, what learning difficulties his/her students may be having, and construct a lesson that responds accordingly.
- 10** Refocusing/Adaptation – When teachers have reached this point, they will feel very comfortable with the new innovation. It has become integrated into their repertoire of teaching behaviors. The teacher may adapt it or change it slightly to make it more useful. The teacher retains the integrity of the practice, but may modify it

in some way to fit the situation. If the teacher asks questions or comments during debriefing of a strategic lesson that move the practice further would be scored in this category.

APPENDIX A – How to Track and Report Data

Any spreadsheet program can be used to collect and analyze data. The following example is using Microsoft Excel.

First, create a spreadsheet (Figure 1) with each teacher’s name listed with whom the coach will be interacting. See example set below:

	Jan-07	Feb-07	Mar-07	Apr-07	May-07	Sep-07
Teacher A	0	1	0	1	1	2
Teacher B	0	0	0	0	2	2
Teacher C	1	2	2	3	4	5
Teacher D	2	4	5	5	7	8
Teacher E	1	2	2	5	5	6
Teacher F	3	7	7	8	8	9
Teacher G	1	1	1	3	4	5
Teacher H	2	2	2	3	3	3
Teacher I	2	3	3	4	5	5
Teacher J	1	5	5	6	6	6
Teacher K	1	1	1	2	4	5
Teacher L	1	0	1	0	2	2
Teacher M	2	2	3	3	3	7
Teacher N	1	2	3	3	7	7
Teacher O	1	1	2	2	3	5
Teacher P	0	1	0	0	1	2
Teacher Q	0	2	4	6	6	7
Teacher R	3	8	8	8	9	9
Teacher S	4	5	4	5	8	8
Teacher T	0	1	1	0	2	2
Teacher U	1	0	2	4	6	6
Teacher V	2	3	3	3	5	5
Teacher W	2	3	3	4	8	8
Teacher X	1	1	0	3	8	8
Teacher Y	1	6	6	8	9	9
Teacher Z	1	5	4	6	8	8
Teacher AA	0	5	5	8	8	8
Teacher BB	0	0	2	2	3	3
Teacher CC	2	2	3	3	5	4

figure 1

Next, tally how many 0s, 1s, 2s, ...10s for each date. See Figure 2 below.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
#1 (1/2007)	7	12	7	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
#2 (2/2007)	4	7	7	3	1	4	1	1	1	0	0
#3 (3/2007)	4	4	6	6	3	3	1	1	1	0	0
#4 (4/2007)	4	1	3	8	3	3	3	0	4	0	0
#5 (5/2007)	0	2	3	4	3	4	3	2	6	2	0
#6 (9/2007)	0	0	5	2	1	6	3	3	6	3	0

figure 2

Next, decide which data-points will be used to get a snapshot of Instructional Coaching impact at the school or district level. The coach must be sensitive in the use of this data to be sure that it is not used improperly. Use the data from the above chart to select the data to be charted to get this “snapshot.” It is recommended that no more than 3 or 4 data points be used. It would make sense to use the first and last coaching date, and one or two dates at intervals in between. Use this data to make a chart to display the aggregated school data. (See Figure 3.)

	0-Not seen	1-Enrolling	2-Change	3-Implementation	4-Preconference	5-Model	6-Co-Taught	7-Observe-Low	8-Observe High	9-Strategic	10-Refocus
#1 (1/2007)	7	12	7	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	
#4 (4/2007)	4	1	3	8	3	3	3	0	4	0	
#6 (9/2007)	0	0	5	2	1	6	3	3	6	3	

figure 3

Finally, see Figure 4 on the next page to view the data in chart format.

Impact of Coaching - Sample School (n=29)

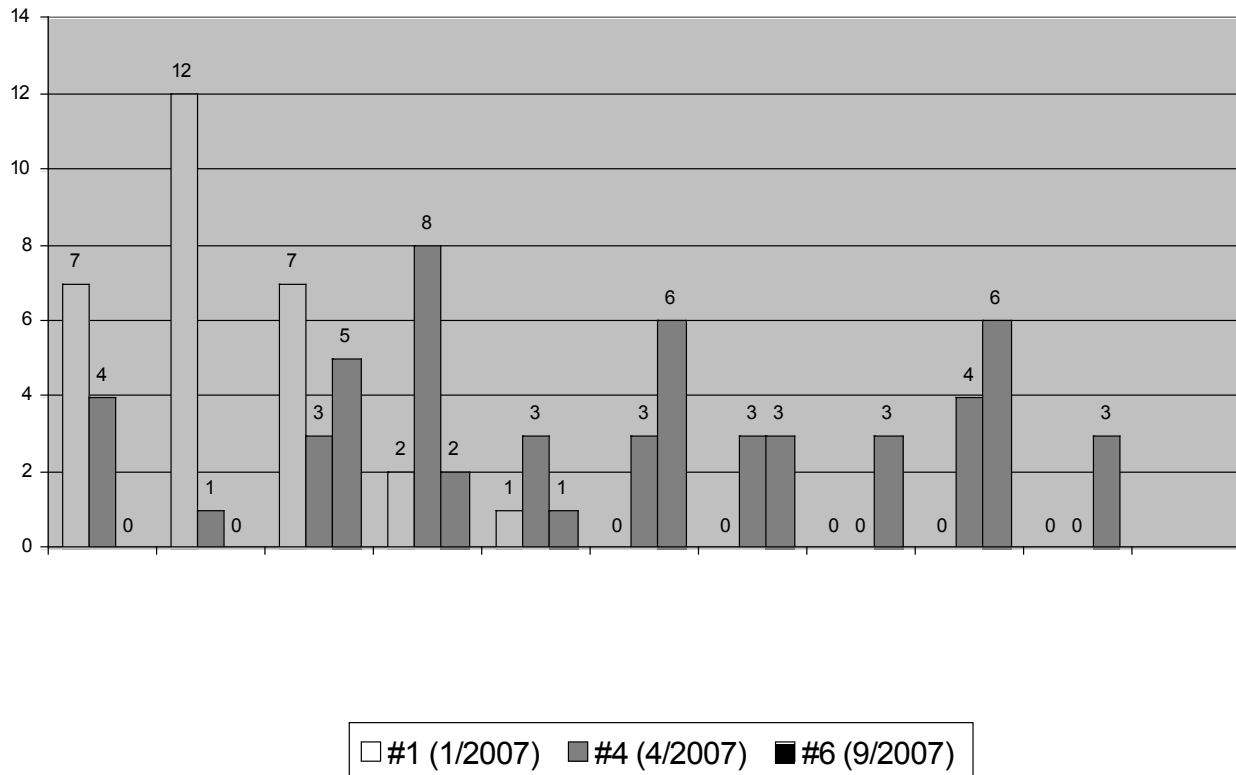


figure 4

Interpretation of Chart

(FIGURE 4)

- ▶ Over the course of 9 months, 29 teachers at the Sample School participated in Instructional Coaching.
- ▶ Initially, nearly 25% of the group were not seen due to a variety of reasons – breaking of appointments, calling in sick, unexpected events, etc. The key data to note, however, is that 0% were “not seen” at the last visit.
- ▶ The nature of the visits changed by the second data point (April 2007). By April the coach was having implementation conversations and nearly one third of the sessions were spent in the classroom with teachers.
- ▶ By September 2007, over half of the coaching sessions were spent either co-teaching or observing and giving feedback in the targeted practices. Nearly one third of the teachers were utilizing the coached practice with high fidelity or using multiple practices strategically.

- ▶ The inference from this data is that this coach is having significant impact on his or her school. This kind of change is being observed in a little over one semester's time period.

This type of data could certainly help administrators evaluate whether coaching is having an impact. When little or no impact is seen, then the situation must be examined and evaluated. There may be multiple factors contributing to the cause. It is important, however, to investigate and get at the cause or causes. This would best be done in a partnership by the coach and his or her supervisor.

The bottom line is that there is positive growth. Different schools have different cultures. A school with a highly negative school culture will most definitely respond differently than a highly collaborative school. Schools should NOT be compared to one another, as each school is unique. This scale was created to support coaches and their supervisors in making the best decisions about professional development and change for their schools.

Another way of interpreting the data is demonstrated below. In Figure 5, the data is calculated by averaging the scores of each visit. In the case of #1 Visit, the sum of the scores is 36. Refer to Figure 1 on page 6. This number, 36, is then divided by the total number of teachers, 29. The average score is for visit #1 is 1.2.

The perfect score is 10 (every teacher at the refocusing level), and the lowest score possible is 0 (every teacher not showing up for coaching visit.)

This alternate method is less specific and less descriptive about what is occurring in regards to Instructional Coaching in the school, but much easier to calculate. This “Average Monthly Score” chart can visually display an upward, downward, or stagnant trend. In the case of the sample school (whose data is detailed on page 6) a definite upward trend is indicated. The final average score is 5.7 (Visit #6) – which on the scale is between a model lesson and a co-taught class. This is pretty solid coaching ground. Again, many factors weigh in on this type of data – culture of the school, personality and style of the coach, educational leadership, and the level of urgency regarding change.

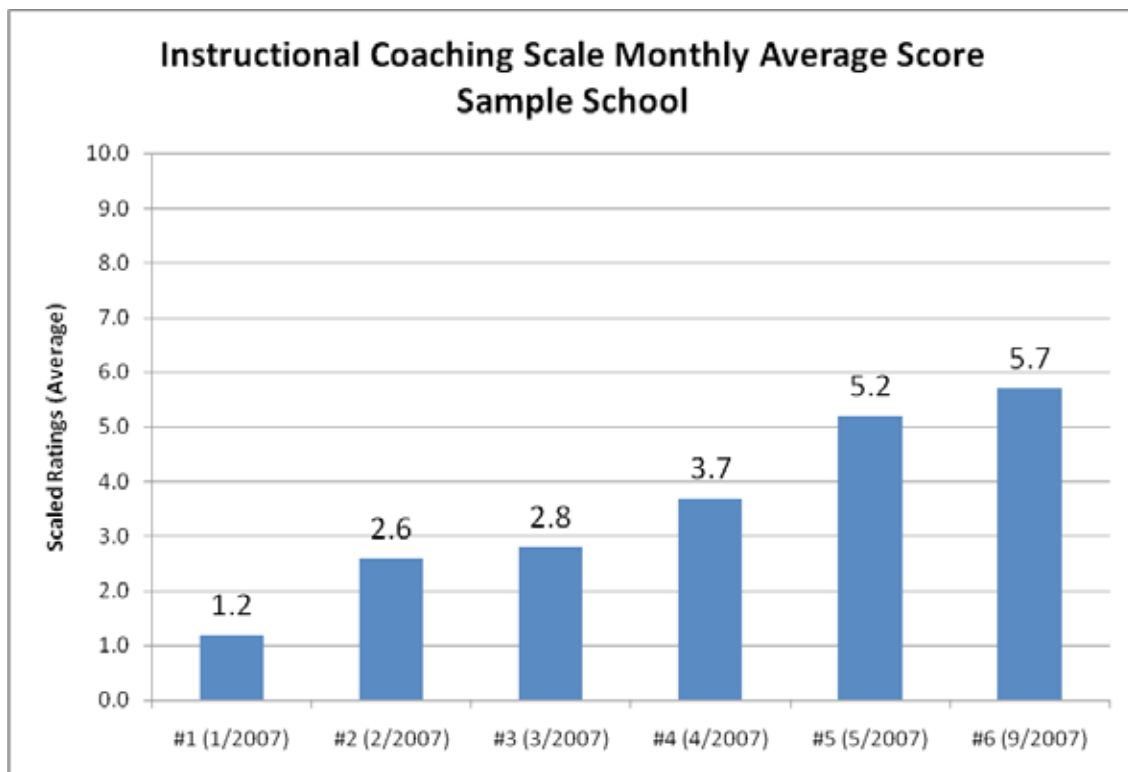


figure 5