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# Self-Study Guide for Evidence-Based Coaching for Literacy: PreK–Grade 12

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# Self-Study Guide for Evidence-Based Coaching for Literacy: PreK–Grade 12

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**The purpose of this self-study guide is to increase the knowledge, skills, and ability of teachers to implement evidence-based instructional practices by improving the effectiveness of literacy coaching. This self-study guide is intended to help administrators, teacher leaders, and coaches determine which components of literacy coaching to prioritize based on the data collected. Sources of evidence for this review include coach schedules, lesson plans, professional development agendas, and similar documents, which self-study team members can review to assess whether an area of coaching is being sufficiently addressed. The components important to implementation of coaching were identified based on a thorough review of the literature on literacy coaching. This guide was developed in partnership with the Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast's Improving Literacy Research Alliance. It was pilot tested with Wolfpack Works coaches, a literacy coaching program based at North Carolina State University.**

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# Introduction

States and school districts across the country are implementing large-scale literacy initiatives that depend on the support of literacy coaches. Literacy coaches work with teachers to improve literacy instruction and thus to improve student achievement. However, administrators, teachers, and coaches themselves might be uncertain about whether they are providing support effectively. Studies have shown that coaches might engage in activities that do not contribute to improving teacher knowledge or skills (Marsh et al., 2008; Matsumura et al., 2009).

This *Self-Study Guide for Evidence-Based Coaching for Literacy: PreK–Grade 12* provides a template for data collection and guiding questions for a facilitated discussion for a team of literacy leaders comprising administrators, teacher leaders, coaches, and other educators. Teams at the district or school level can use the self-study guide to evaluate coaching across a district or a school. The self-study guide aims to improve the effectiveness of literacy coaching in order to increase the knowledge, skill, and ability of teachers to refine their instructional practices. The ultimate aim of the guide is to support higher student achievement.

Self-study involves using a guide with predetermined focus areas and questions to collect, share, analyze, and discuss data for professional growth. The self-study team participates in the process in order to help educators implement interventions and document instructional practices. Self-study should take place at the beginning or end of the school year, to consider the prior year's coaching and plan for the upcoming school year.

The Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southeast developed this self-study guide in partnership with the Improving Literacy Research Alliance. Alliance members, along with the Florida Literacy Coaches Association and a district-level coach, provided feedback on the guide. Literacy specialists from the South Carolina Department of Education also reviewed the guide and provided feedback. The guide was pilot tested by Wolfpack Works, a program based at North Carolina State University that provides literacy coaching support to new primary grade teachers in high-needs schools in the state.

## Purpose and use of the self-study guide

The purpose of the *Self-Study Guide for Evidence-Based Coaching for Literacy: PreK–Grade 12* is to increase the knowledge, skills, and ability of teachers to implement evidence-based practices by improving the effectiveness of literacy coaching. The self-study guide should also help literacy coaches refine their instructional practices, leading to improved student achievement. The self-study guide will help states and schools:

- Gather baseline information related to literacy coaching in schools, districts, or states.
- Prioritize their need to improve one or more of the following areas covered in the guide:
  1. Implement evidence-based practices of literacy coaches.
  2. Establish a principal–coach partnership agreement.
  3. Ensure robust hiring and training processes.
  4. Set up systems of communication.
- Develop a plan for improving the effectiveness of literacy coaching.
- Gather data to monitor progress for continuous improvement of literacy coaching.
- Assess the effectiveness of literacy coaching in schools, districts, or states.

The guide prompts the self-study team to reflect on the strengths and challenges of their literacy coaching, engage in purposeful conversations, and identify areas for improvement. Pilot use of the guide suggests that the annual use of this self-study guide might take three to five hours over several sessions. Time estimates are provided for each of the process steps outlined below.

The self-study guide works best if a dedicated facilitator leads the process for members of the self-study team. In addition to being knowledgeable about research-based literacy coaching practices and the district or school's literacy coaching practices, the facilitator should be a careful listener and able to lead and structure discussions around collected evidence and data-driven decisionmaking processes. The facilitator should review the guide in detail before the self-study process begins, which should take about two hours. The facilitator should also collect data and possible sources of evidence before convening a meeting.

Members of the self-study team should also be knowledgeable about literacy coaching practices in the district or school.

## Components of the self-study guide

The self-study guide has four primary components:

- Planning and Implementation Scoring Guide.
- Implementation Consensus Rating Form.
- Planning Next Steps Form.
- Action Plan Template.

Each is discussed in turn below.

## Planning and Implementation Scoring Guide

The Planning and Implementation Scoring Guide includes guiding questions and potential sources of evidence to support literacy coaching models. The guiding questions help team members think about practices that might be considered for each of the four areas identified.

*Four areas to consider when planning and implementing literacy coaching models*

The REL Southeast reviewed the research and practice literature (see appendix A) to identify what should be included in the Planning and Implementation Scoring Guide. This review suggested that the following four areas were likely to be important for educators to consider when planning and implementing literacy coaching models:

1. Evidence-based practices of literacy coaches.
2. Principal-coach partnership agreements.
3. Hiring and training practices.
4. Communication.

*Four-point scale for assessing implementation*

The Planning and Implementation Scoring Guide uses a four-point scale to assess implementation in each area:

1 = Important, but not feasible now.

2 = Area to develop.

3 = Partially in place, under development.

4 = Already in place.

Each self-study team member should complete the Planning and Implementation Scoring Guide.

Appendix A includes an annotated bibliography of the research supporting each Planning and Implementation Scoring Guide area.

## Implementation Consensus Rating Form

After all self-study team members complete the Planning and Implementation Scoring Guide, the facilitator guides the team through a group rating process referred to as consensus rating. The team uses the Implementation Consensus Rating Form to reach agreement on the current implementation status of each literacy coaching area. The consensus ratings are used to plan next steps (see next section). The most important part of this process is the discussion that goes into the consensus rating. The scores on the Implementation Consensus Rating Form reflect this facilitated discussion. Box 1 lists the steps for completing the Implementation Consensus Rating Form.

## Box 1. Steps to complete the four components of the self-study guide

### Planning and Implementation Scoring Guide

1. *District or school leaders recruit five to seven members for the self-study team, and convene a meeting to complete the self-study process.* Select a dedicated and knowledgeable facilitator who has a background in literacy and literacy coaching, has led multirole teams, and has some background in using student classroom data. Then recruit administrators, lead teachers, literacy coaches, and others knowledgeable in literacy coaching to join the team. Some people who are an important part of the literacy coaching initiative in their district or school might be selected for the team even if they do not have an extensive background in literacy. The goal is for the team to represent a variety of roles and perspectives.
2. *Facilitators present an overview of the self-study process to all members of the team,* including a review of data and possible sources of evidence identified by the facilitator. [Activity length: 30 minutes]
3. *Facilitators ask each team member to review the four areas of the Planning and Implementation Scoring Guide* (for example, Evidence-based practices of literacy coaches and Principal-coach partnership agreements) and the Support for Implementation Scoring Guide. [Activity length: 20 minutes]
4. *Facilitators and team members discuss any questions team members raise during the review.* The facilitator should answer questions after the overview (Step 2) and review (Step 3) of the guide components. [Activity length: 20 minutes]
5. *Team members complete ratings for the Planning and Implementation Scoring Guide.* Ratings should be based on team members' current knowledge, evidence identified by the facilitator, and other evidence identified by team members. Each team member should rate each area independently to provide individual feedback. Team members can abstain from rating areas that they do not feel competent to rate. [Activity length: 60 minutes]

### Consensus Rating Form

6. *Vote as a group to reach consensus.* Consensus voting involves several steps [Activity length: 90 minutes]:
    - *Initial vote.* Ask each self-study team member to provide a numerical rating (1–4; see above) for each of the four areas.
    - *Discuss the rationale for high-frequency numbers.* Ask a team member who selected a high-frequency numerical rating to talk about what motivated that vote.
    - *Discuss the rationale for lower-frequency numbers.* Ask other team members to talk about why they chose a different rating.
    - *Final Vote.* Ask each team member to provide a second numerical rating. Members can change their initial vote based on the discussion or retain their initial vote.
    - *Record ratings.* If consensus is reached (typically determined by majority vote), record the high-frequency number on the Implementation Consensus Rating Form. If consensus is not reached (there is no high-frequency number), continue discussing and voting until consensus is reached.
    - *Repeat* this process for each area until consensus is reached on each area.

7. *Discuss and record initial team thoughts on priorities, next steps, and activities on the Implementation Consensus Rating Form.* [Activity length: 20 minutes]

#### Planning Next Steps Form

8. *Complete the Planning Next Steps Form.* The facilitator leads a discussion with the self-study team about the priorities for action. The team then develops a detailed implementation plan for next steps and activities that are most urgent and actionable. Finally, the facilitator leads a discussion to identify potential challenges to the plan and uses that information to complete the Action Plan Template. [Activity length: 60 minutes]

#### Action Plan Template

9. *Complete the Action Plan Template using information recorded on the Planning Next Steps Form.* The Action Plan Template allows the self-study team to document the following:
   - Action steps.
   - Responsibilities of team members.
   - Timeline.
   - Available resources and needed resources.
   - Potential barriers.
   - Communication Plan.
   - Evaluation method.
   - Budget.

## Planning Next Steps Form

The Planning Next Steps Form helps team members prioritize the four Planning and Implementation Scoring Guide areas based on the strength of evidence and importance for success, as described in the literature. The self-study team reviews the consensus scores and identifies one or two priority areas that need improvement. The team records the priority areas, completes a detailed plan for next steps and activities, and notes potential challenges.

## Action Plan Template

The facilitator uses the information recorded on the Planning Next Steps Form to complete the Action Plan Template. This template helps the team create a detailed plan to address the priority areas identified as in need of improvement.

# Planning and Implementation Scoring Guide

## Area 1: Evidence-based practices of literacy coaches

Literacy coaches should use evidence-based approaches to deepen the knowledge base and refine the instructional practices of the teachers they work with, leading to improved student achievement. The following quotation highlights some important components of providing job-embedded professional development, which is the essence of literacy coaching.

"These efforts have led to a growing consensus that effective PD [professional development] programs share several 'critical features,' including job embedded practice, intense and sustained durations, a focus on discrete skill sets, and active learning (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Desimone, 2009; Desimone & Garet, 2015; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; H. C. Hill, 2007)." (p. 548)

Kraft, M. A., Blazar, D., & Hogan, D. (2018). The effect of teacher coaching on instruction and achievement: A meta-analysis of the causal evidence. *Review of Educational Research, 88*(4), 547–588. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1185488.

The use of evidence-based coaching practices also involves coaching teachers on evidence-based literacy instruction, using data to drive instruction, and teaching students from a variety of populations. The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) practice guides provide recommendations grounded in research that can serve as the content base for coaching. Relevant practice guides are listed in the references section of this guide.

The WWC publishes practice guides that present recommendations for educators to address challenges in their classrooms and schools. The practice guides are based on reviews of research, the experiences of practitioners, and the opinions of a panel of nationally recognized experts. Access the WWC practice guides (https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuides) to view recommendations that could serve as a content-base for coaches.

### Part 1.1. Literacy coaches spend most of their time engaged in evidence-based activities such as lesson planning with teachers, modeling, co-teaching, reflective conversations, data chats with teachers, and facilitating professional learning communities

***Directions:*** In this section you will rate the extent to which literacy coaches engage in evidence-based activities. Review the possible sources of evidence and the guiding questions to help you determine a rating for Part 1.1. Record your rating in the box below.

*Possible sources of evidence*

- Literacy coaches' and teachers' calendars.
- Coaching schedules.
- Professional development modules for professional learning communities.
- Literacy coaches' plans for professional development.
- Teacher lesson plans reflecting coach–teacher collaboration.
- Job description for literacy coaches.

*Guiding questions*

In determining a numerical rating for this area, consider each question using the identified sources of evidence and then answer Y, Yes; N, No; or D, Developing.

___ Do we document the amount of time literacy coaches spend engaging in evidence-based practices such as those delineated in Part 1.1?

___ Do we know if literacy coaches are meeting the district/school established amount of time engaged in evidence-based practices?

___ Is there a clear job description that reflects the amount of time that literacy coaches should spend engaging in evidence-based practices?

___ Have we established criteria to determine which teachers the literacy coaches will work with (student performance, new teachers, content areas)?

___ Have we established guidelines for how much time coaches will spend with individual teachers?

___ Is there documentation of implementation of the coaching cycle?

___ Is there a plan to determine what kinds of professional learning opportunities coaches will develop for teachers?

| | |
|---|---|
| **Write the rating number below that best describes your progress in implementing literacy coaching for this item.**<br><br>**My rating:_____** | **1 = Important, but not feasible now**<br>**2 = Area to develop**<br>**3 = Partially in place, under development**<br>**4 = Already in place** |

## Part 1.2. A plan is in place to systematically review data from literacy assessments during the school year and to help teachers translate that data into instruction

***Directions:*** In this section you will rate the extent to which literacy coaches review data with teachers and help them use data to drive instruction. Review the possible sources of evidence and the guiding questions to help you determine a rating for Part 1.2. Record your rating in the box below.

*Possible sources of evidence*

- Grade-level team meeting agendas.
- Coaching schedules.
- Coaching logs.
- Student grouping and placement documents.
- District or school plan with expectations for student achievement.
- Professional development agendas.
- Plans for literacy improvement.
- Agendas and notes of the instructional leadership team.
- Samples of literacy assessment reports.
- Evidence of use of professional learning communities.

*Guiding questions*

In determining a numerical rating for this area, consider each question using the identified sources of evidence and then answer Y, Yes; N, No; or D, Developing.

___ Are the data gathered with literacy assessments timely and useful for guiding instruction?

___ Do literacy coaches have dedicated time to review assessment data?

___ Do teachers review data individually or in teams?

___ Do literacy coaches have designated and protected time to review data with teachers?

___ Have literacy coaches identified additional data that they should review with teachers?

___ Do the data inform planning, coaching, and professional development?

___ Do literacy coaches ensure that lesson plans are informed by student assessment data and aligned to student needs and discrete skills?

___ Do literacy coaches partner with teachers to ensure that students are engaged in learning?

___ Do literacy coaches partner with teachers to ensure that instruction is based on data and is relevant and rigorous?

___ Do literacy coaches conduct observations to verify the implementation and support of effective instructional practices based on data (for example, observations for adherence to program components delivered with quality, evidence of teacher-created portfolios that include artifacts of instruction)?

___ Do literacy coaches partner with teachers to ensure that literacy is integrated across content areas based on data?

___ Do literacy coaches support teachers in implementing strategies to differentiate instruction based on students' strengths and needs demonstrated by data?

| | |
|---|---|
| **Write the rating number below that best describes your progress in implementing literacy coaching for this item.**<br><br>**My rating:_____** | **1 = Important, but not feasible now**<br>**2 = Area to develop**<br>**3 = Partially in place, under development**<br>**4 = Already in place** |

## Part 1.3. Literacy coaches spend minimal time in noninstructional activities, such as attending meetings unrelated to instruction, organizing materials, engaging in bus and cafeteria duties, and administering assessments

***Directions:*** In this section you will rate the extent to which the involvement of literacy coaches in practices that are not evidence based is minimized. Review the possible sources of evidence and the guiding questions to help you determine a rating for Part 1.3. Record your rating in the box below.

*Possible sources of evidence*

- Schedules of meetings attended by literacy coaches.
- Calendars of literacy coaches and teachers.
- Assessment calendars.
- Coaching schedules.
- Literacy coaches' plans for professional development.
- Agendas for training literacy coaches and principals on the evidence-based practices of a literacy coach.
- Job description for literacy coaches that includes evidence-based practices.

*Guiding questions*

In determining a numerical rating for this area, consider each question using the identified sources of evidence and then answer Y, Yes; N, No; or D, Developing.

___ Is the amount of time literacy coaches spend in noninstructional activities documented?

___ Do principals expect literacy coaches to engage in more noninstructional activities than teachers?

___ Are the primary noninstructional responsibilities expected of literacy coaches documented?

___ Is there a decisionmaking process for assigning noninstructional responsibilities to literacy coaches?

___ Can other staff members take on some of the noninstructional responsibilities that literacy coaches are currently handling?

___ Does the principal consistently protect literacy coaches' time from encroachment by noninstructional responsibilities?

| | |
|---|---|
| **Write the rating number below that best describes your progress in implementing literacy coaching for this item.**<br><br>**My rating:_____** | **1 = Important, but not feasible now**<br>**2 = Area to develop**<br>**3 = Partially in place, under development**<br>**4 = Already in place** |

# Area 2: Principal–coach partnership agreements

It is important that literacy coaches and principals agree on the roles and responsibilities of the coach if literacy coaches are to deepen the knowledge and refine the instructional practices of the teachers they work with. The following quotation reflects the critical nature of the principal–coach partnership and the importance of teachers understanding the expectations of coaches.

"Principal beliefs regarding a literacy coach's role and responsibilities were associated with the frequency with which teachers opened their classrooms to the new coaches." (p. 655)

Matsumura, L. C., Sartoris, M., Bickel, D. D., & Garnier, H. E. (2009). Leadership for literacy coaching: The principal's role in launching a new coaching program. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 45*(5), 655–693. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ860704.

## Part 2.1. Coaches and principals have a formal agreement that details the scope of work, expected results, and responsibilities of both parties in supporting literacy instruction in the school

***Directions:*** In this section you will rate the extent to which literacy coaches and principals have established a formal agreement that reflects the expectations of the coach and principal. Review the possible sources of evidence and the guiding questions to help you determine a rating for Part 2.1. Record your rating in the box below.

*Possible sources of evidence*

- Partnership agreement document.
- Coaching schedules.
- Coaching logs.
- Agendas and schedules of meetings between coach and principal.

*Guiding questions*

In determining a numerical rating for this area, consider each question using the identified sources of evidence and then answer Y, Yes; N, No; or D, Developing.

___ Are goals and timelines incorporated into the partnership agreement?

___ Is the scope of work included in the agreement, including which teachers literacy coaches will work with and the task for which coaches will be responsible?

___ Are boundaries established in the agreement so that it is clear which tasks are *not* the responsibility of literacy coaches?

___ Are expectations for confidentiality addressed in the agreement?

___ Is the type of support literacy coaches expect to receive from the principal delineated in the agreement?

___ Are the means of communication among the principal, literacy coaches, and teachers described in the agreement, along with a timeline?

| | |
|---|---|
| **Write the rating number below that best describes your progress in implementing literacy coaching for this item.**<br><br>**My rating:_____** | **1 = Important, but not feasible now**<br>**2 = Area to develop**<br>**3 = Partially in place, under development**<br>**4 = Already in place** |

## Part 2.2. Coaches and principals revisit the principal–coach partnership agreement periodically and at the end of the school year to confirm implementation of the agreement and evaluate progress toward goals

***Directions:*** In this section you will rate the extent to which literacy coaches and principals revisit the principal–coach partnership agreement to ensure that they are following the agreement and to evaluate progress toward established goals. Review the possible sources of evidence and the guiding questions to help you determine a rating for Part 2.2. Record your rating in the box below.

*Possible sources of evidence*

- Partnership agreement document.
- Coaching schedules.
- Coaching logs.
- Documents of principal's classroom walkthroughs.
- Agendas and schedules of meetings between literacy coach and principal.

*Guiding questions*

In determining a numerical rating for this area, consider each question using the identified sources of evidence and then answer Y, Yes; N, No; or D, Developing.

___ Do principals and literacy coaches determine how many times per year they will meet to discuss implementation of the partnership agreement and evaluate progress toward goals?

___ Do principals and literacy coaches establish dates and times to meet to discuss how well the principal–coach partnership agreement is being implemented?

___ Do principals and literacy coaches meet at the dates and times planned?

___ Do principals and literacy coaches define successful outcomes for literacy coaching?

___ Is it clear how the principal is supporting literacy coaching?

___ Are professional growth plans for coaches in place to support effective literacy coaching?

___ Is the principal conducting classroom walkthroughs to ensure that progress is being made toward instructional and coaching goals?

| | |
|---|---|
| **Write the rating number below that best describes your progress in implementing literacy coaching for this item.**<br><br>**My rating:_____** | **1 = Important, but not feasible now**<br>**2 = Area to develop**<br>**3 = Partially in place, under development**<br>**4 = Already in place** |

# Area 3: Hiring and training practices

Researchers note the importance of hiring literacy coaches with expertise in both literacy instruction and coaching. The following quotation reflects the importance that districts hire capable literacy coaches and that principals have confidence in the coach's abilities. Both are important for supporting literacy coaches in their work of deepening the knowledge and refining the instructional practices of the teachers they work with, leading to improved student achievement.

"Districts must ensure that schools have access to well-qualified and well-trained coaches that principals can support and promote to their teachers with confidence." (p. 686)

Matsumura, L. C., Sartoris, M., Bickel, D. D., & Garnier, H. E. (2009). Leadership for literacy coaching: The principal's role in launching a new coaching program. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 45*(5), 655–693. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ860704.

## Part 3.1. A plan has been established to identify and hire as literacy coaches people who have a deep knowledge of literacy, who have been successful classroom teachers, and who are able to work with adults

***Directions:*** In this section you will rate the extent to which a plan has been established to hire literacy coaches who have a deep knowledge of literacy, who have been successful classroom teachers, and who are able to work with adults. Review the possible sources of evidence and the guiding questions to help you determine a rating for Part 3.1. Record your rating in the box below.

*Possible sources of evidence*

- Job descriptions and hiring announcements for coaches.
- Documents describing hiring procedures.
- Interview protocols.
- Candidates' credentials.
- List of committee members who will interview candidates.
- Human resources policies and procedures.
- Onboarding procedures.

*Guiding questions*

In determining a numerical rating for this area, consider each question using identified sources of evidence and then answer Y, Yes; N, No; or D, Developing.

___ Does our hiring process provide a pool of qualified candidates?

___ Is a protocol in place for evaluating applicants for literacy coaches that includes evidence of deep knowledge of literacy based on training and experience, evidence of success as a classroom teacher, and evidence of ability to teach and work with adults?

___ Do we recruit individuals who we believe will be successful literacy coaches?

___ Does the district have a process for mentoring qualified candidates to fill coaching positions?

___ Is a protocol in place for interviewing literacy coaches that includes evidence of deep knowledge of literacy based on training and experience, evidence of success as a classroom teacher, and evidence of ability to teach and work with adults ?

___ Do our interviews provide the information we need about the candidates?

| | |
|---|---|
| **Write the rating number below that best describes your progress in implementing literacy coaching for this item.**<br><br>**My rating:_____** | **1 = Important, but not feasible now**<br>**2 = Area to develop**<br>**3 = Partially in place, under development**<br>**4 = Already in place** |

## Part 3.2. A plan has been established to provide support for and retain literacy coaches

***Directions:*** In this section you will rate the extent to which a plan has been established to support and retain literacy coaches. Review the possible sources of evidence and the guiding questions to help you determine a rating for Part 3.2. Record your rating in the box below.

*Possible sources of evidence*

- Agendas for meetings of coaches.
- Principal–coach partnership agreements.
- Calendars reflecting principal–coach meetings.
- Literacy coaches' schedules and logs.
- Literacy coaches' mentoring program materials.

*Guiding questions*

In determining a numerical rating for this area, consider each question using identified sources of evidence and then answer Y, Yes; N, No; or D, Developing.

___ Do literacy coaches receive professional development before they become a coach?

___ Do literacy coaches continue to receive professional development?

___ Do literacy coaches have the support needed to perform their duties?

___ Is literacy coaches' time protected so that they can focus on coaching and reflection?

___ Is feedback solicited from literacy coaches to ensure that they are receiving adequate support?

___ Do literacy coaches have opportunities for professional growth?

___ Is adequate funding available to support the placement of literacy coaches so that they can meet the needs of the school(s) they serve?

| | |
|---|---|
| **Write the rating number below that best describes your progress in implementing literacy coaching for this item.**<br><br>**My rating:_____** | **1 = Important, but not feasible now**<br>**2 = Area to develop**<br>**3 = Partially in place, under development**<br>**4 = Already in place** |

# Area 4: Communication

Researchers note that it is important to provide feedback to teachers as quickly as possible. Immediacy has been identified as a characteristic of effective feedback. The following quotation reflects the benefits of providing immediate feedback.

"Targeted teaching behaviors were acquired faster and more efficiently when feedback was immediate." (p. 403)

Scheeler, M. C., Ruhl, K. L., & McAfee, J. K. (2004). Providing performance feedback to teachers: A review. *Teacher education and special education, 27*(4), 396–407. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ694123.

## Part 4.1. A plan has been established and implemented to facilitate effective communication and collaboration among literacy coaches, administrators, and teachers to ensure that each student's strengths and needs are met in the classroom

***Directions:*** In this section you will rate the extent to which a plan has been established to facilitate effective communication among coaches, administrators, and teachers. Review the possible sources of evidence and the guiding questions to help you determine a rating for Part 4.1. Record your rating in the box below.

*Possible sources of evidence*

- Coaching logs.
- Literacy coach, administrator, and teacher calendars.

- Agendas from professional learning communities or professional development sessions.
- Coaching artifacts such as coaching logs, schedules for coaching sessions, and professional development session agendas
- Documents of principal classroom walkthroughs.
- Notes from coaching sessions.
- Instructional observation data and feedback.

*Guiding questions*

In determining a numerical rating for this area, consider each question using identified sources of evidence and then answer Y, Yes; N, No; or D, Developing.

___ Do literacy coaches, administrators, and teachers understand evidence-based practices of literacy coaching?

___ Do literacy coaches and the administrators supervising the coaches meet regularly and with a clearly identified purpose?

___ Are regular and frequent opportunities provided for literacy coaches and teachers to collaborate?

___ Do administrators, teachers, and literacy coaches use the same terminology when referencing aspects of literacy instruction?

___ Are the goals and expectations for literacy coaches clearly delineated, including those related to their role as a coach, the teachers they will work with, and student achievement gains?

___ Are the goals and expectations for teachers related to implementation of practices presented by literacy coaches clearly delineated?

___ Is there evidence that the goals established for the school, literacy coaches, and teachers for improving instruction and student achievement are being met? Is this evidence shared with administrators and other teachers?

| | |
|---|---|
| **Write the rating number below that best describes your progress in implementing literacy coaching for this item.**<br><br>**My rating:_____** | **1 = Important, but not feasible now**<br>**2 = Area to develop**<br>**3 = Partially in place, under development**<br>**4 = Already in place** |

# Implementation Consensus Rating Form

**Rating key:**

1 = Important, but not feasible now.

2 = Area to develop.

3 = Partially in place, under development.

4 = Already in place.

**State:** _____

**District/School:** _____

**School Year:** _____

To complete this form, the facilitator circles the consensus rating of the self-study team for each area and then records the priorities for improvement based on team discussions and consensus ratings. Finally, the facilitator and team brainstorm next steps and activities for each prioritized area, and the facilitator records these ideas on the form.

| Planning and Implementation Scoring Guide area | Consensus (circle number) | Priorities | Ideas for next steps/activities |
|---|---|---|---|
| Area 1. Evidence-based practices of literacy coaches | Part 1.1: 1 2 3 4<br>(Time spent in evidence-based activities)<br>Part 1.2: 1 2 3 4<br>(Reviewing data with teachers)<br>Part 1.3: 1 2 3 4<br>(Minimal time spent in practices that are not evidence based) | | |
| Area 2. Principal-coach partnership agreements | Part 2.1: 1 2 3 4<br>(Principals and coaches develop agreement detailing the work of the coach)<br>Part 2.2: 1 2 3 4<br>(Principals and coaches revisit agreement to monitor progress) | | |
| Area 3. Hiring and training practices | Part 3.1: 1 2 3 4<br>(A plan for hiring competent coaches is established)<br>Part 3.2: 1 2 3 4<br>(A plan for supporting and retaining coaches is developed) | | |
| Area 4. Communication | Part 4.1: 1 2 3 4<br>(A communication and collaboration plan is developed and implemented) | | |

# Planning Next Steps Form

After completing the Implementation Consensus Rating Form, the facilitator leads a discussion with the self-study team on the priorities for action. Following that, the facilitator leads a discussion on developing a detailed implementation plan for next steps and activities that are the most urgent and actionable. Next, the facilitator leads a discussion to identify potential challenges to the plan and resources available to meet them. Finally, the facilitator records on the Planning Next Steps Form the self-study team's priorities for action, the detailed implementation plan for next steps and activities, and the potential challenges and the resources available for meeting them.

**List one or two priority areas to improve the implementation of literacy coaching.**

_____

_____

_____

_____

**Selected Priority Area 1** _____

**What are the next steps and activities to address this priority area? Consider timelines and the person or people responsible for determining the strategies or providing the resources.**

_____

_____

_____

_____

**What challenges does the team anticipate?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

**Outline a plan to address the challenges and identify the resources or support needed to do so successfully. For each plan of action in need of support, tentatively identify the person responsible for addressing this priority area and ensure follow-through.**

**What resources or support is needed to meet the challenges identified above?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

**Who is responsible for addressing this priority area and ensuring follow-through?**

_____

_____

**What is the timeline for implementation?**

_____

**What funding is needed to support successful implementation of the plan?**

_____

**Selected Priority Area 2** _____

**What are the next steps and activities to address this priority area? Consider timelines and the person or people responsible for determining the strategies or providing the resources.**

_____

_____

_____

_____

**What challenges does the team anticipate?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

**Outline a plan to address the challenges and identify the resources or support needed to do so successfully. For each plan of action in need of support, tentatively identify the person responsible for addressing this priority area and ensure follow-through.**

**What resources or support is needed to meet the challenges identified above?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

**Who is responsible for addressing this priority area and ensuring follow-through?**

_____

_____

**What is the timeline for implementation?**

_____

**What funding is needed to support successful implementation of the plan?**

_____

# Action Plan Template

***Purpose:*** To create an Action Plan for Priority Area 1.

***Directions:*** Using this form as a template, develop an Action Plan to identify the action items your institution must accomplish to address Priority Area 1 outlined in the Planning Next Steps Form.

| **Action steps**<br>What will we do? | **Responsibilities**<br>Who will do it? | **Timeline**<br>By when?<br>(day/month/year) | **Resources (financial, human, other)**<br>• Available<br>• Needed<br>• Administrative support needed | **Potential barriers**<br>• What individuals or entities might resist?<br>• How do we address this resistance? | **Communications plan**<br>• Who is involved?<br>• What methods?<br>• How often? | **Evaluation method**<br>• How will we know we have reached our goal?<br>• What are our measures? | **Budget** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step 1: | | | | | | | |
| Step 2: | | | | | | | |
| Step 3: | | | | | | | |
| Step 4: | | | | | | | |

***Purpose:*** To create an Action Plan for Priority Area 2.

***Directions:*** Using this form as a template, develop an Action Plan to identify the action items your institution must accomplish to address Priority Area 2 outlined in the Planning Next Steps Form.

| **Action steps**<br>What will you do? | **Responsibilities**<br>Who will do it? | **Timeline**<br>By when?<br>(day/month/year) | **Resources (financial, human, other)**<br>• Available<br>• Needed<br>• Administrative support needed | **Potential barriers**<br>• What individuals or entities might resist?<br>• How do we address this resistance? | **Communications plan**<br>• Who is involved?<br>• What methods?<br>• How often? | **Evaluation method**<br>• How will we know we have reached our goal?<br>• What are our measures? | **Budget** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Step 1: | | | | | | | |
| Step 2: | | | | | | | |
| Step 3: | | | | | | | |
| Step 4: | | | | | | | |

# Appendix A. Support for Planning and Implementation Scoring Guide areas

This appendix describes key references that provide additional support for each of the Planning and Implementation Scoring Guide areas.

## Scoring guide Area 1: Evidence-based practices of literacy coaches

Literacy coaches should use evidence-based approaches to deepen the knowledge and refine the instructional practices of the teachers with whom they work, leading to improved student achievement. The research highlighted below reflects the importance of coaches engaging in evidence-based practices, including working with teachers in the classroom and reviewing data with them to improve student achievement.

Kraft, M. A., Blazar, D., & Hogan, D. (2018). The effect of teacher coaching on instruction and achievement: A meta-analysis of the causal evidence. *Review of Educational Research, 88*(4), 547–588. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1185488.

This meta-analysis of causal evidence on the effect of teacher coaching on instruction and achievement identifies several key features of effective programs.

"The failure of traditional PD [professional development] programing to improve instruction and achievement has generated calls for research to identify specific conditions under which PD programs might produce more favorable outcomes (Desimone, 2009; Wayne, Yoon, Zhu, Cronen, & Garet, 2008). These efforts have led to a growing consensus that effective PD programs share several 'critical features' including job embedded practice, intense and sustained durations, a focus on discrete skill sets, and active learning (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Desimone, 2009; Desimone & Garet, 2015; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001; H. C. Hill, 2007)." (p. 548)

Matsumura, L. C., Garnier, H. E., & Spybrook, J. (2013). Literacy coaching to improve student reading achievement: A multi-level mediation model. *Learning and Instruction*, *25*, 35–48. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1003566.

This longitudinal group-randomized trial finds that Content-Focused Coaching has a positive effect on classroom text discussions and student reading achievement.

Although a number of literacy coaching models are being implemented in a variety of contexts, the consensus of the models is that "literacy coaches provide long-term engagement

of teachers in a learning community with opportunities to design, enact, and critique lessons." (p. 36)

Hamilton, L., Halverson, R., Jackson, S. S., Mandinach, E., Supovitz, J. A., & Wayman, J. C. (2009). *Using student achievement data to support instructional decision making.* IES Practice Guide (NCEE No. 2009–4067). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED506645.

The authors of this practice guide reviewed findings from several study types, including studies with causal designs that examined the effectiveness of data use interventions, case studies of schools and districts that prioritized the use of data, and observations from the field. The authors developed several recommendations on the use of data to support instructional decisionmaking.

The authors of the practice guide reflect that data are a valuable tool to help teachers prioritize instructional time, identify students who need additional instruction, recognize strengths and weaknesses of students, gauge the instructional effectiveness of their lessons, refine instructional methods, and determine how they might adapt curriculum based on information about individual student's strengths and weaknesses. Coaches can be integral in helping teachers understand the data that have been collected.

Marsh, J. A., McCombs, J. S., Lockwood, J. R., Gershwin, D., & Martorell, F. (2008). *Supporting literacy across the sunshine state: A study of Florida middle school reading coaches (Vol. 762).* Rand Corporation. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED502636.

This mixed-methods study examines the implementation and impact of Florida's coaching program and identifies several key features of an effective coaching program.

The authors reflect that "the frequency with which coaches reviewed assessment data with teachers was associated with positive outcomes" (p. 183). In addition, they note that "teachers' perception of the coach's influence on their instruction were strongly related to the frequency with which the coaches reviewed assessment data with social studies teachers" (p. 184). Finally, they note that coaches should spend time in the classroom working with teachers.

## Scoring Guide Area 2: Principal-Coach Partnership Agreements

Literacy coaches and principals need to agree on the roles and responsibilities of the coach if coaches are to deepen the knowledge base and refine the instructional practices of the teachers with whom they work, leading to improved student achievement. The research highlighted below reflects findings that suggest that the partnership between principals and literacy coaches can create an environment in which teachers continually learn. In addition, principals' beliefs regarding the roles of the literacy coach are related to how often teachers welcome a new coach into their classrooms.

Walpole, S., McKenna, M. C., Uribe-Zarain, X., & Lamitina, D. (2010). The relationships between coaching and instruction in the primary grades: Evidence from high-poverty schools. *The Elementary School Journal*, *111*(1), 115–140. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ913202.

The findings of this mixed-methods study, which used teacher and coaching observation protocols, provide insights on teaching, coaching, leadership, and coaching–teaching relationships in high-poverty schools.

The study looked at how coaching influenced instruction in the primary grades, especially in high-poverty schools, and examined how leadership support for coaching was related to changes in teacher practice. "Leadership support for coaching, measured by the frequency of constructive collaborations between the coach and principal, active support for the writing of differentiated 3-week lesson plans, and participation in professional learning, provided the highest number of significant relationships to teaching" (p. 135). Findings from the Coaching Observation Protocol used in the study suggest that the partnership between coaches and principals can create an environment in which teachers continually learn.

Matsumura, L. C., Sartoris, M., Bickel, D. D., & Garnier, H. E. (2009). Leadership for literacy coaching: The principal's role in launching a new coaching program. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *45*(5), 655–693. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ860704.

This randomized controlled trial investigated the relationship between categories of principal support and frequency of teachers' participation in coaching activities and finds that principal leadership is significantly associated with teachers' engagement with coaches.

The study explored the relationship between principal leadership and the variation in teacher participation in a new coaching program. "Principal leadership was significantly associated with the frequency with which teachers conferred with their new Content-Focused Coach (CFC) and were observed by their new coach as teaching reading comprehension lessons. Principal behaviors associated with teachers' increased engagement with coaches included actively participating in the CFC program and publicly endorsing the coach as a source of literacy expertise to teachers. Principal beliefs regarding a literacy coach's role and responsibilities were associated with the frequency with which teachers opened their classrooms to the new coaches" (p. 656). Providing support included behaviors such as attending meetings between teachers and the coach; consulting with the coach about important matters related to the school; and talking with the coach about the coach's work with teachers, including establishing goals for teacher learning, establishing how the goals will be met, and so on.

## Scoring Guide Area 3: Hiring and Training Practices

Researchers note that it is important to hire coaches with expertise in literacy instruction and coaching. In addition, school districts should develop potential coaching candidates for open positions and take steps to retain good coaches. The research highlighted below