



PBS TeacherLine Peer Connection Fact Sheet

Instructional Coaches

- The role of instructional coaches varies across settings and individuals. Generally, their activities include observing, modeling instruction, co-teaching, co-planning, conducting teacher study groups, brokering instructional materials, providing workshops, and helping analyze student work.
- Instructional coaches provide on-site, job-embedded, continuous professional development to peers of all experience levels, usually in a particular subject area (such as reading) or in technology integration.
- The number of hours worked and the amount of compensation for coaches varies widely across the nation. Coaches may work primarily as full-time teachers, or they may be focused on professional development exclusively.
- Instructional coaches serve in a variety of positions in their schools and identify themselves from a varied list of titles including teacher leader, master teacher, subject area specialist (ex. reading, math), department chair, curriculum director or consultant. Seven percent identify themselves as a “coach.”
- Because coaches have many job titles, the exact number of coaches is unknown. Based on its own market research as well as published surveys, PBS TeacherLine estimates that there are at least 40,000 U.S. educators who serve as instructional coaches or school-based professional developers

Emerging Trend Toward Instructional Coaching

- Forty-six percent of superintendents and 65 percent of principals report the use of instructional coaching for teacher professional development.
- The movement toward instructional coaching in schools and districts represents a nationwide shift away from one-time, short-term professional development offerings (such as workshops and seminars) to job-embedded, ongoing professional development.

Needs of Instructional Coaches

- The coach-teacher relationship must be collaborative rather than evaluative to be successful. Coaches need training and materials that enable them to be a “guide on the side,” providing professional development support to peers.

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- Coaches express a need for research-based content that meets district initiatives, classroom instruction video clips, classroom-ready materials, and articles on best practices. Access to a wide variety of instructional resources is particularly important because a majority of coaches say there is a continuous, intensive need for staff development as new students with different needs come in, state regulations change, and new school programs are implemented.
- Coaches say they need ongoing support and training, including ways to facilitate dialogue with teachers and to help them improve their coaching skills, especially since coaching is a new role for many educators.

About PBS TeacherLine Peer Connection

- PBS TeacherLine Peer Connection (www.pbs.org/peerconnection) is an expansive online suite of instructional and professional development resources designed to support instructional coaches and teacher mentors.
- Currently, the content covers K-12 reading, math, instructional strategies, and instructional technology. Other instructional areas including science will follow.
- The functionality of PBS TeacherLine Peer Connection positions the coach as the curriculum expert in the school, able to deliver a unique, customizable coaching experience to each teacher.
- Professional development modules help coaches increase their own effectiveness in their teacher-leader role. Through the modules, coaches learn to understand their coaching styles, how to observe teachers and provide appropriate feedback, how to find applicable resources, and how to use them while fostering community within the school.
- Content and resources are searchable by topic, grade level, subject area standards, and media type. Coaches can use the online communication and collaboration tools within Peer Connection to easily and quickly share resources with one or more teachers and create discussion groups to exchange ideas. Teachers can rate, tag and provide comments on any resource.
- Educators nationwide have been instrumental in designing this tool for maximum functionality and value its ability to deliver customized mentoring and support right to the desktop.
- PBS TeacherLine continues to provide educators with top-level professional development materials in Peer Connection through PBS's award-winning programming and new resources from its partners Just ASK Publications & Professional Development and the School Improvement Network.

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Editor's Note:

The information on instructional coaches and coaching cited in this document was obtained by Hezel Associates through literature reviews and primary research on behalf of PBS TeacherLine. For more information on PBS TeacherLine, visit www.pbs.org/teacherline.

CONTACTS:

- Kevin Dando, PBS, 703-739-5073, kdando@pbs.org
- Donovan Goode, PBS TeacherLine, 703-739-5252, dwgoode@pbs.org
- Kristen Plemon, C. Blohm & Associates, Inc., 608-839-9805, kristen@cblohm.com