



## Webinar Topic: Roles of Learning Coaches

### Overview:

You will understand the 9 roles of instructional coaches as defined in *Taking the Lead* as compared to the 9 roles of learning coaches as defined by the Alberta Ministry of Education. In addition, you will understand the characteristics of an effective coach/principal and coach/teacher relationship.

### Key Points:

- ♦ Learning Coaches work to improve student achievement by providing local support to teachers to strengthen inclusive practices.
- ♦ Learning coaches can use the role descriptions to clarify their responsibilities and to envision what their work should look like.
- ♦ The Ministry of Education sees the role of Curriculum Specialist as a role that should be infuse in many of the other roles.
- ♦ In addition to defining roles, learning coaches will need to consider how to develop an effective relationship with the principals they work with.
- ♦ Specific characteristics of effective principal/coach relationships have been identified.
- ♦ Collaboration is the key to unlocking the potential within schools.
- ♦ Competition and isolation are the barriers that prevent effective teaching from becoming the norm for all teachers.
- ♦ Learning coaches must develop effective relationships with the teachers they work with.
- ♦ Characteristics of effective coach-teacher relationships have been identified.

### Comparison of Roles:

Taking the Lead	Government of Alberta
Mentor	Mentor
Learning Facilitator	Learning Supporter
Instructional Specialist	Instructional Specialist
Catalyst for Change	Change Agent
Data Coach	Assessment Guide
Resource Provider	Resource Supplier
Classroom Supporter	Classroom Advocate
School Leader	School Leader
Learner	Lifelong Learner
Curriculum Specialist	

### **Effective Principal - Coach Relationship**

- Principal is instructional leader with coach support in this area of responsibility. Both principal and coach operate with same vision for instructional improvement.
- Confidentiality is clearly defined and monitored and communicated to all staff.
- Principal and coach communicate on a regular basis meeting minimally on a weekly basis. Partnership agreement conversations need to occur between principals and coaches including clear delineation of confidentiality agreements.
- Principal gives feedback to the coach on a regular basis.
- Principal uses coach appropriately focusing the work on student achievement with a minimal amount of time spent on managerial or administrative tasks, i.e. student discipline, constant substitute teaching, running packets, etc.
- Principal supports the work of the coach through the allocation of time and resources.
- Coach does not evaluate teachers or share any evaluative information with administration. The administrator's job is to evaluate and the administrator may suggest/mandate the coach as a resource to be used and the teacher should initiate this contact with the coach.
- Principals and coaches receive joint training on major district initiatives.

### **Effective Coach - Teacher Relationship**

- Partnership agreements exist between teachers/teams of teachers and coaches including clear delineation of confidentiality agreements.
- Teachers/teams of teachers and coach learn from one another and have dialogue about the work of teaching.
- Coaches summarize their work on a weekly basis and communicate this to all staff, i.e. corner of principal newsletter.
- It is important that all teachers work with the coaches and teachers should have voice and choice in how to work with the coach. An administrator might suggest to a teacher that s/he work with the coach but the teacher should initiate the contact.
- Coaches work on building the school's capacity to improve student achievement and on developing teacher leadership.



## Inquiry Questions:

### ROLES:

- In what areas do learning coaches demonstrate expertise?
- What knowledge, skills, and behaviors do effective coaches demonstrate?
- What are the primary roles and responsibilities of coaches?
- Why is role distinction important?
- Consider the Alberta Learning Coach Definition. What are some ways learning coaches can provide support to teachers to strengthen inclusive practices?
- What is the same and what is different about the way the roles are defined for instructional coaches versus learning coaches?
- Which roles do you see the curriculum specialist role being infused into? Why is it important for a learning coach to have strong knowledge and skills in curriculum?
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### PRINCIPAL/COACH RELATIONSHIP

- How might principals and coaches be an instructional leadership team in your school or district?
- How might time be spent for coaches between working with teachers in the classroom?

### TEACHER/COACH RELATIONSHIP

- ♦ What do you want teachers to say about the impact you are having on instruction?
- ♦ Which of the characteristics are in place for you?
- ♦ What actions will you take to enhance the working relationship between coaches and teachers in your school or district?

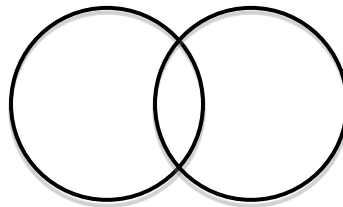
### ACTION PLAN

- ♦ What concepts from today's webinar will you focus on developing?
- ♦ What specific action will you take to implement these actions?
- ♦ When will you start and finish?
- ♦ How will you know you have been successful?
- ♦ What will you do first to initiate your plan?

## Extend Your Thinking Through Collaboration with Others:

### 1. Similarities and Differences Activity: Create a Venn Diagram

Consider each of the roles of coaches. Compare and contrast each role as defined in *Taking the Lead* with the role as defined by the Ministry of Education.



### 2. Allocation of Time and Roles: Based on the role descriptions, which do you feel are most important for learning coaches?

Identify your choices and then compare with others. Share your rationale for your choices.

Government of Alberta	Priority Ranking
Mentor	
Learning Supporter	
Instructional Specialist	
Change Agent	
Assessment Guide	
Resource Supplier	
School Leader	

### 3. Discuss with a Partner:

Look at the 2 charts (Principal/Coach Relationships and Teacher/Coach Relationships.) In which areas would you rate yourself high and in which areas do you continue to develop? Share your ideas for developing at least on area in each chart.



#### 4. Action Plan

After completing your own action plan, share with others for feedback and other perspectives and ideas.