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Role of coach changes with time

Q What has nine years of experience taught you about coaching successfully?

When I first became a coach, the role was primarily a resource teacher — find out what materials teachers need and supply those, pull students out of the classroom to assist. Now, the role has changed significantly. The push is for in-class assistance, to work directly with teachers to hone their craft.

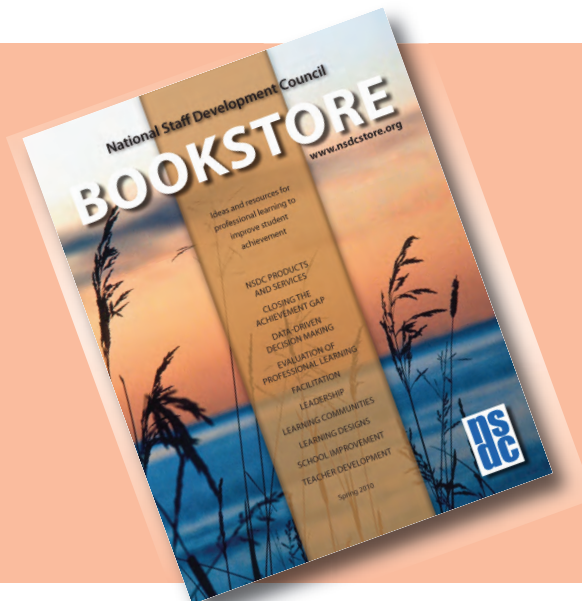
One of the key ingredients of coaching is establishing a focus for instructional help. It's really looking at what the data are saying to you. If we find in a particular grade level that students are not doing well in one area, this is a conversation you need to have with the staff. We need to find out why. Is it that the curriculum is not addressing that area well enough? Is the problem that we didn't have enough time to cover the topic? These data open up the door for me as a coach to provide professional development that teachers might need.

The teachers are very forthcoming at times in saying, "I wasn't sure how to teach that," or "I don't feel confident teaching that area." That's where I can come in and say, "Would you mind if we sit together? We can look at what you have already tried and I can give you a little background on this? Do you want me to model a lesson?" Data really open the door for a coach to know when to provide professional development..

I'm a believer in helping people. I always try to accommodate teachers into my schedule as much as I possibly can.

My feeling is that teachers need to know they can count on me, so I try my best to keep to the promises I make them. Teachers need to feel supported. When you go out of your way to help and you make promises and keep those promises, prove to them that when you say something you mean it, that goes a long way. People learn to trust you. They also need to see that you're good at what you do. These things build the relationship you need as a coach. That's what's been helpful to me. ♦

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