White Paper: Research Study on the Impact of Student-Centered Coaching

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Student-Centered Coaching was developed by instructional coaches and for instructional coaches. It was the result of coaches asking the question, "How can we make our coaching more about student learning?" Until then, it felt like coaching only focused on instruction and wasn't necessarily ensuring that learning was taking place. Coaches worried that, while they may be working very hard, they weren't sure how their efforts were impacting the achievement of students.

Beginning as a practitioner driven model has its advantages. The most profound is that the practices for Student-Centered Coaching make sense in the complex environment of schools. As many coaches describe it, "The practices feel right. They are so practical and teachers aren't at all intimidated."

While we are thrilled to receive kudos of this nature, we believe it is our job to be certain that the practices are also reaching the desired results. Therefore, we recently engaged in an evaluation study with KickUp, an independent K-12 evaluation firm. Our goal for the study was to determine how Student-Centered Coaching was impacting teaching and learning in the schools where it is being implemented. We also wanted to gather feedback regarding how we might better support instructional coaches in the use of our model.

Methodology

KickUp collected data from 87 coaches throughout the state of Iowa. These coaches, also known as teacher leaders, were in year 2 and 3 of implementation of Student-Centered Coaching. Corwin contracted with KickUp and supported the development of the evaluation tool. Central Rivers, Keystone, and Green Hills AEAs provided the sites where the data was collected.

Student-Centered Coaches use the Results-Based Coaching Tool to measure the impact of coaching cycles lasting 4-6 weeks. This became the primary tool for data collection in this study. Coaches recorded information based on the following questions:

At the Beginning of the Coaching Cycle
- What was the goal for the coaching cycle?
- What were the learning targets that aligned to the goal?
- What were the standards that aligned to the goal?
- What was the baseline formative assessment data?

During the Coaching Cycle
- What instructional practices were identified to help the students reach the goal?
- What coaching practices were used throughout the coaching cycle?

At the End of the Coaching Cycle
- As a result of the coaching, what instructional practices are being used on a consistent basis?
- What was the post formative assessment data?

Results

At the end of the study, we were excited to find that across 4-6 week coaching cycles, students grew an average of 68% proficiency. This growth was measured using a success criteria that aligned with the standards. We also found that teachers increased their effectiveness. For example, teachers identified their growth as follows:

- 76% were better able to use formative assessments to plan instruction
- 66% were better able to differentiate instruction
- 65% were better able to model for students
- 55% were better able to deliver focused lessons
- 52% were better able to confer with students
- 35% were better able to help students self-assess

While not every student was there yet, teachers reported that they had a clear path regarding how they would move student learning (and their teaching) forward. This is what coaching is all about.

Alignment with the Visible Learning Research

Since Student-Centered Coaching is an evidence-based model, it aligns with some of the most exciting research in education, the research associated with Visible Learning and the work of John Hattie. A meta-analysis of over 1,500 educational studies, this research base provides evidence of what schools can do to increase student achievement. The following crosswalk between Student-Centered Coaching and Visible Learning provides a look at how the practices overlap.

Student-Centered Coaching Practices	Visible Learning	Effect Size
Using formative assessments to plan instruction	- Providing Formative Evaluation - Evaluation and Reflection	0.48 0.75
Differentiating instruction	- Interventions for students with learning needs	0.77
Modeling for students	- Mastery learning - Planning and Prediction	0.57 0.76
Delivering focused lessons	- Clear Goal Intentions - Direct Instruction - Teacher Clarity - Student Use of the Success Criteria	0.48 0.60 0.75 1.13
Conferring with students	- Teacher-Student Relationships - Feedback	0.52 0.70
Student self-assessment	- Assessment Capable Learners	1.33

Structures for student discourse	- Classroom Discussion - Questioning - Peer Tutoring	0.82 0.48 0.53
Co-teaching and co-planning	- Instructional Quality	1.00

Documenting Our Impact

While it's rewarding to understand the research that supports Student-Centered Coaching, we believe that it's even more important for coaches to document the impact of their own coaching cycles. If we don't look closely at how our coaching is impacting student and teacher learning than we are remiss in ensuring that our work is making the desired impact. The tools we provide through Student-Centered Coaching position coaches to do just that, make an impact that is understood by all.