

iCoach Program Evaluation Update

iCoaching is a joint project between the South Carolina Coalition for Mathematics and Science and the South Carolina Department of Education. The iCoaching project mission is described as building capability and capacity in three areas: pedagogy, content, and professional relationships.

The Biological Sciences Curriculum Study (BSCS) Center for Research and Evaluation was contracted to conduct an evaluation of the iCoaching project beginning in SY 2007-2008. BSCS recently submitted its Year Two Summary Report to the iCoach team. The report focuses on six evaluation questions:

1. *What is the nature of an effective Specialist/iCoach relationship?*
2. *What is the nature of an effective iCoach/Teacher relationship?*
3. *What is the nature of an effective iCoach/School Administrator relationship?*
4. *Can iCoaches be supported effectively through virtual technologies?*
5. *What are the optimal characteristics/behaviors of specialists, iCoaches, teachers?*
6. *Does the program increase the pedagogical and content knowledge of teachers?*

Continued on Page 4

Inside This Issue

- 1 BSCS Evaluation Report
- 2 Coaching in an Engaged School Community
- 3 iCoach Cohort 3 Summer Training
- 4 Dates to Remember

Welcome to a new school year! iCoach School partners

Cohort 2 iCoaches

Sally Adams	Spaulding MS
Frankie Bennett	Newberry MS
Lorna Burnell	Campobello
	Gramling MS
Paula Costello	Lugoff-Elgin MS
Patricia Dangerfield	Hunter-Kinard-Tyler MS
Keonia Gilliard	Holly Hill-Roberts MS
Angela Mills	Berkeley MS
Cathy Morrison	Boiling Springs MS
Kimberly Shelton-Hamilton	Newberry MS
Matthew Weber	Hughes Academy

Cohort 3 iCoaches

Adrienne Chisolm	Lady's Island MS
Sandra Conley	Furman MS
Christy Crytzer	Conway MS
Sarah Davis	Landrum MS
Donna Jackson	York JHS
Karenanne Koenig	McCracken MS
Schanell Montgomery	Southside MS
Connie Singleton-Murphy	Whale Branch MS
Jill Strickler	T.E. Mabry MS
Angela Tanner	Hannah-Pamplico MS
Sheila Ward	Robert Smalls MS

iCoach 4.0 Coaches

LuAnn Graul	Dutch Fork MS
Janice Jackson	Pelion MS
Marian Marlowe	Manning JHS
Hilary Price-Morgan	White Knoll MS
Wendy Morris	Chapin MS
Jenny Parris	Chesnee MS

Coaching in an Engaged School Community

Gregory MacDougall, Year 3 Team
Science Specialist, Central Savannah S²MART Centers SC

There is much talk about what is referred to as the 'knowing-doing gap.' This gap is in reference to the gap that exists between what an organization knows and what an organization actually does. DuFour writes that "there is an enormous difference between writing a mission and *living* a mission" (DuFour, DuFour Eaker, 2008, p. 114). The S²MART Centers' staff believe that one powerful way that schools improve student achievement is to narrow that gap between knowing and doing, between a written mission statement and a teacher's personal mission, through individual coaching and group coaching of teachers.

In the third year of the coaching initiative, the focus of training and support is on coaching groups of teachers in such a way that it facilitates an engaged school community. Coaching groups of teachers may be done by grade-level or by subject across grade levels, or by groups of teachers focused on a topic, or as part of a book study. Just as coaching an individual teacher empowers that teacher, so too does coaching groups of teachers empower that group. This empowerment can narrow the knowing-doing gap as teachers collectively learn and apply new ways of teaching that result in long-term student understanding of material and improved student achievement.

During the summer prior to the third year of the coaching initiative, coaches attend the week-long Mathematics and Science Coaching Institute 4 (MSCI4). MSCI4 is designed so that coaches learn about professional learning communities (PLCs) and their roles within a PLC through a variety of experiences that immerse the coach in a professional learning community. Deep understanding of PLCs and skill sets that facilitate the process come as a method of learning by doing. In MSCI4, coaches are introduced to the five dimensions of PLCs as described by Hord (1997) and characteristics of PLCs as described by DuFour (2008) and apply their knowledge as part of professional learning teams within the year three community of coaches. Although the S²MART Centers' staff draw upon many different sources, the structure of MSCI4 is based on Hord's five dimensions of PLCs: shared and supportive leadership, shared mission and vision, collective learning and application of learning, supportive conditions, and shared personal practice.

One powerful framework that is introduced during MSCI4, and continues into the year three Learning Community Meetings, is the professional teaching and learning cycle (PTLC). The PTLC (Tobia, 2007) is a useful framework that includes multiple P-O-R cycles (planning, observing, reflecting) that is data-driven in planning lessons, formatively assessing lessons, and on-going assessment of lessons. Most literature on professional learning communities mention the importance of the principal. The S²MART Centers' staff also believe this to be true, but also consider the coach as a strong ally in this process. A coach can help low functioning traditional teacher teams (such as grade-level teams) evolve into highly effective professional learning teams in an engaged school community as teachers collectively increase their level of knowing, and, increase their level of doing what they know.

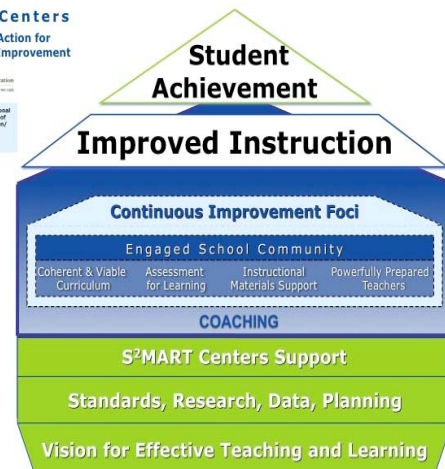
- DuFour, R., DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. (2008). *Revisiting professional learning communities at work: New insights for improving schools*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.
- Hord, S. (1997). *Professional learning communities: Communities of continuous improvement*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.
- Tobia, E. (2007). The professional teaching and learning cycle: Implementing a standards-based approach to professional development. *SEDL Letter* 19(1): 11-15.

S²MART Centers

Theory of Action for
Instructional Improvement



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iCoach Cohort 3 Summer Training 2009

MSCI 3: USC T.I.P.S. Summer Institute

"When you inspire students to imagine beyond their expectations, to seek more questions than they will ever answer, and to persist when others concede, you are becoming an inquiry based teacher." Douglas Llewellyn

This quote describes the learning outcomes of iCoaches and teachers from their schools in June at the USC T.I.P.S. Summer Institute. For the second year in a row iCoaches partnered with USC to build the capacity of math and science teachers in facilitating inquiry based instruction.

The institute was made up of six major participant groups: iCoaches, USC professors, master instructors, pre-service teachers, students from the Columbia area, and teachers from iCoach schools around the state. The teacher participants had a dual role; they were both teachers and learners as they received content instruction from the professors and master instructors and then applied their new learning with the students. The iCoaches conducted planning conversations with the teachers, observed as the teachers taught the lessons and conducted follow up sessions to reflect on the experience and plan next steps.

The iCoaches' purpose at the institute was also twofold. These coaches were transitioning into their 2nd year of coaching. In their first year they had experiences mediating the thinking of individual teachers. The institute provided them with daily opportunities to build their group coaching skills as well as begin developing their knowledge of the principles of high performing collaborative learning teams.

Crossroads Middle School in Irmo was the setting for this rich learning environment and was alive with activity as students were engaged in hypothesizing, investigating, collecting and analyzing data, forming conclusions, and communicating their findings.

These institute strengths from prior years were still evident:

- Opportunities for iCoaches and teachers to engage in the planning, observing, reflecting coaching cycle around new learning
- Teacher development of inquiry based lessons and instructional activities that are aligned with the S.C. content standards.



iCoaches Angela Tanner (above) and Karenanne Koenig (below) plan with T.I.P.S. teacher participants.



- Naturally occurring and powerful vertical articulation as the university instructors and the high school instructors who were assisting them made connections from the middle school content to high school and college content.
- Follow up sessions during the school year with assessment and equipment support provided by the university.

In addition to these components the director of T.I.P.S., Dr. Christine Lotter, Assistant Professor at USC and her staff continually highlighted the idea that "inquiry is simply good teaching." Each day's learning focused on an instructional best practice that was threaded throughout the day. To facilitate the learning of these practices, a whole group learning experience with the adult learners in the institute was the opening activity each morning.

T.I.P.S - technology, inquiry, pedagogy, and standards were well integrated throughout the two weeks to provide a high quality learning experience for all involved.

iCoach Program Evaluation Update
Continued from page 1

As part of the evaluation process, BSCS conducted online surveys, on-site visits, and interviews to address the three questions regarding effective relationships and to determine the optimal characteristics of specialists, iCoaches, and teachers.

"Information from all data collection instruments and activities corroborates the conclusion that the iCoaching program has been successful in developing participants who speak the language of reform and contribute to reflective, collaborative communities of practice at all levels of the program." (*iCoaching Instructional Coaching Year 2 Summary Report*)

To achieve reflective, collaborative communities of practice, relationships are vital. Most important to creating supportive relationships are trust, honesty, professionalism, and productivity—at all levels.

Watch this space in future issues of the STORYLINE for additional updates on the ongoing iCoach program evaluation.

- We want to share YOUR stories of iCoaching experiences. Please help us celebrate by submitting your story, in the format you wish it to be published, by email to Cherlyn Anderson, canderson@scetv.org
- Deadline for submission for December's issue is December 4, 2009.

Dates of Interest

September 28
Regional Learning Community Meetings

October 13-14
Cognitive Coaching, Cohort 3

November 12-13
Learning Community Meeting
Cohorts 2 & 3

December 10-11
Cognitive Coaching, Cohort 3
Virtual Learning Community Meeting,
iCoach 4.0

Professional Opportunity

Are you ready to share your passion for STEM education at the Federal Level? If this appeals to you then consider applying for the **Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellowship**. This prestigious fellowship program brings outstanding K-12 science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) educators to Washington, DC for a school year to share their practical insights, real world perspectives and extensive knowledge in offices of Federal Agencies, such as the Department of Energy (DOE), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the National Science Foundation (NSF) or on Capitol Hill in a Congressional Office. As an Einstein Fellow, you will receive a **monthly stipend**, a **moving allowance** and a **travel budget**. If you have the desire to work on educational issues at a national level then visit this site for more information:

www.trianglecoalition.org/ein.htm
Applications open October 1.

**The iCoaching Team values your feedback.
Please let us know how we might make
THE STORYLINE work for you!**

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