Coaching for Ongoing Professional Learning Within Tiered Support Models

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Contents

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide content-specific examples of how to structure **educator-level** and/or **systems-level** coaching as a mechanism to ensure **ongoing professional learning to support tiered intervention** occurs. This document provides examples of coaching supports, models, and functions within the context of tiered intervention (e.g., RtI, PBIS, MTSS) and data-based decision making (e.g., data-based individualization [DBI]) for educators who already have foundational knowledge and/or experience with coaching.

Audience

The audience for this document includes state education agency (SEA) and local education agency (LEA) leaders and professional learning providers looking to deepen their coaching knowledge and skills as applied to **tiered intervention,** including MTSS and DBI. This comprises, but is not limited to, the following roles:

- Instructional coaches and interventionists
- Curriculum and special education directors
- Principals
- District-level or external trainers, professional development providers, and coaches

Response to Intervention: Response to intervention (RtI) integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and reduce behavior problems. With RtI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness, and identify students with learning disabilities or other disabilities.

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) is a three-tiered framework for improving and integrating all of the data, systems, and practices affecting student outcomes every day. PBIS is a way to support everyone—especially students with disabilities—to create the kinds of schools where all students are successful.

Multi-tiered System of Supports: Multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) is a framework for school improvement. This framework ensures that all students are supported for meeting academic, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes. "All students" means all students, including multilingual learners and students with disabilities. In an MTSS, all students have equitable access to strong, effective core instruction using high-quality curriculum and differentiated instructional practices at Tier 1; evidence-based group interventions at Tier 2; and intensive, evidence-based interventions at Tier 3.

Structure of This Document

This document is divided into sections, which can be used separately or together, based on current knowledge and/or need. You can start from the top or click on the following links to go directly to various sections. There are other links throughout this document that will take you to external websites and resources to explore.

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Coaching Within Tiered Support Models Overview

Broadly defined, *coaching* is "a form of professional learning within the classroom or school that helps [educators] develop and apply new knowledge, make strong plans for instruction and assessment, obtain feedback, refine their practices, and examine results" (The University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning, Learning Forward, & Public Impact, 2016, p. 5). In simpler terms, coaching provides educators with the support they need to apply a newly learned skill within their own context (Horner, 2018). Coaching differs from training or traditional professional development (PD) workshops that serve the purpose of developing new knowledge, because coaching focuses on the application of new knowledge over time. Coaching plays a vital role in the implementation of tiered support models to ensure fidelity of learned practices by educators and within systems (i.e., structures or supports provided by those individuals in leadership roles). Throughout this document, examples across educator-level or instructional- and systems-level or team coaching will be shared. Many states use similar coaching strategies for induction and instructional coaching; this document extends those strategies to specific coaching features for effective MTSS and DBI implementation.

Differences between **educator-** and **systems-level** coaching include the following:

- The nature of the goals
  - **Educator-level** or **instructional** coaching activities support MTSS and DBI practices that lead to student learning.
  - **Systems-level** or **team** coaching activities support practices that lead to the overall functioning of a group of individuals gathered around supporting MTSS and DBI implementation (e.g., healthy routines for communication, discussion, and consensus building; defining roles and responsibilities; increasing implementation buy-in or engagement; common vision and expectations).
- The nature of the relationship
  - **Educator-level** or **instructional** coaches work directly with an educator to shape their MTSS and DBI practices (e.g., data-driven instruction).
  - **Systems-level** or **team** coaches work with school teams or groups of educators and/or directly with a team's facilitator to shape their practices (e.g., developing guidance and policies related to MTSS and DBI implementation).

Regardless of the level (i.e., educator or systems), coaching occurs within the context of ongoing professional learning and may be influenced by an educator or team's familiarity with the practice or set of practices being coached.

Coaching and Implementation

Implementation of any new practice or skill takes place across *phases or stages* ([National Implementation Research Network](#)). These implementation stages include (1) Exploration, (2) Installation, (3) Initial Implementation, and (4) Full Implementation. Table 1 details each implementation stage, along with key features. Additional information about the stages of implementation can be found in these [state examples from Michigan](#).

Table 1. Implementation Stages

Implementation Stage	Defining Features
[Exploration](#)	Identifying a new initiative or practice and planning for implementation
[Installation](#)	Setting up infrastructure with educators or teams, data systems, and an implementation plan
[Initial Implementation](#)	Trying out the practices, learning, and improving
[Full Implementation](#)	Repeating the process with more partners, programs, and practices ■ Full implementation is reached when at least 50% of educators or team members are using an effective innovation with fidelity and positive outcomes.

[Implementation Drivers](#) can be used to help identify priority areas for coaching. The drivers (competency, organizational, and leadership) and implementation stages work in tandem, across educator and systems levels. Table 2 provides an example of how an LEA can look across the implementation drivers to guide professional development and coaching.

Table 2. Implementation Drivers

Implementation Driver	Coaching Focus	Defining Features
Competency	Educator level or systems level	Practitioners receive training and coaching on learning a new MTSS or DBI practice (i.e., using diagnostic assessment to guide intervention adaptations). Performance (fidelity) assessments are used to monitor the progress of teaching and learning.
Organization	Systems level	LEAs consider sustainability from the onset by developing systems, structures, and processes to establish a supportive environment for implementation of tiered supports.
Leadership	Systems level	LEAs resolve adaptive issues (e.g., deciding how to identify problems; measuring progress toward goals) and technical problems (e.g., setting goals; managing time) that arise during MTSS and DBI implementation.

Contextualizing Coaching Support at the Local Level

LEAs should contextualize coaching to address areas of need. LEAs should be prepared to coach **educator-level features** (e.g., intensive intervention in reading, math, and/or behavior; progress monitoring; instructional adaptations) and **systems-level features** (e.g., teaming structures and processes). Table 3 suggests how an LEA can provide ongoing coaching through different approaches, depending on available resources, personnel, and/or time. Successful implementation—for the purpose of sustaining practices over time—requires an individual and/or team to take leadership and ownership over coaching to mitigate potential barriers.

Table 3. Approaches for Ongoing Coaching with LEAs

Coaching Commitment (Systems and Educator Levels)	What Might This Look Like at the LEA Level?

LEA formally commits time and personnel to continuous engagement with district-led or externally-led professional learning.	▪ LEA has a formal agreement in place with a statewide initiative or other external initiative that provides coaching support as part of an ongoing professional learning system).
	  • Resources are allocated to support ongoing professional learning.
	 ▪ LEA has dedicated instructional coaching staff who support ongoing professional learning.
	  • A part- or full-time LEA position dedicated to coaching is funded.
	  • Resources are allocated to support ongoing professional learning.
	  • Instructional coaching staff are knowledgeable and skilled in the system and/or content area and are able to model practices, provide feedback, and support educators with refining skills.

LEA commits to providing ongoing support, following a sequence of professional development opportunities.	▪ LEA sends educators to professional development activities.
	 ▪ LEA supports ongoing professional learning through a peer-to-peer coaching model or a consultation model.
	  • Peer-to-peer coaching pairs are consistent across the school year.
	  • LEA commits time for peer-to-peer coaching activities.
	  • External coaches or supports may be brought in on an ad hoc basis to help coaching pairs.
	 ▪ LEA commits funding and time for teachers to meet with specialists (e.g., English learner, reading, school psychologist) as part of ongoing professional learning.
	  • Supplemental Title funds are used to fund before- and/or after-school coaching meetings.
	  • Time for coaching observations is included in the specialist's role.

| Coaching Commitment (Systems and Educator Levels)	What Might This Look Like at the LEA Level?

Typically, LEA engages in a short-term commitment in conjunction with other professional development activities.	▪ LEA sends educators to professional development activities.
	▪ LEA funds ad hoc coaching meetings after professional development opportunities (e.g., virtual coaching session with a trainer to discuss examples and nonexamples and to problem solve implementation challenges).
	▪ LEA provides administrators with training on coaching as part of ongoing professional learning.
	   • Formative observations of teacher practice are related to the content area being observed.
	   • Formative observations of teacher practice follow a coaching cycle but are not part of formal teacher evaluation processes.

Considerations for Providing Ongoing Coaching Support

Coaching occurs across a continuum of high, medium, and low intensity. These levels of intensity are defined by data indicating a specific need. These data may include (but are not limited to) observation fidelity checks, self-assessments, and student-level outcomes and should be used to determine how an educator or system is performing in implementing MTSS/DBI practices. Continued coaching support at a high-intensity level may not always be possible due to barriers related to resources and available personnel. The flowchart in Figure 1 shows how coaching across the continuum can be maintained over time. The level of coaching intensity should depend on the data collected, expertise, and student outcomes. For example, a teacher who implements, with fidelity, a new evidence-based practice as part of the teacher's tiered instruction—and sees positive student outcomes as a result—may only need low levels of coaching support to sustain the intervention. Conversely, an MTSS team that is new to implementation and scores low on an initial needs assessment and fidelity checks may require a high-intensity level of coaching to start. Data, in these scenarios, are used to move educators or teams through the continuum. The flowchart in Figure 1 visually depicts how data are used within the coaching continuum to determine the level of intensity.

Example: *(Using the flow chart).* A teacher attends a schoolwide professional development session on implementing a Tier 1 phonics program that addresses early literacy skills for Grades K–3. The teacher returns to the classroom and is assigned a dedicated coach who begins one-to-one coaching and team teacher coaching (high-intensity supports). During observations, the coach uses a fidelity checklist to monitor the teacher's implementation. During the post-observation debrief, the coach and teacher discuss the data the teacher is collecting, as well as the teacher's reflections on implementation. The data show that the students are making consistently positive gains. The coach also finds that the teacher has a high fidelity of implementation and is excited about the prospect of continuing the intervention (high score on fidelity measure during data collection phase). They mutually decide that the teacher does not require as much support, and the coach decreases the frequency of classroom observations related to instruction and intervention fidelity (move from high- to medium-intensity interventions). After this change, the teacher's fidelity of implementation begins to decrease, as do the initial gains made by the students (low score on fidelity measure). The coach and teacher mutually decide to increase the intensity of supports again (move the teacher back to high-intensity supports). Again, the teacher's scores improve (high fidelity, student scores, and motivation), so the teacher is moved back to medium supports. This time, the teacher's scores remain high, so the teacher is moved to the lowest supports. Even at the lowest supports, the teacher continues to score well, so the lowest level of support is maintained. Due to the teacher's progress and mastery of the subject matter, the coach believes that the teacher may, in time, transition into being a teacher leader.

Figure 1. Maintaining Coaching Over Time
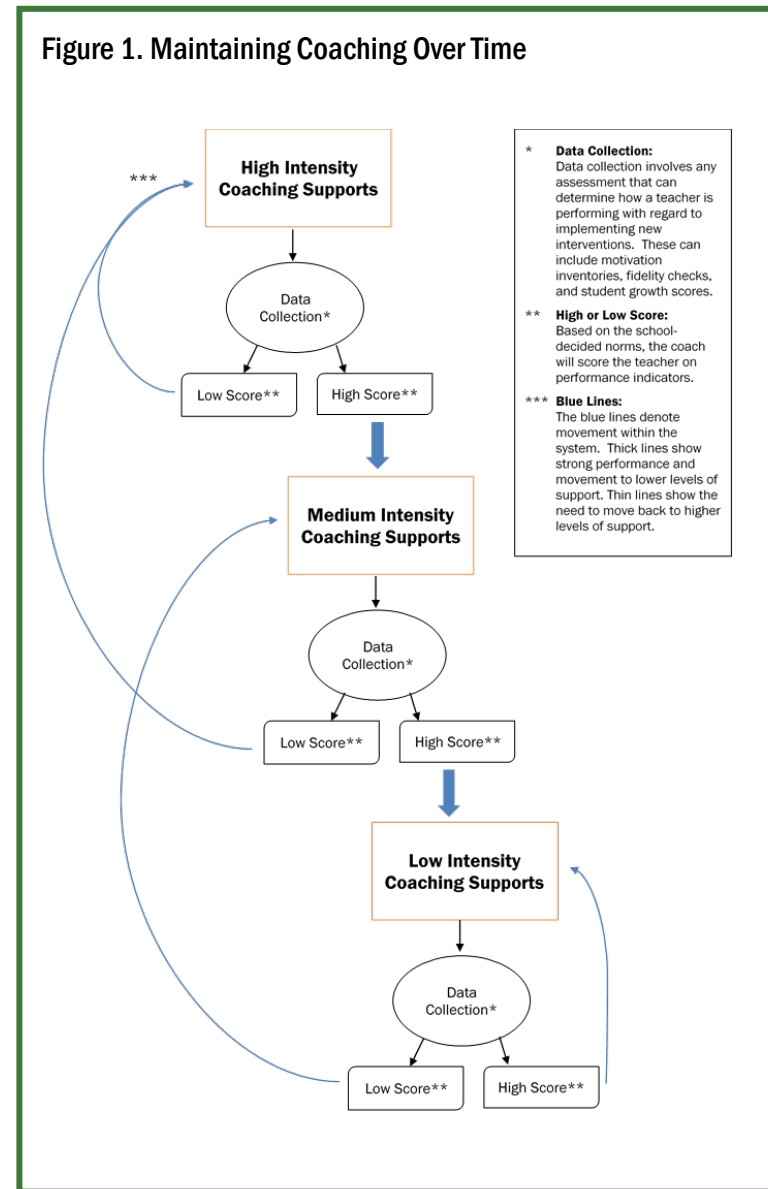
Coaching Skills, Attributes, and System-Level Components for Tiered Supports Models

Effective coaches have a dynamic skill set that encompasses content, organizational, and relational expertise. These skills fall into the categories of (1) focus; (2) communication and relational; (3) knowledge of teaming; (4) knowledge of reading, math, and/or behavioral instruction; and (5) knowledge of assessment practices. Coaching in these skills is provided across the implementation stages. Table 4 details key skills needed in each implementation stage, as related to tiered support models and DBI.

Table 4. Coaching across the Implementation Stages

Coaching Skills, Attributes, Systems-Level Components	Implementation Stage: Exploration	Implementation Stage: Installation	Implementation Stage: Implementation
Understanding of Focus and Context	▪ Systems-level understanding of DBI teaming structures within MTSS ▪ Educator-level understanding of tiered supports and data-based decision making	▪ Systems-level refinement (team autonomy) ▪ Educator-level coaching on instructional practices and DBI implementation at student level	▪ Gradual release of coaching supports to ensure sustainability ▪ Educator-level autonomy and self-reflection
Communication and Relational	▪ Develop relationship ▪ Promote buy-in ▪ Develop a communication protocol ▪ Establish coaching norms	▪ Discuss processes and protocols for instructional observations ▪ Raise concerns and hear people's concerns	▪ Address adaptive challenges in individual or group situations
Content Knowledge: Teaming	▪ Form DBI team ▪ Conduct readiness and needs-assessment activities	▪ Support DBI team with establishing meeting agendas and protocols ▪ Gradually release DBI team facilitation to school personnel	▪ Support DBI team with refining their teaming processes to ensure efficiency ▪ Provide feedback on teaming processes and support with DBI fidelity checks

Coaching Skills, Attributes, Systems-Level Components	Implementation Stage: Exploration	Implementation Stage: Installation	Implementation Stage: Implementation
Content Knowledge: Reading, Math, and/or Behavioral Instruction or Intervention	▪ Coach shares examples that demonstrate expertise ▪ Identify current practices in place and areas of focus ▪ Observe and describe behavior	▪ Establish schedules and routines ▪ Model and scaffold instructional practices and/or review examples and nonexamples ▪ Provide formative feedback on instructional practices	▪ Provide meaningful recognition for improved instructional practices ▪ Support with content-specific instructional strategy fidelity checks
Content Knowledge: Assessment Practices	▪ Identify existing data sources for progress monitoring and diagnostic assessment; come to consensus about the purposes and use of assessment ▪ Support with examining the validity and reliability of tools ▪ Identify knowledge and skills related to the purposes of assessment	▪ Establish schedules and routines ▪ Develop decision rules, especially in relation to movement across the tiers ▪ Support with fidelity checks on progress-monitoring administration ▪ Problem solve with school teams regarding data use for diagnostic purposes	▪ Gradually fade supports for data collection and use to ensure sustainability ▪ Provide consultation on specific, student-level, data-based decisions

Matrix of Coaching Support Models

Coaching is part of an ongoing professional learning system that ensures educators develop the skills needed to improve outcomes at the student level. LEAs may implement a variety of coaching models to meet their needs. Table 5 presents several coaching support models; the defining features of each model; and examples of how intensity levels within the model can differ, based on available resources. Each model can be changed based on time commitment, coaching qualities, and intensity of supports.

Throughout the table, **alliance-building strategies** are referenced. Alliance-building strategies include the following:

- Demonstrating expertise in the area in which coaching occurs (e.g., literacy, DBI, mathematics)
- Collaborating (e.g., setting goals based on the recipient needs)
- High-quality communication skills (e.g., summarizing, active listening, asking open-ended questions)

Table 5. Coaching Support Models

Support Model	Defining Features	Examples, by Levels of Intensity (Low, Medium, High)
One-to-One Coaching (e.g., instructional coaching, behavioral coaching)	▪ Ongoing cycles of observation ▪ Modeling of skills ▪ Performance feedback ▪ Use of alliance-building strategies **Process or coaching cycle:** These practices often occur in a three-step coaching cycle process: ▪ Pre-observation meeting with teacher ▪ Observation and modeling in teacher's classroom ▪ Post-observation meeting to debrief and provide performance feedback	**Low:** Minimal time commitment; use of coaching cycles; minimal classroom supports ▪ *Example:* An expert teacher dedicates two planning periods per month to coach a struggling or new teacher. During the pre-observation meeting, they discuss classroom expectations and decide on a focus for the observation. The expert teacher observes and collects data on practice using appropriate tools regarding the specified focus. The teachers debrief at a post-observation meeting and determine action steps to be implemented. ▪ *Adaptation:* A teacher records his or her instruction and completes a self-reflection to identify areas of strength and areas of need. The teacher then shares the video and self-reflection with a coach who views the recording, provides feedback, and compares notes with the teacher. **Medium:** Nominal time commitment; use of coaching cycles; consistent classroom supports ▪ *Example:* An expert teacher, administrator, or dedicated coach serves as a coach. During the pre-observation meeting, the coach and teacher discuss specific goals based on the following factors:

Support Model	Defining Features	Examples, by Levels of Intensity (Low, Medium, High)
	Peer-to-peer coaching within one-to-one coaching: Peer-to-peer coaching could engage teachers with similar skills or areas of focus. - *Benefits:* Teachers may be receptive to their peers, especially if they can see the direct impact of a specific practice on student outcomes in their context. In addition, scheduling issues related to coaching observations may be reduced if the peers are in the same district/school. - *Challenges:* If the peers have a similar expertise level, feedback may not be as impactful on performance and student outcomes. In addition, teachers may not feel comfortable giving constructive feedback to peers. Time commitment of one-to-one coaching reduces the number of educators supported directly.	a) Needs of teachers and/or their students (e.g., student behavior, lack of academic growth) b) Expertise of coach The coach is prepared with evidence-based discussion points and offers suggestions for the teacher to incorporate into the upcoming lesson. The coach observes and provides classroom supports, modeling, and prompting to aid the teacher in application of new skills. The coach also collects data during the observation. The coach and teacher debrief on the lesson and data during the post-observation meeting and come up with action steps to be implemented. **High:** Considerable time commitment; use of coaching cycles; extensive classroom supports - *Example*: A dedicated coach works multiple days per week to support teachers. During the pre-observation meetings, the coach and teacher discuss specific academic and behavioral goals and how data will be collected on goals. The coach comes to the meeting with evidence-based practices specifically tailored to the teacher's classroom and provides reading for the teacher to look over before the observation. The coach observes in the classroom and provides modeling, prompting, and additional scaffolds when needed. The coach also collects data during the observation. In the post-observation meeting, the coach and teacher debrief on the lesson and data and come up with action steps to be implemented.

Support Model	Defining Features	Examples, by Levels of Intensity (Low, Medium, High)
Team Teacher Coaching (e.g., instructional coaching, behavioral coaching)	**Before the face-to-face session:** ■ Coach provides team of teachers with videos of exemplary teaching. Videos may be of the teachers within the team, of the coach, or of other teachers. ■ Teachers work individually to review the videos and identify specific teaching practices that were exemplary. They note the impact of these practices on student performance. **During the face-to-face session:** ■ The coach and teachers watch the videos of exemplary teaching. ■ The coach asks the teachers to discuss specific exemplary teaching behaviors. ■ The coach provides performance feedback about the exemplary teaching so that the team of teachers can make explicit linkages between exemplary teaching practices and the impact on student performance. ■ The coach also uses alliance-building strategies.	**Low:** Minimal time commitment; videos observed are not the teachers who are being coached; coach and teachers discuss elements of the video and discuss potential application in the classroom. ■ *Example:* Teachers and coach (an expert teacher) meet twice per month. Prior to these meetings, teachers are provided with a video of exemplary teaching. (Video could be the coach, an expert teacher in the school, or an expert teacher elsewhere but not the teachers being coached.) At the meeting, the coaches and teachers discuss various elements of the video and discuss how the positive elements of these videos could be applied to the classrooms. **Medium:** Consistent time commitment; videos observed vary between example teacher and videos of the teachers being coached; coach and teachers discuss elements in the videos as they apply directly to the classroom (e.g., coming up with specific goals; considering what changes can be made in the classroom). ■ *Example:* Teachers and coach (an expert teacher or a dedicated coach) meet weekly. Prior to these meetings, teachers are provided with a video of exemplary teaching. Video could be the coach, an expert teacher in the school, an expert teacher elsewhere, or one of the teachers being coached. At the meeting, the coach and teachers discuss various elements of the video and how the positive elements of these videos could be applied to the classrooms. If the video is of a specific teacher in the group, constructive feedback can also be given. Specific goals can be made in response to this feedback. **High:** Considerable time commitment; videos observed are of the teachers being coached; teachers and coach directly address what is occurring in the classroom and how specific changes could affect goals. ■ *Example*: Teachers and coach (a dedicated coach) meet weekly or multiple times a week. Prior to these meetings, teachers are provided with a video of exemplary teaching that comes from the classroom of one of the teachers being coached. At the meeting, the coach and teachers discuss various elements of the video and how the positive elements of these videos could be applied to the classrooms. The group also offers constructive feedback for elements that need improvement in the classroom. Teachers come up with specific goals and data collection to address the feedback.

Support Model	Defining Features	Examples, by Levels of Intensity (Low, Medium, High)
Systems Coaching (e.g., MTSS coaching)	■ A focus on improving team knowledge (e.g., principles of implementation science) and team processes (e.g., team's use of data to address schoolwide issues) ■ Some models also include coaching individual teachers' practices ■ Training to improve team knowledge and skills ■ Coaches may need to meet with administrators to target implementation challenges outside of the teacher-group level	**Low:** Minimal time investment; large groups; minimal supports ■ *Example:* Teachers meet with expert coaches once per month to discuss systems improvement. Coaches host large-group information sessions, complete with discussion on systems and improving data collection and application. ■ *Example*: School teams from across sites join "consultancy" calls that focus on a problem of practice. The call is facilitated by an expert to ensure there is a level of support provided in identifying potential solutions. **Medium:** Consistent time investment; moderately sized groups; consistent supports ■ *Example*: Teachers meet with expert coaches twice per month to discuss systems improvement. Coaches host small-group information sessions, complete with discussion on systems and improving data collection and application. Teachers discuss specific goals surrounding systems improvement and action steps to implement. **High:** Considerable time investment; small groups; intensive supports ■ *Example:* Teachers meet with expert and dedicated coaches weekly to discuss systems improvement. Coaches host small-group information sessions, complete with discussion on systems and improving data collection and application. Teachers discuss specific goals surrounding systems improvement and action steps to implement. Teachers and coaches discuss individualized and group goals as well as devise data collection routines and ways to continue the advancement of the systems at the school.

Support Model	Defining Features	Examples, by Levels of Intensity (Low, Medium, High)
Advising Support	■ Use of effective teacher-coaching practices to improve advisee practice, particularly performance feedback ■ Advising may be incorporated as a part of other coaching models (one-to-one, online communities of practice, team teacher coaching)	**Advising is an inherently lower intensity coaching system but can still be changed based on time and intensity of supports.** Advising teachers can engage in aspects of the other forms of coaching, depending largely on what the advisee needs. The following are just a few examples of what an advisor could do with an advisee at various coaching intensity levels ranging from low to high. **Low:** Advisor meets with advisee monthly to discuss goals and aid advisee with lesson planning. Advisee discusses practice, and advisor coaches advisee on subjects that may be helpful in the classroom. This advising can be combined with systems coaching (e.g., the team is supported as described under the Systems Coaching section, and the team facilitator also receives advising supports). ■ *Example*: Special education director advising between veteran and new directors where advising pairs are identified and consistent over time. Advising occurs monthly and focuses on a broad range of questions, concerns, and successes. **Medium:** Advisor meets with advisee bimonthly to review videos advisee took of his or her classroom. Advisee and advisor discuss the classroom and determine goals and action steps to pursue perspective changes. Advisor may follow up with readings and resources to support advisee in classroom changes. ■ *Example*: Special education director advising between veteran and new directors where supporting pairs are identified and consistent over time. Advising occurs bimonthly and is more narrowly focused on a specific area that needs improvement. **High:** Advisor meets with advisee weekly and uses the same cycles as with one-to-one coaching to support the advisee in the classroom. The advisor can use the same levels of intensity as discussed in the section on one-to-one coaching to provide the proper levels of support for the teacher. ■ *Example:* Special education director advising between veteran and new directors where engaged in coaching as a part of an ongoing professional learning system.

Coaching Cycle Components and Functions for Educator-Level Coaching

Coaching occurs within a cycle (plan, act, reflect). Table 6 outlines the coaching cycle components and functions for **educator-level** coaching and definitions across low, medium, and high levels of intensity, as described in the [Matrix of Coaching Support Models](#).

Table 6. Coaching Cycle Components and Functions for Educator-Level Coaching

Components	Description	Low/Facilitative	Medium/Collaborative	High/Instructive
Plan	Pre-meeting ■ Identify expectations, goals, and priorities ■ Plan actions to moving toward goals	Preparing for the observation. This means discussing expectations for the observation and creating a plan for improving instruction.	Preparing for the observation and setting concrete goals for instructional changes. This means setting goals related to evidence-based instructional changes and coming up with a plan for data collection.	Preparing for the observation, developing concrete goals, and creating action steps for implementing goals. This means setting goals based on evidence-based instructional changes, creating a data collection and analysis plan and concrete action steps for implementing and recording instructional changes.
Act (Teach and Assess)	Meeting observation ■ Engaging in actions identified during planning	Observing in a limited capacity. This means observing and taking notes on potential instructional changes and discussion points for post-observation debrief.	Observing and collecting information in a systematic way, focusing specifically on goals set during the pre-meeting. Make note of instructional changes and make on-the-spot adjustments when needed, including modeling specific, goal-oriented instructional changes. Monitor data collection procedures.	Observe and collect information in a systematic way, focusing on goals as well as on classroom systems (e.g., management, data collection). Record instructional changes and intervene with concrete instructional supports when needed, including modeling critical skills and giving on-the-spot suggestions to adjust instruction. Collect data that can be used in the post-observation debrief.

Components	Description	Low/Facilitative	Medium/Collaborative	High/Instructive
Analyze and Reflect	Debrief ▪ Feedback to facilitate self-reflection and moving forward	Post-observation debriefs should focus on expectations discussed in the pre-meeting and observation notes. Post-observation debriefs should set the stage for the next pre-meeting and concern potential changes to instruction surrounding expectations and observation.	Post-observation debriefs should focus on specific goals discussed in the pre-meeting and observation notes. These debriefs should set the stage for the next pre-meeting and should concern instructional changes to address any specific deficits toward goal completion. In addition, post-observation debriefs can include information about evidence-based interventions and classroom systems (e.g., data collection, classroom management, MTSS).	Post-observation debriefs should focus on evaluating progress of the coaching goals set during the pre-meeting, specific evidence-based interventions, and observation notes. Post-observation debriefs should set the stage for the next pre-meeting and should focus on outlining action steps that will lead to instructional changes to address any specific deficits toward goal completion. In addition, post-observation debriefs should include information about evidence-based interventions and classroom systems (e.g., data collection, classroom management, MTSS).

The coaching functions below can be used throughout the coaching cycle				
Coaching Functions	**Description**	**Low**	**Medium**	**High**
Prompting, Questioning, and Facilitating	Building newly trained skills in "normal" contexts	Prompting involves subtle suggestions. Observer can use physical cues to aid the teacher (e.g., pointing or proximity) or verbal cues (e.g., suggestions or verbal praise).	Prompting involves concrete suggestions. Observer can use the low-level prompting and minor modeling to adjust critical skills.	Prompting involves all the low- and medium-level prompting and intensive modeling. This can be in the form of full-class demonstrations and/or direct discussion on momentary instructional changes.
Fluency Building	Repeated opportunities to use new skills, preferably soon after training	Fluency building involves setting-specific opportunities to attempt new skills.	Fluency building involves classroom opportunities, as well as opportunities to attempt new skills in controlled environments, such as during post-observation debrief and small-group professional development opportunities (see Team Teacher Coaching).	Fluency building involves classroom opportunities, as well as opportunities to attempt new skills in controlled environments, such as during post-observation debrief and small-group professional development opportunities (see Team Teacher Coaching). High-intensity fluency building includes dedicated opportunities to attempt and critique new skills in controlled and heavily scaffolded environments.

Coaching Functions	Description	Low	Medium	High
Performance Feedback	Provide feedback on accuracy and shaping of trained skills	Performance feedback involves discussions on setting-specific observations and expectations during the post-observation debrief.	Performance feedback involves discussions on classroom observations and expectations during the post-observation debrief. Discussions should be focused specifically on goals and evidence-based instructional changes and should conclude with concrete action steps.	Performance feedback involves discussions on classroom observations and expectations during the post-observation debrief. Discussion should be focused specifically on goals and evidence-based instructional changes, as well as systems changes, and should include concrete action steps. Performance feedback can include readings and opportunities to attempt new skills in a controlled environment and should include discussion of potential systems changes (data collection).
Adaptation	Modify trained skills to fit local culture and context; suggest and encourage adaptations	Adaptation involves tailoring coaching cycles to fit the specific student population. Expectations for a classroom with a high level of English learners should be planned for and observed differently than a classroom with few English learners. Coaches must take into consideration culture and context.	Adaptation involves tailoring coaching cycles to fit specific student populations. Goal setting, as well as perspective evidence-based interventions, should fit specific student populations. An intervention that has evidence-based support only in suburban schools may not be the best option in an urban setting. A focus on systems (MTSS) can encourage individual students' adaptations.	Adaptation involves tailoring coaching cycles to fit specific student populations. Goal setting, as well evidence-based interventions, should fit specific student populations. In high levels of support, there should be a focus on using systems (e.g., MTSS, PBIS) to fit instruction to specific students and student population needs.

Coaching Cycle Components and Functions for Systems-Level Coaching

Coaching occurs within a cycle (plan, act, reflect). Table 7 outlines the coaching cycle components and functions for **systems-level** coaching and definitions across low, medium, and high levels of intensity, as described in the Matrix of Coaching Support Models.

Table 7. Coaching Cycle Components and Functions for Systems-Level Coaching

Components	Description	Low	Medium	High
Plan	Pre-meeting ■ Surface goals and priorities ■ Plan actions to moving toward goals	Discuss expectations for the team meeting and create a plan for improving facilitation.	Prepare for the team meeting and set concrete goals for facilitation changes. This means setting goals related to evidence-based changes and coming up with a plan for data collection.	Prepare for the team meeting, create concrete goals and action steps for implementing goals. This means setting goals based on evidence-based facilitation and leadership changes, creating a data collection and analysis plan and concrete action steps for implementing and recording changes. This could include rehearsal and/or use of resources to assist with facilitation preparation.
Act (Observe and Assess)	Meeting observation ■ Engage in actions identified during planning	Observe in a limited capacity. This means observing and taking notes on potential facilitation changes and discussion points for post-observation debrief. Or Use self-reflection during the post-observation activity.	Observe and collect information in a systematic way, focusing specifically on goals set during planning. Make note of facilitation changes and make on-the-spot adjustments when needed, including prompting specific goal-oriented facilitation changes. Record data collection procedures.	Observe and collect information in a systematic way, focusing specifically on goals set during planning. Make note of facilitation changes and intervene with concrete supports when needed, including modeling and/or prompting critical skills and giving on-the-spot suggestions to adjust actions. Collect data that can be used in the post-observation debrief.

Components	Description	Low	Medium	High
Analyze and Reflect	Debrief ■ Feedback to facilitate self-reflection and moving forward	Post–team meeting debriefs should focus on expectations discussed in the pre-meeting and observation or self-reflection notes. Post-observation debriefs should set the stage for the next pre-meeting and concern potential changes to facilitation surrounding expectations and observation.	Post–team meeting debriefs should focus on specific goals discussed in the pre-meeting and observation notes. Post observation debriefs should set the stage for the next pre-meeting and concern facilitation changes to address any specific deficits toward goal completion. In addition, post-observation debriefs **can** include information about evidence-based implementation.	Post–team meeting debriefs should focus on specific goals and action steps discussed in the pre-meeting, specific evidence-based interventions, and observation notes. Post–team meeting debriefs should set the stage for the next pre-meeting and concern facilitation changes to address any specific deficits toward goal completion. In addition, post-observation debriefs **should** include information about evidence-based implementation and should be oriented toward team progress related to the identified team goals and mission.

The coaching functions below can be used throughout the coaching cycle				
Coaching Functions	Description	Low/Facilitative	Medium/Collaborative	High/Instructive
Prompting, Questioning, Facilitating	Actions aimed at building new skills in natural context and/or learning new skills outside of natural context	Ask questions to promote self-reflection, anticipation, and goal setting in planning and debriefing.	Ask questions to promote self-reflection, anticipation, and goal setting in planning and debriefing; and include materials and resources designed to promote team facilitation skills.	Ask questions to promote self-reflection, anticipation, and goal setting in planning and debriefing; and include materials and resources designed to promote team facilitation skills. Prompting and facilitating can include visual, verbal, and nonverbal gestures, as well as modeling of critical skills in the natural context.
Fluency Building	Repeated opportunities to use new skills, preferably soon after training	Fluency building involves team-meeting opportunities to attempt new skills.	Fluency building involves team-meeting opportunities, as well as opportunities to attempt new skills in controlled environments, such as during planning and/or reflection.	Fluency building involves team-meeting opportunities, as well as opportunities to attempt new skills in controlled environments, such as during planning and/or reflection and small-group professional development opportunities. High-intensity fluency building includes dedicated opportunities to attempt and critique new skills in controlled and heavily scaffolded environments.

Coaching Functions	Description	Low/Facilitative	Medium/Collaborative	High/Instructive
Performance Feedback	Information on performance of and shaping of trained skills	Performance feedback involves discussions on team-meeting observations and expectations during the post-observation debrief.	Performance feedback involves discussions on team-meeting observations and expectations during the post-observation debrief. Discussion should be focused specifically on goals and evidence-based facilitation changes and should conclude with concrete action steps.	Performance feedback involves discussions on team-meeting observations and expectations during the post-observation debrief. Discussion should be focused specifically on goals and evidence-based facilitation changes, as well as systems changes, and should include concrete action steps. Performance feedback can include readings and opportunities to attempt new skills in a controlled environment and should include discussion of potential systems changes (data collection).
Adaptation	Modify trained skills to fit local culture and context; suggest and encourage adaptations	Adaptation involves tailoring coaching cycles to fit the specific team. Expectations for a Tier 3 DBI team should be planned for and observed differently than a district MTSS team. Coaches must consider culture and context.	Adaptation involves tailoring coaching cycles to fit specific student populations. Goal setting, as well as team facilitation strategies, should fit the specific team. Strategies known to support teams in engaging in well-defined, structured processes (e.g., scripts and graphic organizers used in DBI initial meeting) may not be the best option for teams addressing less well-defined aims (e.g., integration of restorative practices in a behavioral core). A focus on systems (MTSS) can encourage individual students' adaptations.	Adaptation involves tailoring coaching cycles to fit specific student populations. Goal setting, as well as team facilitation strategies, should fit the specific team. Strategies known to support teams in engaging in well-defined, structured processes (e.g., scripts and graphic organizers used in DBI initial meeting) may not be the best option for teams addressing less well-defined aims (e.g., integration of restorative practices in a behavioral core). In high levels of support, there should be a focus on using systems (MTSS, PBIS) to fit instruction to specific students and student population needs.

Coaching Selection Criteria and Training

Step 1: Selection Criteria

Selecting coaches with appropriate expertise across both content and coaching functions may lead to changes in instruction and intervention delivery within tiered models (**educator level**) or teams' use of data to inform tiered instructional decisions (**systems level**). Prospective coaches should be interviewed and selected based upon these critical criteria before they are trained for coaching in a specific role:

- Coaches should be an expert in their field and should have considerable experience teaching their content or subject area (for purposes of this document, *subject area* can also refer to *behavior*).

- Coaches should be knowledgeable about MTSS and DBI.

- Coaches should be able to make the time commitment needed for the level of intensity they are providing.

- Coaches should be knowledgeable about adult learning principles and alliance-building strategies (e.g., collaborating, developing trusting relationships).

Table 8. Coaching Selection Criteria across Levels of Intensity

Level of Intensity	Selection Criteria	Examples
Low	1. Expert in subject area 2. Comprehensive knowledge of MTSS and DBI 3. Can be teachers, administrators, or instructional coaches 4. Minimal time commitment; can be changed based on availability	1. Expert mathematics teacher with knowledge of Tier 2 number sense interventions works as a one-to-one coach for the first semester with a struggling new teacher. 2. Administrator with extensive training and experience in early literacy leads a Tier 1 team teaching workshop and works with a large group of teachers for the first half of the academic year.
Medium	1. Expert in subject area 2. Comprehensive knowledge of MTSS and DBI 3. Can be teachers or instructional coaches 4. Dedicated; coaching should be consistent throughout the year, although not as frequent or individualized as high intensity	1. Expert writing teacher with extensive knowledge of MTSS and DBI coaches small group of teachers on how data can be used to transition struggling readers between different levels of instruction and intervention. The teacher leads the group for the entirety of the academic year, either during a planning period or after school. 2. Instructional coach observes a literacy teacher every other week to address concerns pertaining to Tier 1 instruction and preventative behavior management. The coach works with the same teacher for the entire year.
High	1. Expert in subject area 2. Expert knowledge of MTSS and DBI (i.e., experienced in supporting implementation) 3. Should be instructional coaches 4. Dedicated; coaching should be frequent (e.g., biweekly) and individualized	1. Expert mathematics instructional coach works individually with teacher to use data to move students between instructional tiers based on need and fit in intervention. Coach also advises teachers on best teaching practices in implementation of Tiers 1, 2, and 3 interventions. Coach works with teacher biweekly toward specific and targeted goals.

Step 2: Self-Assessment

Prior to training, prospective coaches should test their knowledge on the content and focus of coaching. By having prospective coaches complete a self-assessment, trainers can determine what needs should be addressed during coaching training.

- DBI Implementation Interview/Self-Assessment
- DBI Implementation Interview/Self-Assessment Scoring Rubric

Step 3: Coach Training and Preparation

The following are suggestions for how to train coaches for the various coaching support models. These models can be used either individually or in combination with each other.

1. **Self-Reflection and Self-Study:** This form of training represents the least commitment by the school and potentially the most commitment by the individual coach. In this form of training, the coach acknowledges his or her knowledge gaps made clear by the self-assessment and commits to individually reviewing training and research to fill these gaps.

2. **Online Learning (Modules):** Similar to self-study, online learning represents a way for coaches to independently build knowledge of coaching. Through online learning modules, coaches can target areas in which they require more knowledge.

3. **Shadowing:** Shadowing should be used for a coach who already has expert knowledge of DBI and MTSS but who needs training on how to coach. Matching a new coach with a more seasoned coach could work to help the new coach understand the social interactions involved with coaching and the logistics of being a coach.

4. **Co-Coaching:** Like shadowing, co-coaching represents a gradual reduction of supports from shadowing. The trainee can transition from shadowing to taking on partial coaching responsibilities to taking on full-time coaching responsibilities to field coach observation by outside agency or organization.

Evaluating Coaches and Coaching Programs

When LEAs invest in coaching, they must also invest in evaluating the effectiveness of both the programs and the coaches—an evaluation system should be embedded within the coaching model from the start. Evaluations provide data that can be used to monitor and assess the coaching program, providing insight regarding how to redesign the program, if necessary. Data can be both formal (i.e., scientific evaluations) and informal (i.e., conversations with teachers and principals). Evaluations should include frequent formative evaluations of both the program and the coaches and periodic summative evaluations that are based on specified criteria.

The following stakeholders should be involved in the evaluation process:

- Teachers
- Coaches
- Principals
- LEA coaching lead or team

When designing an evaluation plan, LEAs should create a theory of change and collect data on fidelity and effectiveness. Table 9 describes the defining features of the components and provides considerations for the planning process. More information about evaluating coaches and coaching programs can be found here.

**RESOURCES TO SUPPORT
COACHING FIDELITY MEASUREMENT**

Coaching Module Part 2: Measuring the Fidelity of Coaching

Measuring the Fidelity of Coaching is the second in a series of self-paced, professional development learning modules that NCIS has developed on coaching for teachers who work in the kindergarten–12th-grade setting. Module 1 focuses on effective practices for coaches. Module 2 addresses how to measure the fidelity of coaching practices to increase their impact on teaching and learning. The module also features other resources:

- Effective Coaching of Teachers: Fidelity Tool Worksheet
- Effective Coaching of Teachers: Completed Sample of the Fidelity Tool Worksheet
- Effective Coaching of Teachers: Fidelity Tool Rubric

Although this module reviews the concept of fidelity and key components of fidelity, we strongly recommend watching Module 1 to fully enhance the coaching of teachers. View both modules in the NCSI resource library.

Table 9. Defining Features and Considerations for Coaching Evaluation Plans

Components	Defining Features	Considerations
Theory of Action	▪ Defines action steps to produce intended outcomes ▪ Details the program's structure, professional development available to coaches and their principals, ongoing support for coaches, and other program components ▪ Outlines clear, measurable goals	▪ What is the program intending to accomplish? ▪ What are its intended results? ▪ Who will the coaching program affect? *Example:* If we provide coaching on formative assessment use, 100% of teachers will analyze student benchmark data and design interventions to increase student mathematics performance by at least one level on the next benchmark assessment.
Fidelity	▪ Adherence to essential ingredients ▪ Quality ▪ Dose ▪ Responsiveness	▪ Within our coaching model, are we measuring fidelity of our own practices? **Resources to Support Fidelity Measurement** NCSI Training Module: Measuring the Fidelity of Coaching NCSI Effective Coaching: Fidelity Tool Rubric NCSI Effective Coaching: Fidelity Tool Worksheet
Evidence of Effect	▪ Multiple measures • Formative • Summative ▪ Rigorous and ongoing	▪ Do teachers who have coaching support meet or exceed performance standards? ▪ Is the coaching program being implemented with fidelity? ▪ Is student achievement improving with coaching support? ▪ What coaching behaviors contribute to improved teaching and student learning? *Examples:* ▪ Walk-throughs and observations ▪ Teacher feedback on professional development and coaching sessions ▪ Student formative achievement data ▪ School-level data trends related to tiered intervention delivery

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