

Developing a Playbook - Coaching on the GO: COT-GO

By Yvonne D. Smith-Jones

Valuing classroom observations, connecting research to the results of the observations, and conferencing with the key stakeholders are elements of an action plan for effective teaching. How do leaders translate observations into student achievement? One answer is found in sports. Examples of successful coaching on the courts, tracks and fields offer strategies that educators can adapt to classrooms. Coaches gather data, view performances, analyze evidence and offer feedback. A playbook is developed after reviewing performance and determining what is working and what can be improved. The playbook is based on research, actions, feedback, and trends (RAFT). Coaching with a RAFT mindset is framed around the 4L's - look into the classrooms, listen for effective teaching, lean into student learning, and lead the learning conversations. Principals and leadership teams are adapting coaching strategies to develop playbooks for school improvement. The classroom playbooks must be customized and updated to meet the needs of the students as students demonstrate success on the learning targets.

The learning intention of each lesson must be clear and concise. The teacher must know not only what the learners need to understand and master by the end of the teaching/learning session but also must check for understanding throughout the process. Once these guidelines have been established the principal/coach can visit the classroom and observe for specific criteria. A strong, trusting relationship must exist between the leader and the coach. Developing this relationship requires both formal and informal conversations. Coaching teams need to stay focused on the research findings and models embraced by the school. Committed communication, structured meaning, inquisitive listening and specific details can assist the instructional coach who witnesses what teachers are encountering on a daily basis. Therefore, the instructional leader as coach must have the "RIGHT" tools in the playbook as well as face-to-face coaching to guide the implementation of the plays (4L's).

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