

Coaching types overview

There are three key forms of coaching we see as directly relevant to improving learning and contributing to transformational growth in schools and educational workplaces:

- ▶ **peer coaching**
- ▶ **instructional coaching**
- ▶ **leadership coaching**

While the same essential premises underpin each form, there are also some key differences, particularly in relation to the different purposes they serve. The purpose here is to help you gain an overview and sense of the similarities and differences between them.

This is key to making an informed choice regarding which form or forms of coaching best align with your purpose, priorities and needs.

Peer coaching

Peer coaching: a non-evaluative reciprocal process in which teachers are paired to discuss and share a strategy, observe each other and provide mutual support.

(Hodges Simons, 2006)

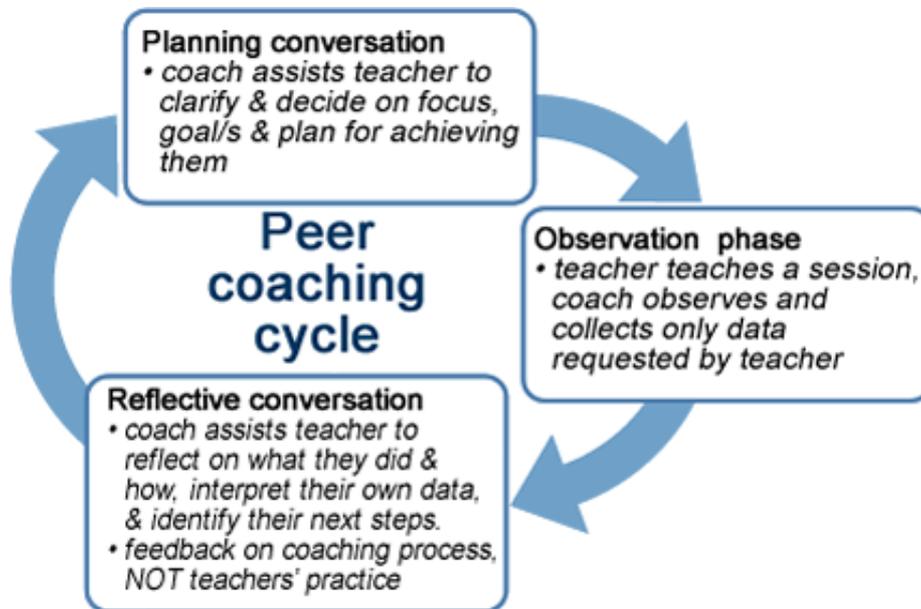
We see Peer coaching as a learning partnership between two individual teachers who coach each other in a reciprocal manner. Mutual learning, professional growth and teacher empowerment are the goals.

Peer coaches do not need to be 'expert' in the area they are coaching. They act as a 'mirror' or another pair of 'eyes and ears' to assist their valued colleague to reflect, actively examine their practice, identify where they want to go and how they will get there.

Unlike instructional coaching and leadership coaching, feedback on teaching practice is generally not part of peer coaching. Coaching pioneers, Joyce and Showers, found that when 'teachers try to give one another feedback, collaborative activity tends to disintegrate.'

Trusting relationships, confidentiality and agreed processes are critical to success. Listening, questioning, skilful dialogue and non-judgment are essential as coachee and coach engage in the three phases of the coaching cycle:

1. a planning conversation in which the role of the coach is to help the coachee determine their goals and their plan and processes for achieving them;
2. an observation phase where the coach observes the teaching session and collects the relevant data asked for by the coachee, and
3. a reflective conversation where data collected is presented back to the coachee. The coach does not provide feedback or interpret the data. The conversation is focused on assisting the teacher to reflect on what they did and how they did it, to interpret their own data, identify their learning, and next steps forward.



The Coaching Cycle diagram further specifies the roles and responsibilities of coach and coachee:

The Coaching Cycle

<p>Planning conversation: coachee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ decides on their goal & success criteria ▶ shares how they will achieve their goal ▶ determines the role of the coach & observational focus 	<p>Planning conversation: coach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ listens, pauses, paraphrases, asks questions ▶ clarifies focus & summarizes coachee's goal ▶ draws out the specifics of how this will be achieved ▶ clarifies expectations & their role
<p>Observation phase: coachee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ teaches the session ▶ makes mental notes (meta-cognitive) 	<p>Observation phase: coach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ observes specified focus ▶ collects agreed data ▶ documents evidence
<p>Reflective conversation: coachee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ reflects on the session outcomes ▶ articulates what happened, how & why ▶ interprets & reflects on the data ▶ makes forward plans & next steps ▶ provides feedback on the coaching process 	<p>Reflective conversation: coach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ inquires: asks probing questions to guide coachee's reflections ▶ clarifies & extend's coachee's thinking ▶ assists coachee to make connections ▶ shares data collected: reports without judgment (description, not interpretation) ▶ summarizes coachee's reflections & next steps ▶ asks for feedback on the process ▶ clarifies on-going support desired

For more information, see:

[Go to PLOT > Implementation > Coaching > Peer coaching > Coaching process](#)

[Go to PLOT > Implementation > Coaching > Peer coaching > Peer coaching protocol](#)

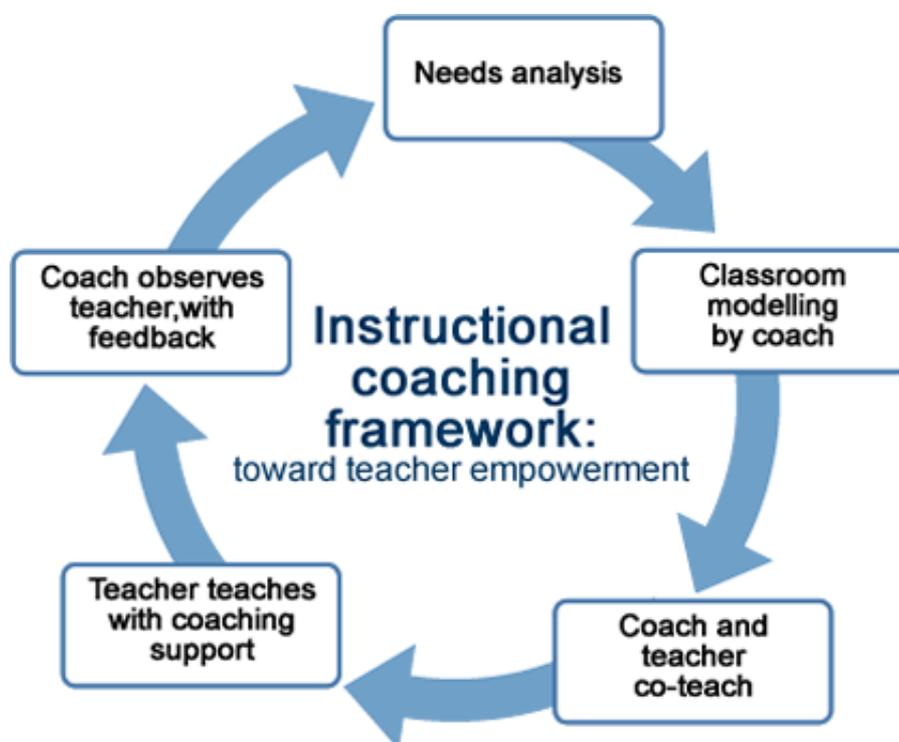
Instructional coaching

School-based (instructional) coaches are master teachers who have received specialized training to work with adult learners, design and facilitate professional learning, provide confidential classroom-based support, and assist the administrative team in reaching data-driven student achievement goals

Killion & Harrison, 2005

The work of the instructional coach is complex, and the roles they play may vary. Their over-arching purpose, however, remains constant, and drives the work they do:

The over-arching purpose of the instructional coach is to assist teacher learning and build teacher capacity to implement effective instructional practices to improve student learning and achievement.



While outside consultants have traditionally worked in this capacity over time in schools, instructional coaching provides a powerful way to access internal expertise, grow potential and build teacher leadership capacity.

The role of an instructional coach is pivotal to moving learning forward across the school, and so careful selection of a coach or coaches is critical.

Unlike peer coaches, who work in partnership with one colleague at a time, instructional coaches generally work across the school, with individuals and teams.

Unlike peer coaches and leadership coaches, instructional coaches do need expertise appropriate to their focus area, and unlike peer coaching, the provision of skilful feedback is an important part of the instructional coach's role.

And since an instructional coach is the

COACH WANTED

Expert educator, with:

- ▶ deep knowledge of content and pedagogy practices
- ▶ exemplary communication skills
- ▶ leadership capacity to work with a wide range of people
- ▶ masterful organizational skills
- ▶ public relations guru

designated 'on-the-ground' person for improving learning across the school, on-going support from, and liaison with, school leadership, is essential.

▶ outstanding 'people' & collaborative skills

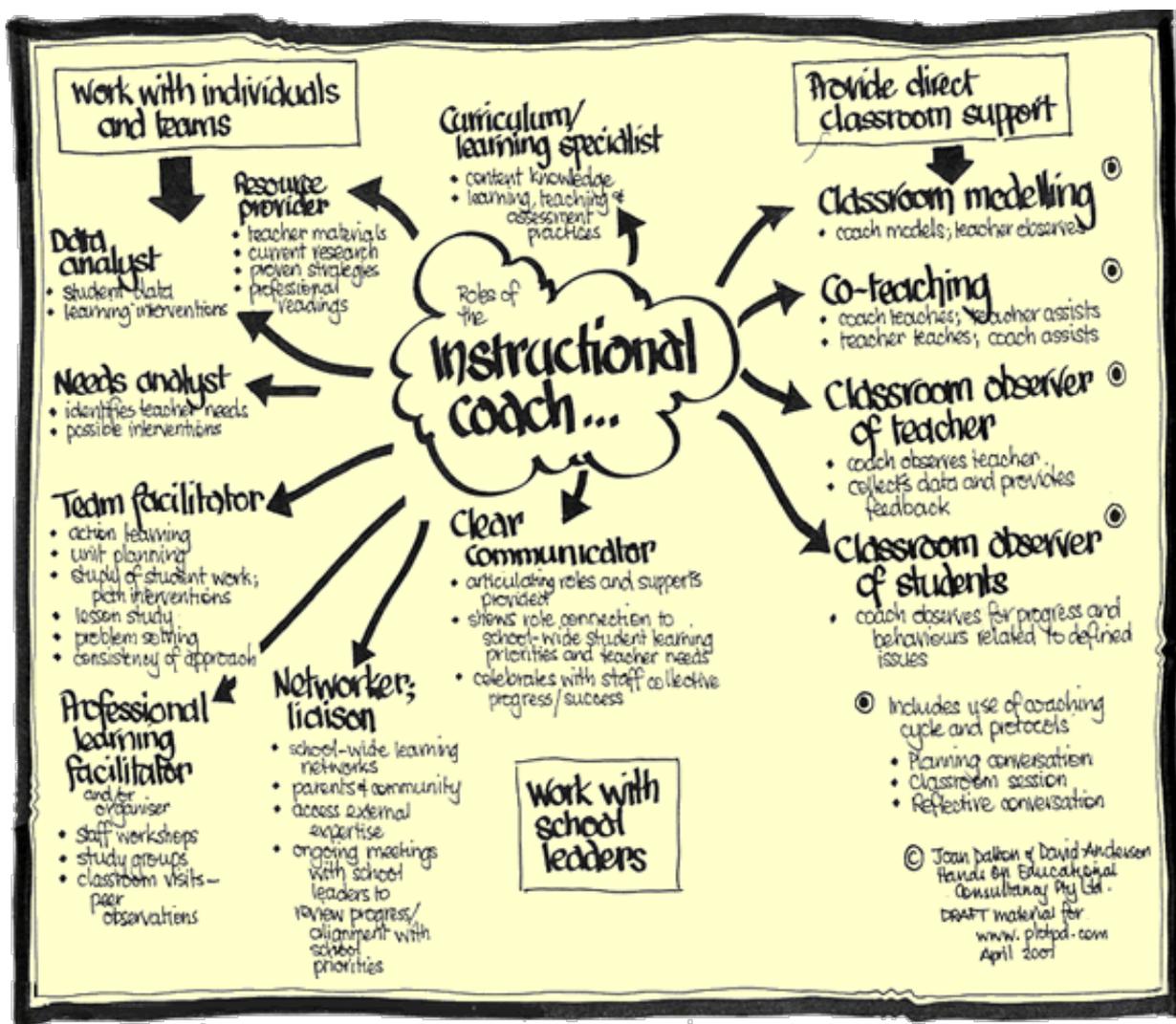
To achieve their over-arching purpose, instructional coaches will play many roles simultaneously. As you peruse these in the **Roles of the Instructional Coach diagram**, you will notice their inter-related nature; notice also that they are not linked in any way to appraisal, supervision or evaluation.

The roles you select need to align with the stage your school and coach are at, and work to achieve your core purpose. Print off an A4 sized copy of the diagram **Roles of the Instructional Coach diagram** and use it to assist you to identify appropriate roles.

No matter what specific roles the instructional coach plays, they will need to understand and be highly skilful in the coaching process, drawing on phases from the peer coaching cycle and leadership coaching process when appropriate.

Perhaps most of all, keep in mind that, to achieve the purpose of improved practice and student learning, instructional coaches need to spend a significant portion of coaching time directly supporting teachers in the school and working in their classrooms. That is where the action really happens.

Roles of the instructional coach



Leadership coaching

Leadership coaches can be any individuals who are in a position to move your organization forward with others.

Australian Growth Coaching, 2003

Unlike peer coaches or instructional coaches, we see leadership coaches primarily as those who work with individuals and teams for whom they have leadership or supervisory responsibility.

Leaders who undertake this kind of coaching will work in a variety of settings with people who fulfil different roles and functions.

In a school, for example, this might involve the principal and/or team leaders working with staff members to foster individual personal/professional growth and build collective leadership capacity. Within an education system, district or regional personnel whose job it is to support leaders and their schools, may be involved in coaching school leaders.

And, of course, facilitators or coaches who work independently may be invited into a school or educational workplace to coach key leaders and leadership teams. In this instance, the leadership responsibility is invitational.

As with all coaching, the goal of leadership coaching is to empower others to be the best they can be, and the essential premises of coaching hold true:

Coaching is an on-going relationship which focuses on coachees taking action toward the realization of their visions, goals or desires. Coaching uses a process of inquiry and personal discovery to build the coachee's level of awareness and responsibility and provides the coachee with structure, support and feedback.

The coaching process helps the coachee to define and achieve professional and personal goals faster and with more ease than would be possible otherwise.

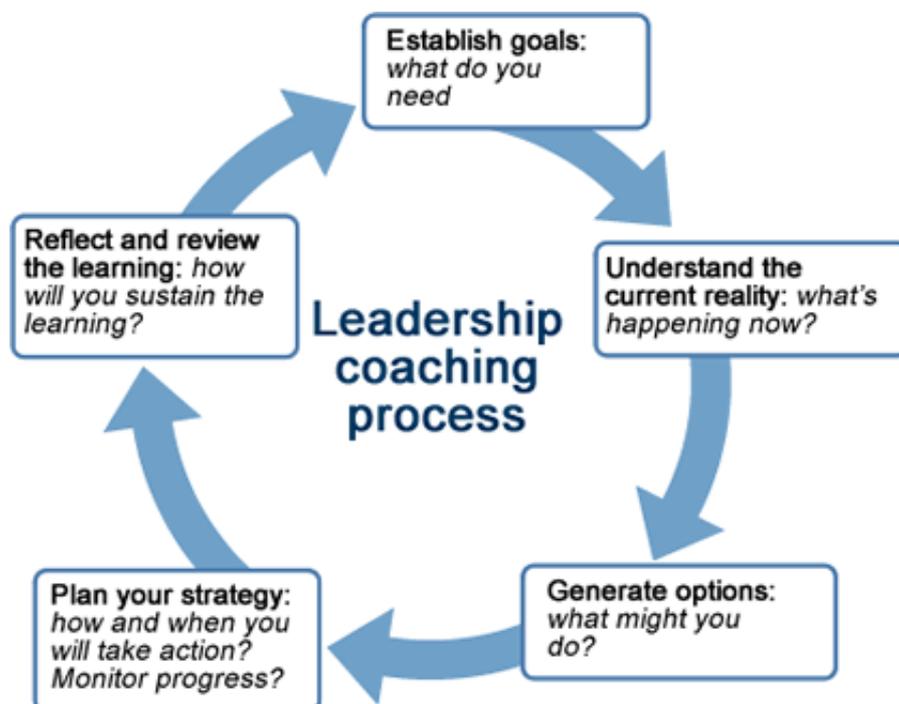
International Coaching Federation, cited in Reiss, 2007

The leadership coaching process is a generic one that applies equally well to leaders in a range of schools, businesses and workplaces. Its depth and breadth makes it highly appropriate for use with people on a long-term basis, over time:

Leadership coaching techniques are effective in many contexts where individuals and teams could benefit from structured support in achieving specific goals and general professional growth to achieve enhanced results.

Australian Growth Coaching, 2003

The following process acts as a vehicle for facilitating quality coaching conversations. Remember that such conversations deal with human complexity and interaction; while these steps may look neatly linear, in practice they are inter-related.



However, successful coaching will generally touch on all of these steps at different points and over time throughout the coaching process:

Leadership coaching process

1. Establish goals -What do you need to achieve?

Coach assists coachee to clarify and agree on his or her goal/s, explicitly connect them to relevant priorities and role, and establish timeframe and success criteria.

2. Understand the current reality - What's happening now?

Coach assists coachee to clarify actions already taken and what is in place that will assist goal achievement, and identify possible gaps and inhibiting factors. Part of this involves unearthing and testing assumptions and asking for evidence.

3. Generate options - What might you do? What will you do?

Coach assists coachee to explore all the possible options for action, and select appropriate action/s to enable goal achievement.

4. Plan your strategy - How and when will you take action? How will you monitor your progress?

Coach assists coachee to plan out their action steps, establish how progress will be monitored and documented, and reach agreement on coach's role in supporting this.

5. Reflect and review the learning - How will you sustain your learning?

Coach assists coachee to reflect on and acknowledge their successes and progress, identify enabling and limiting factors, and next steps. Coachee offers feedback on the coaching process, and agreement reached on on-going support required.

This process has much in common with aspects of the peer coaching cycle and all, or aspects of it, can be extremely useful for instructional coaches as part of particular roles that they play with teachers.

While direct observation is an important part of peer and instructional coaching, this is not a mandatory aspect of leadership coaching. It depends on the circumstances, the goals of coachees, and the coaching agreement established.

Unlike peer coaching, feedback is integral to the leadership coaching process. Knowing how to give and receive skilful feedback is essential for both leadership and instructional coaches.

However, whereas instructional coaches require specific expertise related to their instructional coaching focus, leadership coaches need to be expert in the coaching process, not the particular focus area selected by coachees.

Like teachers who work with students, any coach will deal with enormous diversity in adults. In the roles that instructional and leadership coaches play, it is particularly important to understand that some adults will need more structured support than others to achieve self-responsibility and interdependence.

Leadership coaches need a deep understanding of people, and an ability to work with individuals and teams in entirely facilitative or more directive ways, depending on the needs of coachees:

[Go to PLOT > Substantive dialogue > Positive improvement > Looking at repertoire](#)

Mud map

Setting the scene

From the research

Coaching quotes

Essential premises

Coaching types overview