

Webinar 5: Handout 9

Guidance, considerations and resources for training, supporting & monitoring coaches

Coaches themselves need to be supported on an ongoing basis by those more knowledgeable than they are with respect to early grade reading pedagogy, *assessment* and working with teachers. Programs therefore need to include more professional development opportunities for coaches and monitor its effectiveness over time.

- 1. Identify coach learning needs.** The first step to developing an effective coach training and support program is to identify what coaches' needs are. This will depend on what coaches are expected to do and achieve, and the coaches' skill level. This in turn will depend on how long a coach has been coaching, and also the phase of the program. A small baseline survey of coach knowledge and skills may be helpful in identifying what topics coaches will need to be trained on. Programs should also keep in mind the skills coaches need to be effective when identifying learning needs.
- 2. Develop a comprehensive training program.** A few days of formal training are insufficient for creating a quality cadre of coaches, particularly in contexts where most of those recruited to serve as coaches have little to no background on early grade reading and how to support teachers. Rather, coaches need to be provided with multiple opportunities to learn how to be an effective coach. This will include formal trainings (e.g., workshops), small group meetings and discussions to discuss timely issues, as well as one-on-one support ("coaching of coaches").

Providing scaffolded and diverse learning opportunities to coaches: The case of Nigeria

Coaches participating in a pilot reading program in two states in Northern Nigeria, conducted through the USAID- supported Nigeria Reading and Access Research Activity (RARA), took part in two formal trainings during the school year, as well as a separate training on using hand-held tablets to collect data. Additional professional development opportunities were provided via two one-day "check-in meetings" with program staff. These small-group meetings provided coaches with an opportunity to review data and information gathered from monitoring visits of coaches, discuss experiences and address challenges. Program staff and coaches both reported that they appreciated these check-in meetings and found them to be effective in providing targeted support to coaches.

Source: RTI International (2016)

Key topics to include in coach training and via ongoing support include:

- Reading (and language) pedagogy and instruction (specific to the new approach used by teachers they will observe)
- Use of early grade reading materials (specific to the EGR program)
- What it means to be a coach
- Coach roles and responsibilities
- How to conduct an effective coaching visit and observe a lesson
- How to use coach-related tools and resources (e.g., classroom observation protocol, tablet)
- How to develop a positive relationship with teachers
- How to effectively communicate and provide feedback to teachers

See example coach training agenda at the end of this document.

- 3. Scaffold and stagger professional development.** Training and professional development should be provided over time. This will help to stagger learning so that coaches do not get overwhelmed with the amount of new information and skills they need to learn. Scaffolding learning and providing it in “doses” will also allow coaches to digest new knowledge and practice the skills they are learning, allowing them to add to their knowledge and skill base. Staggering PD also allows for opportunities to respond to particular needs and challenges that arise during implementation. For example, monitoring data may indicate that coaches need more training on particular topics, such as providing feedback to teachers. Program evaluations are also likely to identify areas for which teachers need additional support.
- 4. Give coaches ample and diverse opportunities to learn and practice what they will be expected to do.** Coaches will need multiple and diverse options for professional development, including formal training, individual monitoring visits to observe coaches “in action” and provide them with feedback, and occasional “check-in meetings” with a small group of coaches. Provide opportunities for learning in a non-threatening environment, such as one that is separate from the teachers that coaches will observe, so they do not feel “embarrassed” if they make “mistakes” while learning.
- 5. Provide explicit training on how to conduct a classroom observation and provide feedback to teachers.** Coaches will need to learn how to carry out an effective lesson observation, including the tasks they will conduct and the tools they will use. Additionally, they will need to learn how to provide constructive feedback to teachers, something that may not come naturally in contexts where coaches have previously held a more supervisory role, and where such critical feedback has not traditionally been part of professional development. The example below is excerpted from a coach training guide
- 6. Provide opportunities for coaches to apply new knowledge and practice new skills.** Training that is too focused on theory or that takes place only in a workshop setting is likely to be ineffective. Therefore, training should include opportunities to practice what is learned. Providing coaches-in-training with opportunities to apply and “try out” what they are learning at schools and with teachers is critical. Some coach training activities that have been used in EGR programs include:

 - ***Pair coaches with each other to practice classroom observations.*** This can take place in a workshop setting, with one coach trainee playing the role of the teacher while two others observe and complete the lesson observation instrument. Afterwards, the two trainees can compare the information they recorded. This activity can also take place at a school with a real teacher.
 - ***Provide opportunities for coach trainees to practice giving feedback to teachers.*** This is a critical aspect of coaches’ role, and usually one of the most difficult, as it requires them to translate their observations into actionable, effective feedback to the teacher. Experience has also indicated that providing this type of feedback is something that those serving in the coach role usually do not have experience providing, nor may it be something that is culturally familiar. Thus, opportunities to practice providing this type of critical yet respectful feedback is paramount. During the coach training, give coaches an opportunity to practice with each other first. Then, it is recommended that they also have an opportunity to provide feedback to a teacher.

- **Use video to support learning.** Coach trainees can conduct a practice classroom observation using a video recording of a teacher delivering a lesson in a real classroom setting. The trainer can stop the video as needed to discuss what the teacher is doing and how the coaches might record information about what they are observing. This activity can also be conducted in groups or pairs, or used as a form of monitoring and assessment during the training.

- 7. Plan for and invest in coach monitoring (to inform ongoing PD).** The quality of coaching needs to be monitored and evaluated to determine whether it is effective, as well as to identify what additional support coaches may need. Monitoring can include periodic site visits, during which time project staff or others who have been involved in training coaches can speak with the coach and teacher, observe the coach and record information about the coach visit. It is recommended that these “coach monitors” or “coaches-of-coaches” record information on a data collection instrument (which has been developed and field tested) in a way that that allows data to be aggregated over time, both for the same coach and for different coaches. This will allow a program to identify trends at the individual level (e.g., whether a coach is improving across various indicators) and at the group level (e.g., whether all coaches are successful at a given task, and what they need support on). A clear plan should be put in place for when and how the data collected during monitoring visits will be used, how frequently and who will be responsible for analyzing it and communicating it to different stakeholders. (See text box below for an example of how coach monitoring data was collected and used in Nigeria to provide feedback and support to coaches.) Information collected about how well coaches are doing should be used to inform ongoing training and support. It can also be used to inform program parameters and activities. Lastly, it can be used to provide targeted support to coaches in need.
- 8. Identify strategies to support coaches’ ability to carry out their responsibilities, and for holding them accountable.** Identifying potential barriers to effective coach support of teachers is paramount during the design phase of a coaching program. Such obstacles may include lack of mandate to serve as a coach; lack of interest or motivation to serve as a coach; lack of reliable transportation; unwillingness to travel long distances and/or on bad roads; and feeling unprepared to serve as a coach/fear of “losing face” with teachers. All stakeholders—including coaches themselves—need to be involved in identifying potential ways of overcoming these obstacles. Some ideas that have been used in EGR programs include: incorporating coaching into a ministry staff person’s job description; getting support from high-level government officials, which is in turn communicated to coaches; providing transportation allowances to coaches; bringing coaches together periodically so they have opportunities to share experiences and to feel connected to their peers; and providing an opportunity for coaches to call or text someone for support when needed. Other ideas include providing coaches with certificates that are valued within the education system (e.g., lead to potential pay increase or promotion).

Monitoring coaches to inform ongoing coach PD in Nigeria

As part of the Nigeria RARA program, coaches were monitored by project staff and government personnel, who observed the coach and recorded information about the coach-teacher visit using a standardized instrument on a hand-held tablet. The data were aggregated and shared with both project personnel and coaches. Coaches reported they appreciated how the monitoring data allowed them to see how they and their peers were progressing over time, which in turn motivated them to continue doing a challenging job. Project personnel also benefited from being able to identify areas where additional training was needed, and to make it a focus of individualized and small group training (via one-day check-in meetings with coaches). *Source: Pflapsen, A., Harden, K., & Sankey, S., 2016*

References

Pflepsen, A., Harden, K., & Sankey, S. Becoming a Reading Coach in Northern Nigeria: Findings and Implications for Literacy Improvement Initiatives. Presentation delivered at CIES 2016. Available at <https://globalreadingnetwork.net/eddata/becoming-reading-coach-northern-nigeria-findings-and-implications-literacy-%0Bimprovement>

RTI International (2016). *Nigeria Reading and Access Research Activity (RARA): Results of an approach to improve early grade reading in Hausa in Bauchi and Sokoto states*. Prepared for USAID under the EdData II project, Task Order No. AID-620-BC-14-00002 (RTI Task 26). Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI. Available at http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00KVM1.pdf

Coach training materials

- Creative Associates. (2016). *Mu Karanta! Let's Read! Guide to coaching and professional learning communities*. Nigeria Northern Education Initiative Plus. U.S. Agency for International Development. Available at https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00N787.pdf
- FHI 360. (2017). USAID Partnership for Education: Ghana *Learning Coaching/School-based INSET Resources Guide*.
- FHI 360. (2017). USAID Partnership for Education: Ghana *Learning Coaching/School-Based INSET Facilitator Guide*.
- International Rescue Committee. (2013). *Coaches resource manual*.
- Save the Children. (No date). *Coaching Guide: A training for instructional supervisors*.

Example coach training agenda 1

Source: FHI 360. (2017). USAID Partnership for Education: Ghana *Learning Coaching/School-Based INSERT Facilitator Guide*.

Program Outline

Goal: Coaches will demonstrate the competencies required to effectively coach teachers as they improve their classroom practices.

Objectives:

- Identify the competencies (knowledge, attitudes and skills) of effective coaches; and provide example behaviors of each.
- Use the Literacy Practices Walk-Through (LPWT) tool to collect evidence of classroom teaching, analyze results, and provide teacher feedback.
- Explain the stages of the coaching cycle and provide example activities and outcomes for each.
- Clarify coaching responsibilities: use recording tools; manage work load.
- Identify features of school based in-service (SBI) sessions and the coach's role.

Day 1: Effective Coaches

Session 1	Welcome & Introductions	60 min
Session 2	Baseline Self-Assessment	20 min
Session 3	Building on Participant Knowledge	40 min
Session 4	Workshop Overview & Objectives	10 min
Session 5	Coaching Competencies: Essential Skills and Knowledge for Coaches	110 min
Session 6	Principles of Adult Learning	90 min
	Wrap Up	30 min

Day 2: Literacy Practices Walk-Through Tool (LPWT)

	Warm Up	30 min
Session 7	LPWT: Purpose & Features	75 min
Session 8	LPWT: Robust Evidence and Literacy Practices Review	75 min
Session 9	LPWT: Practice	150 min
Session 10	Intro to Reflective Conversations	50 min
	Wrap Up	30 min

Day 3

	Warm Up	10 min
Session 11	Reflective Conversations	50 min
Session 12	Constructive Feedback	70 min
Session 13	The Coaching Cycle: Strategies & Outcomes	60 min
Session 14	Record Keeping	60 min
Session 15	School-Based INSET (SBI): Introduction	105 min
Session 16	Revisit Self-Assessment	45 min
	Wrap Up	30 min

Example coach training agenda 2

Source: Save the Children. (No date). Coaching Guide: A training for instructional supervisors.

Coach Training Overview

Workshop 1			
	Session	Key Topics	Time
Day 1	1. Making a Case for Coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a clear, shared instructional vision • Current teacher support practices • Three reasons for coaching: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The gap between the support teachers require and the support teachers receive 2. Low literacy learning of children in the early grades 3. Research that shows adding coaching is more effective in changing teachers' practice than the combination of theory, demonstrations and practice 	2.5 hours
	2. The Role of a Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of a coach and the coaching cycle • Characteristics of a successful coach with an emphasis on the ability to establish trust and being willing to learn • The difference between a coach and a supervisor 	1 hour
	3. Effective Literacy Instruction in the Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key components of effective literacy instruction: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The use of time 2. The use of materials 3. Purposeful talk 4. Direct Instruction 5. Assessment 	3.5 hours
	Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>PowerPoints with guiding notes for each session</i> • <i>Handouts for participants:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Print rich classroom checklist</i> 2. <i>Fostering class discussions</i> 	
	1. Observation and Feedback protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesson observation protocols (before, during, after) • Coaching skills: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Observation and note-taking 2. Listening 3. Promoting Reflection 4. Giving effective feedback 	6 hours
	2. Organizing for Coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for coaching and homework: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meet with teachers to fill our Teacher Professional Development Plan 	1 hour

Day 2		2. Observe and give feedback (xx frequency) 3. Identify one common development need and provide targeted support in this area	
	Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>PowerPoints with guiding notes</i> • <i>Sample Teaching Scenarios</i> • <i>Handouts for participants:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Lesson observation</i> 2. <i>Effective Listening</i> 3. <i>Promoting reflection</i> 4. <i>Feedback</i> 5. <i>Teacher Professional Development Plan template</i> 6. <i>Questions for Observation</i> 7. <i>Observation Schedule template</i> • <i>Required <u>but not provided</u>: Videos of classroom teaching in the local context--at least one short one (10-15 minutes) and one longer one (a full lesson).</i> 	

Workshop 2

	Session	Key Topics	Time
Day 1	1. Reflection and Sharing	Reflection on practice and consideration of implications for future coaching activities	1 hour
	2. Developing Inclusive Classroom Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is not learning and way? • Different modalities of teaching and learning • Theory of multiple intelligences • Strategies and accommodations to meet diverse needs 	3.5 hours
	3. Planning demonstration lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning inclusive, model lessons for literacy instruction 	2.5 hours
	Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>PowerPoint with guiding notes</i> • <i>Handouts for participants:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>MI activity checklist</i> 2. <i>MI activity tally sheet</i> 3. <i>MI activity visual chart</i> 4. <i>Strategies and Accommodations</i> 	
Day 2	1. Lesson demonstration and feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modeling inclusive, literacy lessons • Peer feedback on model lessons 	6 hours
	2. Organizing for coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for coaching and homework: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Observe and give feedback (xx frequency) 2. Review and update Teacher Professional Development Plans 3. Support lesson planning. Model and co-teach when appropriate and possible 	1 hour

Workshop 3			
	Session	Key Topics	Time
Day 1	1. Reflection and Sharing	Reflection on practice and consideration of implications for future coaching activities	1 hour
	2. Classroom Visits: Preparation and Field Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review goals and protocols of Classroom Observations Field visit to classrooms 	4 hours 10 minutes
	3. Debrief Classroom Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing observations and feedback from classroom visits 	1 hour 50 minutes
	Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>PowerPoints with guiding notes</i> 	
Day 2	1. Professional Development Within Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Existing Professional Development opportunities Why invest in school-based PD Peer-to-Peer Observations Teacher Learning Circles 	5 hours
	2. Organizing for Coaching	3. Plan for coaching and assignment: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Observe and give feedback (xx frequency) Review and update Teacher Professional Development plans Establish and support at least one school-based PD opportunity for teachers 	1 hour
	Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>PowerPoints with guiding notes</i> <i>Handouts for Participants:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>TLC Meeting Structure</i> <i>Peer Observation Tracker</i> <i>TLC Tracker</i> 	