



Instructional coaching handbook

Rationale:

Instructional coaching is currently the best evidenced form of professional development we have available to us as a sector. For this reason, it is our primary method of individual professional development. We also use Instructional coaching as an implementation tool for our whole school and team professional development priorities. The design of our instructional coaching programme is such that everyone has the opportunity to be coached and also to coach others because we believe that collaboration on classroom challenges is best done from a level playing field and so there is no hierarchical element to our coaching programme.

We operate four different models of Instructional coaching to fit different preferences. We acknowledge that sometimes preferences do not align fully with what is most effective and as such, there are times when some teachers may be urged to consider a different coaching model.

Purpose:

The purpose of our programme is to provide a scaffold and structure for teacher thinking. We do not have a set of mandated strategies that we want to see in all classrooms. That is not what consistency is about for us. For us, consistency is about everyone having three things:

- A shared understanding of the continuum journey from novice to expert in any given aspect of a domain
- A shared understanding of big ideas that shape the way we think about teaching and learning as processes. For us, these ideas are cognitive load theory, schema building and direct instruction
- A shared model of the teaching process

These aspects shape how we collectively think about teaching and therefore the decisions that teachers make in their classrooms. Coaches and teachers work together to establish awareness of what is happening in the classroom and how to interpret it accurately in the context of learning. Teachers and coaches use the continuum journey from novice to expert to frame their thinking at this stage. They then ensure that their perceptions are aligned, drawing on shared understanding of the big ideas of research. This allows them to identify a learning problem they want to solve and frame this as a long term goal, at both stages drawing on a consideration of where on the teaching process model the problem can be best addressed. Once the goal has been set, teacher and coach engage in a cycle of coaching that involves making subtle but significant tweaks and changes to the teacher's practice. These changes are discussed and framed around a bank of strategies. Our teachers have access to Steplab, Walkthroughs and Teach like a champion, all of which provide an excellent bank of strategies to help make the solutions to the learning problems as concrete as possible.

Partnership principles:

This section is based on 'The Partnership principles' chapter of Jim Knight's 'The definitive guide to Instructional coaching' (2022) Instructional coaching at EduPulse is part of the culture of our school.

Because of this, the way in which coaching is done has to align to the values of our school and how we want to work with each other. Therefore, the following principles are embedded into our expectations of the coaching relationship between colleagues.

- **Respect** for teachers' voice, especially in light of the unique contextual expertise they hold about their classes
- **Agency** in the hands of the teachers, ensuring that decision making about actions to be taken and strategies and techniques to be tried sit with the teacher and are supported by the coach
- **Collaboration** between coach and teacher to co-construct an understanding of what is going on in a classroom, what the implications are for learning, which part of the teaching process to examine and which strategies should be used to live that out
- **Challenge** from coach to teacher and teacher to coach. The right of both parties to seek evidence for a view on the way forward helps to ensure that decisions are grounded in evidence and what we know about how teaching and learning work. This increases the chances that changes will make a tangible difference to pupils
- **Choice** as a guiding principle refers to the fact that we want coaches and teachers to develop situational awareness. This means that in any given situation, teachers are able to recognise what is happening in terms of student thinking and craft their response, using a range of tools and techniques to make their decision
- **Accountability** as a relationship not a top down stick to beat someone with. Both teacher and coach are accountable to each other and to the process in terms of engaging and respecting the values of respect, agency and collaboration.

Aims:

The aims of this document are:

- To support coaches in understanding how to support teacher thinking and decision making about classroom improvements
- To support coaches in understanding how to support teacher thinking so that it can be effectively responsive in the moment
- To support teachers in understanding what to expect from a coaching relationship
- To provide resources to support coaching conversations

Introduction:

We believe that the current educational landscape incentivises schools to mandate the blanket application of strategies and techniques in the name of consistency. We also believe that a focus on strategy and technique is a vital part of the teacher development and the instructional coaching process. This presents a paradox. How do we ensure that we are providing the kind of concrete, practical support for teachers to improve their practice without removing their agency as decision makers around the choices they have in their classrooms?

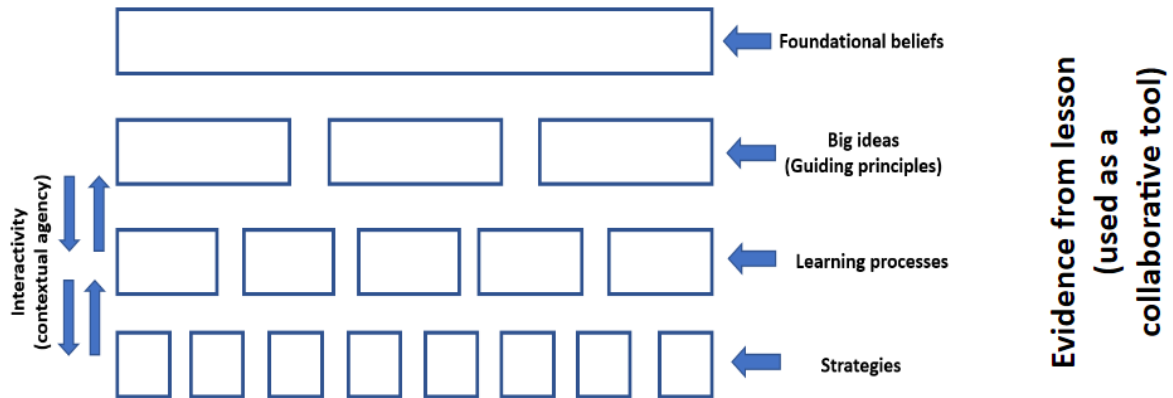
This document is our attempt to reconcile that paradox. It is an attempt to codify the processes of learning, teaching and coaching in a way that creates a consistent way of understanding and thinking about those processes but provides space for context driven choices about how to apply this thinking with trust that teachers will make instructional choices which show fidelity to our shared model of how to think about teaching.

It is our intention that coaches will use this handbook to help them to plan and have coaching conversations that focus on supporting teachers to think in a more evidence informed way about teaching and therefore make decisions that are likely to yield greater learning gains. We want teachers to develop improved situational awareness - accurately seeing and knowing to what extent taught material is being thought about by pupils and where it is being misunderstood as well as the ability to respond with effective actions. This requires the development of a strong mental model of great teaching and effective learning and a wide repertoire of strategies and techniques to help enact teaching goals.

As you move through the handbook, examples of what ideas might look like in conversation are given. These are intended to be examples and not sentence stems that must be used in every conversation. To that end, you will find space in each part of the handbook to record your own ideas about how to have conversations within that part of the coaching process.

The structure of our coaching conversations

Our coaching conversations have four layers to them and coaches should ensure that they refer back and forth between each layer as part of the conversation.



Each of the four stages of the model above are gone into in detail over the remainder of this handbook. At this stage though it is important to draw attention to the value we place on using evidence from a lesson to co-construct the different parts of the conversation. In the examples within each stage, you will see exemplars of how this can be used.

It is also important to draw attention to the importance of interactivity between each stage of the conversation. Coaches should be continually supporting teachers to make connections between different parts of the decision-making process. Again, this is exemplified in the examples within each stage of the conversation. The decision teachers make at each level should inform their thinking about the next level. If the connection is not clear, coaches should ask the teacher to reflect on this and challenge this part of the thinking process.

Initial coaching conversation

Before an observation or joint watching of video takes place, the coach and teacher meet to outline the terms of the partnership. In this conversation, the teacher should be able to talk about what they feel they would like to work on. The coach's role here is to ensure that teachers are basing their view on evidence from the pupils. This is because we know that there is a tendency for teachers to feel they are weaker in certain areas of teaching based on what they may have been told in previous schools or their own beliefs and insights.

However, we believe that one key purpose of coaching, and perhaps the one that drives the others, is to improve student experiences and help them learn better. Therefore, this conversation should focus on identifying the learning problem (Goodrich, 2023) that teachers have identified and interrogating the evidence to support this area being the right place to focus attention.

Stage 1 - Awareness

The first stage of our instructional coaching process aims to ensure that teachers and coaches have an aligned understanding of what is actually happening for pupils during the lesson. To help with this, coaches may watch the teacher teaching either live or on video or they might co-watch a video with the teacher. This is a decision that coach and teacher should make together as a partnership. We call this stage aligning awareness.

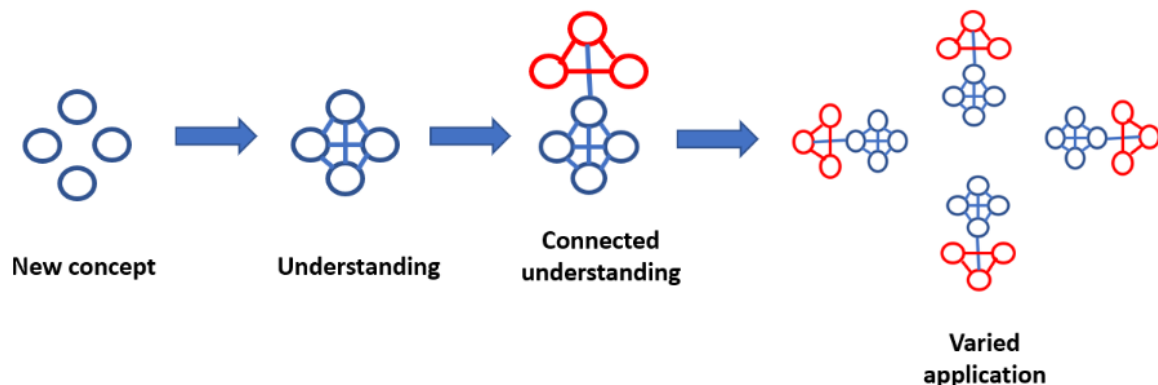
There are typically two issues around awareness:

1. Teacher and coach see different things - omissions
2. Teacher and coach see the same thing but interpret them differently - misinterpretation

The learning process and awareness

The first stage of our Instructional coaching process is concerned with coaches supporting teachers to identify where pupils are in terms of the quality of their learning on a given topic or aspect of a topic. They should reflect on evidence from the lesson with their coach. In this part of the conversation, the coach's aim is to build awareness. To do this, they may use a simple 1-10 scaling model. For example, a coach might say: 'On a scale of 1-10, how pleased were you with the start of the lesson from when the students entered the room to when you put up the answers to the retrieval quiz?' They could then follow this up with a question like: 'What would have moved the dial in a positive direction?' This kind of questioning provides an insight into how effective the teacher feels their teaching was.

Often, in order to keep student learning at the forefront of the conversation, coaches will use the model below in a very similar way to how scaling is used as outlined above.



The diagram conceptualises our shared understanding of a child's journey from novice to expert in a given domain or aspect of a domain. When a new idea is initially introduced, it sits in isolation from anything else. An example of this would be when children in Reception are introduced to the letter H. Initially, they see it as three discrete lines. Over time, they come to recognise the three lines orientated in a particular way as the letter H. At this stage, they have moved to 'Understanding'. When they recongise that the letter can be combined with other letters to form words, they have reached 'Connected understanding' and when they recognise the word in spoken as well as written form and in written form in a range of contexts, they have reached 'Varied application' or what some would term, 'mastery'.

How do coaches use this model to support thinking?

Coaches should use this model alongside evidence from lessons to work with teachers to co-construct an idea of where pupils' knowledge and understanding of the concept or idea in the observed lesson is on the continuum. This is about being sure that the teacher's awareness is strong. Where it is not, it will usually be for one of two reasons:

1. The teacher does not see what the teacher sees. For example, they did not notice that children were talking when they came into the room and the Do Now activity was on the board.

- The teacher sees what the coach sees but interprets it differently. For example, they noticed the children talking but think this is a really good thing because of the buzz it seems to create in the room.

Some ideas of how they could do this are listed below as well as some space for you to script out how you could approach this part of the conversation.

Examples of questions to support thinking at this stage	My scripting
<p>Tell me about where you think the class's understanding of this concept is currently up to?</p> <p>What evidence is informing that view? I don't mean just what's in their books but you might reflect on comments pupils have made or how certain questions have been answered.</p>	
<p>I'm really interested to know what the different components of knowledge were that you taught before this lesson...</p> <p>Do you feel secure in the idea that this has moved them to connected understanding at the point of the lesson I saw?</p> <p>How certain are you and what makes you that certain?</p>	
<p>It felt like you were aiming to move them from one stage of the continuum to the next in that lesson. Have I got that right?</p> <p>What evidence do you think I drew on to reach that conclusion?</p>	
<p>Tell me about what was happening in this part of the lesson. Do you think this supported the transition from understanding to connected understanding?</p>	

It is helpful to think of the aim of this part of the conversation as being to establishing the context of the evidence that the coach wants to draw on with the teacher in the rest of the conversation.

There are times when it is helpful for the coach to present their views to the teacher first. In this case, coaches should try to cushion these views pre and post statement. For example:

Pre-statement: *I'd love to give you my view and then hear what you think about that. I'll do my best to explain my thinking here but remember, this is just my perception and I really need you to validate it or challenge it.*

Statement: *My instinct is that the connections between the things they need to know in order to access what you wanted to teach them were not as solid as what they might feel.*

Post-statement: *This is my view at the moment because when I spoke to X they said.... And actually just prior to that, you said.....*

It is vitally important that coaches then focus on alignment with the teacher. If teachers don't agree, coaches should ask for the teacher's evidence and then support the teacher to weigh the evidence they have and the evidence the coach presented to come to a decision. The decision does not have to be in line with the coaches initial belief, in line with our principle of challenge. The decision is not final and certainly not judgemental but is important because it will act as the foundation for the rest of the conversation.

Stage 2 – The three big ideas

The second stage of our Instructional coaching process is concerned with coaches helping teachers to connect their instructional decisions to our shared understanding of three central theories from cognitive science. These are shown in the icons below:



Cognitive load theory



Direct Instruction



Schema building

Cognitive load theory

We have invested a lot of time over the last two years in learning about cognitive load theory. Summaries of this work are available to you from the professional development lead. Some key aspects of this theory are:

- Working memory is limited in capacity and teachers need to constantly evaluate how close to full working memory of pupils is likely to be
- Long-term memory is unlimited
- Storage strength is positively impacted by connection to prior knowledge so teachers should make these links explicit
- Retrieval strength is positively impacted by effortful retrieval so teachers should allow spacing to exist between initial teaching and revisiting of a concept
- There is a difference between biologically primary and biologically secondary knowledge

Direct instruction

Some key aspects of this theory are:

- In the case of biologically secondary knowledge, it is more efficient and effective for teachers to teach pupils rather than rely on them to discover or correctly interpret things for themselves
- Direct instruction is not lecturing and requires frequent checks for understanding
- Direct instruction is highly interactive because for teachers to be able to be directive with their teaching, they need to know, as precisely as possible, about the nature of current understanding and misconception

Schema building

Some key aspects of this theory are:

- The long-term memory works a bit like a filing system and we can build those filing systems deliberately to make retrieval easier for pupils
- We can do this by teaching broad overarching concepts and then planning where component concepts link into these so that pupils know which filing cabinet each concept belongs in
- The more interconnected a pupil's schema is on a given topic, the more sophisticated and thorough their understanding of it will be

How do coaches use this model to support thinking?

Coaches should use this model alongside evidence from the observed lesson including linking this back to what they and the teacher have decided about the point in the journey from novice to expert that the pupils are at. The aim of this stage of the process is for the teacher to frame what is going on in their classroom in the context of what we know about effective learning from cognitive science. Typically, this is about establishing one of two things:

- Why is what I am currently doing worth changing?
- Why is what I am currently doing worth doing more of?

When coaches help teachers gain a greater awareness of what is going on in the classroom and examine this in the context of the evidence from lessons and from cognitive science, they are equipping teachers with the tools to gain better understanding about the teaching process and then make better decisions as part of it. This goes a long way to giving teachers the agency that we believe their professional ability deserves.

Some ideas of how coaches could prompt a consideration of cognitive science as part of the coaching process are listed below as well as how they might like to continually link this back to the awareness gained from stage 1. There is also some space for you to script out how you could approach this part of the conversation.

Examples of linking this back to awareness from Stage 1	Examples of questions to support thinking at this stage	My scripting
We've already agreed that their understanding was probably not as connected following the do now activity	Tell me about what you know about schema theory that might help us think about why they weren't able to get to the	

<p>and we share an awareness of why – although the talk felt nice, they weren't able to attend to those key bits of knowledge that then linked to what you wanted to do next.</p>	<p>depth of thinking you had intended...</p> <p>Does that tally with evidence from the lesson or from other lessons you've taught where things have gone really well?</p>	
<p>OK so we managed to figure out that the pupils probably weren't ready for that big jump to looking at that concept in so many different ways because they hadn't had long enough to really develop their connected understanding.</p>	<p>Can you suggest how direct instruction might be able to help us understand how you could have supported them in making that jump?</p> <p>Does that align with the evidence from the lesson I watched last time. Here's what we discussed then...</p>	

It is helpful to think of the aim of this part of the conversation as integrating the teacher's awareness of what was actually going on in their classroom with their existing beliefs about how learning happens. This allows them to compare and contrast and be more willing to make changes if they can see that their current practice is problematic and does not align with the principles of cognitive science.

There are times when it is helpful for the coach to present their views to the teacher first. In this case, coaches should try to cushion these views pre and post statement. For example:

Pre-statement: *I'd love to give you my view and then hear what you think about that. I'll do my best to explain my thinking here but remember, this is just my perception and I really need you to validate it or challenge it.*

Statement: *My instinct is that they were overloaded at that point in the lesson. Cognitive load theory reminds us that working memory space is limited and I think there was quite a lot there. Can you list the different things they had to be conscious of at the same time?*

Post-statement: *This is my view at the moment because when I spoke to X they said.... And actually just prior to that, you had said....*

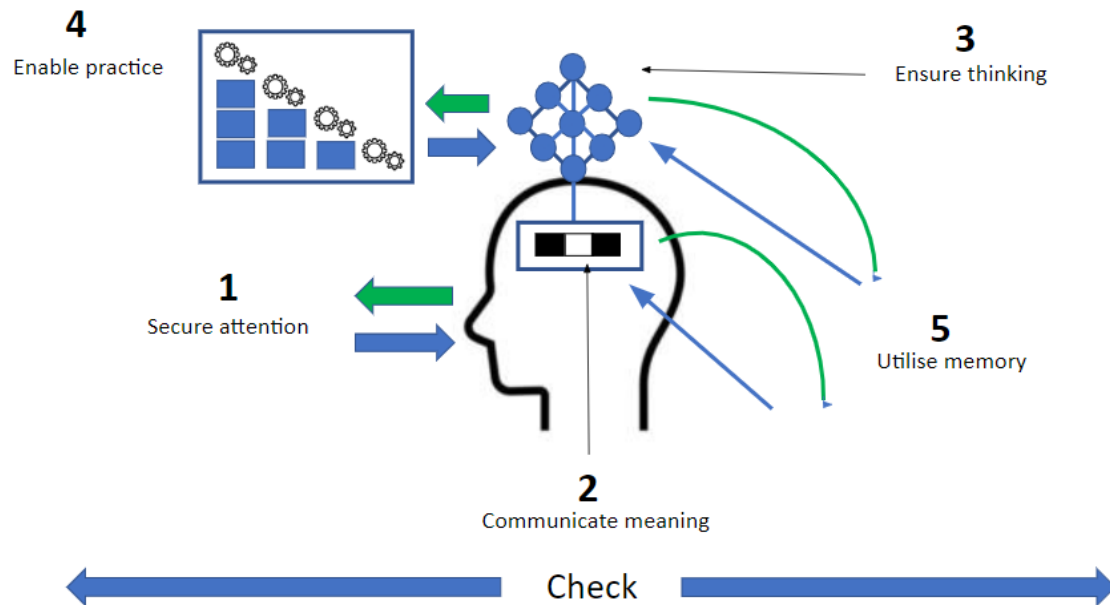
It is vitally important that coaches then work to get the teacher's agreement. If teachers don't agree, coaches should ask for the teacher's evidence and then support the teacher to weigh the evidence they have and the evidence the coach presented in combination with the evidence from cognitive science to come to a decision. The decision is not final and certainly not judgemental.

Stage 3 – The teaching process

The third stage of our Instructional coaching process is concerned with coaches helping teachers to connect the evidence from the observed lesson (of which they now have an accurate awareness)

and the insight from cognitive science with the thing that has the greatest impact on learning – the teaching process.

The model below represents our shared understanding of the teaching process and while it is not the only way to view the process of teaching, it is important that our way of viewing it is consistent across our school.



This model is not designed to be linear. That is to say that teachers and coaches should not view lessons as being in five parts that they work through from 1-5. Rather, the model is a tool to evaluate and consider what is happening in a lesson and where improvements can be made at any given point.

How do coaches use this model to support thinking?

To this point in the process, the coach and teacher have focused on gaining an aligned view on the reality of what is going on in the classroom and have used insights from cognitive science alongside evidence from the lesson (either live or video) to come to an understanding. The next stage of the process is concerned with distilling this thinking into a coherent understanding of what the learning problem is and then setting a goal that the coach and teacher will work on over a period of time together.

By this point in the conversation, there should be a clear understanding of what the problem that is trying to be solved is. However, it is important to clarify it before moving on to co-constructing a goal.

A coach will typically introduce the model of the teaching process as a way of narrowing down the thinking about which part of the process is likely to have the greatest weight in terms of solving the learning problem identified. This should be done with reference to the three big ideas and the awareness that the coach and teacher established at the beginning of the conversation. At all times,

the conversation should be underpinned by evidence from the observed or videoed lesson or other lessons.

The key questions the coach is looking to get the teacher to consider are:

- Which parts of the teaching process might have an impact on this learning problem?
- Which part feels like it could have the greatest impact on the learning problem?

Underpinning this stage is, as ever, evidence and justification. Is there a reason why the teacher and coach are deciding on one particular part of the teaching process over another? What is that reason? Is it evidence informed?

Some ideas for how coaches can support teachers in their thinking about which part of the learning process to focus on are listed below along with how they could link this back to awareness and the three big ideas. There is also room for you to script your own.

Examples of linking this back to awareness from Stage 1	Examples of linking this back to the three big ideas from Stage 2	Examples of questions to support thinking at this stage	My scripting
<p>We've already agreed that their understanding was probably not as connected following the do now activity and we share an awareness of why – although the talk felt nice, they weren't able to attend to those key bits of knowledge that then linked to what you wanted to do next.</p>	<p>We then decided that schema theory was worth thinking about to understand why that chatter at the start was a problem and what kind of problem it was causing. We decided that they just weren't going to be able to make the links with prior knowledge if we weren't insisting on a silent environment.</p>	<p>OK, so let's now begin to think about what you could do differently in the teaching process. Where do you think you should be focusing here?</p> <p>Are there other options?</p> <p>Which is the best option and why? Try to refer back to stage 1 and 2 here if you can...</p>	
<p>OK so we managed to figure out that the pupils probably weren't ready for that big jump to looking at that concept in so many different ways because they hadn't had long enough to really develop their connected understanding.</p>	<p>We decided that direct instruction has some learning that we should be drawing on in a broad sense because it tells us that when we want kids to make connections, we should be being explicit about what those connections are the first time we want them to make them.</p>	<p>Ok, so which part of the process do you think we should be working on?</p> <p>Are there any other options?</p> <p>Talk me through what your reasoning is for each of those options. Which feels like the most valid reasoning?</p>	

		Is there any context you have that might be relevant for us to think about before we decide for sure that that's where we want to work?	
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This part of the conversation helps teachers to integrate their awareness of what is actually going on in their classroom in the context of pupil thinking and understanding (even if there is a low level behavior issue, the idea at that stage is to develop the awareness of the impact of that on pupil learning), with what we know about learning from cognitive science and then provide a framework for beginning to think about teacher decisions in any given moment.

There are times when it is helpful for the coach to present their views to the teacher first. In this case, coaches should try to cushion these views pre and post statement. For example:

Pre-statement: *I'd love to give you my view and then hear what you think about that. I'll do my best to explain my thinking here but remember, this is just my perception and I really need you to validate it or challenge it.*

Statement: *My instinct is that we should probably start thinking about securing attention. I did think about ensuring thinking but this is just not going to be possible if attention isn't on the thing we want it to be on. Once they are attending to the aspect of the concept that we want then we could think about designing some really thoughtful questions that might drive better thought and I guess that would also solve the problem about persistent chatter. But, it feels to me right now that something around attending to the important part of the concept would be useful. What do you think?*

Post-statement: *This is my view at the moment because when I spoke to X they said.... And actually just prior to that, you had said....*

It is vitally important that coaches then work to get the teacher's agreement. If teachers don't agree, coaches should ask for the teacher's evidence and then support the teacher to weigh the evidence they have and the evidence the coach presented in combination with the evidence from cognitive science to come to a decision. The decision is not final and certainly not judgemental.

Stage 4 – Strategies and techniques

The fourth stage of the process is where coaches support teacher to think about the options they have for different strategies and teaching techniques to improve the part of the teaching process that they have agreed to focus on. There is no such thing as a bad strategy but there are plenty of ways that good strategies can be used badly. Usually, this is because teachers have not decided about which strategy to use based on context. For this reason, coaches must support teachers to consider all of different strategy options they have to choose from and reflect on the purpose they are trying to meet to help them make their decision.

We provide staff with three core banks of strategies and techniques to choose from. These are:

- Teach like a champion by Doug Lemov

- Walkthrus by Tom Sherrington
- Steplab by Josh Goodrich

All of the strategies and techniques from each source are held in the Steplab platform and so we use Seplab to support, plan and scaffold our coaching conversations following observations.

How do coaches use this to support thinking?

Coaches will use strategies to help the teacher think about the different options they have to improve practice within a particular area they have decided to work on. As with stage 3, coaches must ensure that teachers fully understand all of the options (including strategies they come up with themselves!) They will then support them to make their final decision.

Some ideas for how coaches can support teachers in their thinking about which strategies to focus on are listed below along with how they could link this back to awareness, the three big ideas and the teaching process model. There is also room for you to script your own.

Examples of linking this back to awareness from Stage 1	Examples of linking this back to the three big ideas from Stage 2	Examples of linking this back to the teaching process model from Stage 3	Examples of questions to support thinking at this stage	My scripting
We've already agreed that their understanding was probably not as connected following the do now activity and we share an awareness of why – although the talk felt nice, they weren't able to attend to those key bits of knowledge that then linked to what you wanted to do next.	We then decided that schema theory was worth thinking about to understand why that chatter at the start was a problem and what kind of problem it was causing. We decided that they just weren't going to be able to make the links with prior knowledge if we weren't insisting on a silent environment.	So, we then agreed that we should work in the securing attention space because if the kids attend to the concept like we want them to then they'll learn it.	So what strategy options do we have? Which is the right one to go for do you think? Are there other options? Why is this one better? Can you see a difference to your decision making now compared to before? Which contextual factors might influence this?	
OK so we managed to figure out that the pupils probably weren't ready for that big jump to looking	We decided that direct instruction has some learning that we should be drawing on in a broad sense	So, the options we looked at then were.... And we decided to work in the space of communicating	Which strategies could we start by thinking about? What other options are there?	

<p>at that concept in so many different ways because they hadn't had long enough to really develop their connected understanding.</p>	<p>because it tells us that when we want kids to make connections, we should be being explicit about what those connections are the first time we want them to make them.</p>	<p>meaning for this part of the problem. We think that by working there we're going to be able to work on making the links more explicit during explanation.</p>	<p>Which is the best option and why? When might the context mean you might have a different option? When might a different option be the best one?</p>	
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This part of the conversation helps teachers to integrate their awareness of what is actually going on in their classroom in the context of pupil thinking and understanding (even if there is a low-level behavior issue, the idea at that stage is to develop the awareness of the impact of that on pupil learning), with what we know about learning from cognitive science and a framework for beginning to think about teacher decisions in any given moment. It then draws in thinking about which strategies could be considered and what it is about the context of this learning problem that means that the best decision is X.

There are times when it is helpful for the coach to present their views to the teacher first. In this case, coaches should try to cushion these views pre and post statement. For example:

Pre-statement: *I'd love to give you my view and then hear what you think about that. I'll do my best to explain my thinking here but remember, this is just my perception and I really need you to validate it or challenge it.*

Statement: *I'm thinking there might be three options – mini white boards, cold calling or pair share. I'm leaning towards mini white boards. Can you think of why that might be? Do you agree that that's a good decision to make?*

Post-statement: *This is my view at the moment because when I spoke to X they said.... And actually just prior to that, you had said....*

It is vitally important that coaches then work to get the teacher's agreement. If teachers don't agree, coaches should ask for the teacher's evidence and then support the teacher to weigh the evidence they have and the evidence the coach presented in combination with the evidence from cognitive science to come to a decision. The decision is not final and certainly not judgemental.

Stage 5 – modelling and rehearsal

The fifth stage of the instructional coaching process is modelling and rehearsal. This is the stage at which coaches start to support teachers in moving from accepting the theory of an idea to integrating it into their own practice. Any modelling and rehearsal should be preceded by a conversation around the different options available in different scenarios to solve the identified learning problem. It should also be preceded by a discussion about the different variations and adaptations that may need to be made for different reasons. This discussion is vital to the aim of integrating the theory with the practice.

Modelling and rehearsal, in its most prescriptive sense, has seven parts to it:

- Break the strategy or technique down into actionable steps
- Coach models putting them into practice and narrating as they go
- Coach models putting them into practice with no narration
- Coach asks teacher to reflect on the model
- Teacher rehearses
- Coach provides feedback
- Teacher rehearses again

1. Break the strategy down in actionable steps

Although strategies are granular in themselves, for teachers to plan how to put them into practice, they need to not only codify the practice but also the steps to be taken to enact it. For example, the steps for the strategy 'cold calling' might look like this:

- Pose the question
- Leave a pause of 8 seconds
- Name the person to answer
- Insist on 'hands on shoulders if you agree' from all other pupils

Breaking a strategy down in this way makes it easier for coaches to know where to zoom in during observations and subsequent coaching sessions.

2. Coach model putting them into practice and narrating as they go

The next stage is for the coach to model the practice but to narrate what they are doing at each stage of the practice. This is so that the teacher can easily integrate what they are seeing with the agreed steps.

3. Coach models putting them into practice with no narration

Having broken the process down very deliberately, the coach now puts it back together and models again with no narration. It is vital that following this, the coach asks the teacher to recap the steps and to provide feedback against each of those steps so that they can internalise the strategy themselves.

4. Coach asks teacher to reflect on the model

The coach then asks the teacher to reflect on the model against the agreed steps. They should comment on the fidelity of each step and the effectiveness of it.

5. Teacher rehearses

The teacher now has a go at rehearsing the strategy. Although this can feel awkward at the start, coaches have to support teachers in having a go at rehearsal so that they can develop confidence over time.

6. Coach provides feedback

The next step is for the coach to provide feedback about the rehearsal and to suggest tweaks and changes. If needed, this is also the time to amend the agreed steps towards enacting the strategy.

7. Teacher rehearses again

With feedback received, the teacher rehearses again as they try to integrate this into the practice.

However, rehearsal is an extremely flexible tool for coaches and teachers. To explore this flexibility, it is important to understand the range of reasons that rehearsal is useful:

1. Rehearsal provides an opportunity for teachers to practice stringing together different strategies. Pritesh Raichura provides an excellent example of this on his X feed where he shows how he combines paired talk with all hands up and heads down, palms open to check understanding. Rehearsing the transitions from one move into another is helpful in supporting teachers to eventually chunk together smaller moves into one
2. Rehearsal provides an opportunity for teachers and coaches to work through options and discuss contextual cues that influence strategy decision making
3. Rehearsal allows an opportunity for simulated scenarios to be put to a teacher, drawing their attention to the slight variations between scenarios and therefore, exposing their reasoning for their decisions
4. Rehearsal is useful for helping a strategy become increasingly automated. This frees up working memory space for the teacher in the moment of the lesson to be able to be responsive to everything going on in the room. It also enables the teacher to have working memory space free to analyse the effectiveness of the strategy or technique.
5. Rehearsal is not just about improving the effectiveness of the perfectly executed strategy. It is more often about improving the effectiveness of the average execution of the strategy. For example, when a tennis player practices 100 forehands, they are often doing so to ensure that when they have to use a forehand in the moment of a match, the 'without thought' or automated version of the stroke is 'good enough'. For teachers, in the midst of everything that goes on in the average classroom, thinking through execution to ensure it is the very best it can be is unrealistic. We have to rely on the automated version of the technique which will usually not be as good as the most effective version of it that we are capable of. The more rehearsal we do, the more consistent that base level of execution will be.
6. Rehearsal also allows coaches and teachers to zoom in on options in a way that they can't during live teaching. The coach can 'pause' the teacher and ask them what options they have at that moment. Which strategy choices do you have at your disposal? Which one will you choose and why? Are there any adaptations you will make to it for specific children? When might the context dictate a different strategy should be used?

If the coach and teacher prefer, modelling and rehearsal can take place live in the classroom situation rather than in the coaching room with no children present. The most important thing with any form of modelling, rehearsal or practise is that the coach provides feedback after each attempt to gradually improve the teacher's execution. Different modes of modelling include:

- Coach models live with the teacher's class. It is useful during this kind of work for the teacher to have a checklist to keep them focused on the practice being modelled
- Coach and teacher go to see another colleague together with the intention of watching the modelled strategy
- Teacher goes to observe another colleague on their own with the intention of watching the modelled strategy

Of course, coaches and teacher should be ready to use a range of different modelling and rehearsal strategies as outlined above flexibly and responsively.

Stage 6 – Making it stick

Even the most well designed instructional coaching conversation will not succeed if there is no action take at the end of it to support teachers in overcoming the high cognitive demand of teaching.

Strategies to help teachers embed ideas are:

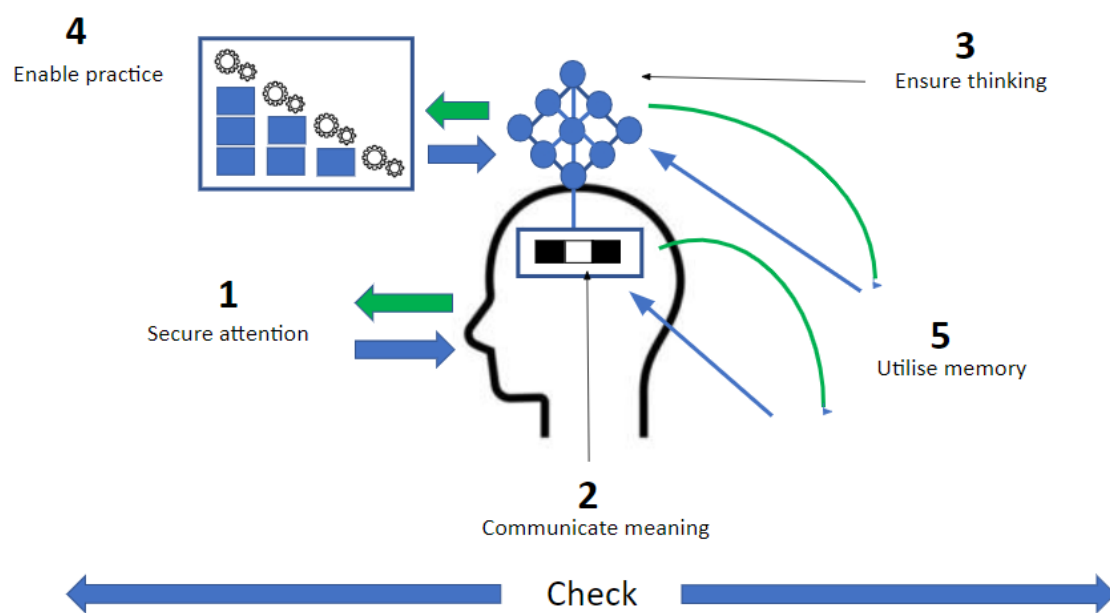
- Amend lesson slides for the next lesson to prompt yourself to do your strategy at given points in lessons
- Make reminders like post it notes or mnemonics to support teachers to remembering to put given strategies into practice.

Integrating instructional coaching with whole school priorities

At EduPulse, we are forensic in our professional development diagnostic process. We use data from pupil and staff questionnaires, from lesson walkabouts and from data analysis to decide what our whole school and team priorities should be. This means that over the course of the year, we are able to plan sequences of professional development in line with the theory set out in our professional development policy.

In each sequence, we work on improving the effectiveness of teaching in a particular aspect of a particular subject. Instructional coaching during a given sequence should focus on these same areas. For example, if a professional development sequence is focused on incorporating more independent practice in Maths lessons, instructional coaching sequences during this period will begin within this context. Because our professional development sequences are research informed, they always begin with shared reading, research or listening. In the instructional coaching sessions that follow, teachers are able to draw on this learning to provide insight related to their analysis of their own teaching.

Even though teachers have the same focus related to our whole school priorities, by using the model of the teaching process, we are able to ensure that each teacher can still construct a personalised goal within the shared focus.



For example, to continue with the professional development sequence focused on increasing the amount of guided practice in Maths, a teacher might choose to work on this in the context of utilising memory. This might involve them developing a wider range of cued retrieval scaffolds to support pupils with independent practice of previously taught content for the purposes of retrieval and the learning gains that this offers. Conversely, a teacher may decide, with their coach, to work on independent practice and the follow up questions they ask to help pupils generate their own understanding of the concept by reflecting on their process.

In this way, Instructional coaching can remain unique for the individual while also feeding into whole school development aims.

Different models of coaching

At EduPulse, we operate four different models of coaching and teachers are fully involved in choosing the right model of coaching for them. If teachers feel that they would like to try a different model, they only have to let the Professional development lead know and this will be facilitated.

1. Coaching for student teachers

We take our responsibility to student teachers extremely seriously. At EduPulse, students receive what we consider to be an excellent standard of support and development. In this model of coaching, the awareness stage will often begin with the coach presenting their view and then helping the teacher to integrate this with their own existing mental models. We take this approach because we understand that student teachers are still very much developing their mental models of teaching. Throughout the process, the coach will usually offer their thoughts and ideas first and then ask the student to draw connections between these ideas and the evidence from the lesson observed or from what they know about the theory of learning. By taking this approach, we reduce the cognitive load on the student teacher and allow them to focus on connecting what they know with the mental model that the coach is inducting them into.

2. Coaching for Early career teachers

We follow the Early Career Framework for our Early Career Teachers (ECTs). This is an approach that we support because it allows us to go slower through the science of learning over the two year period and connect what the ECT is learning with their practice. For this reason, coaching is less responsive (as it follows the framework of the ECF) but can enable the teacher to have greater control over the process because by aligning coaching foci with their current module of study, coaches support teachers to apply their theoretical learning into their teaching. They also support them to recognise contextual variations that are important to the execution process. We see the ECT years as vital in establishing the mental models of newly qualified teachers and as such, the coach will likely guide the coaching process far more in the first year before challenging the ECT to apply their learning in Year 2 of the programme.

3. Experienced teachers: observation based

For more experienced teachers, we use the scaffold for coaching sessions provided on the Steplab platform. In this model, the coach and teacher are in full equal partnership and the coaching cycle is based around observation and feedback cycles where the coach uses observation to gather evidence to support the conversation with the teacher. As such, their initial interpretations act as a starting point and can be challenged throughout by the teacher.

4. Experienced teachers: video based

In this model, coaches and teachers use video to support the process. This naturally leads to a more in depth exploration of the evidence as more can be captured on video than on observation notes. However, coaches must be careful here to not see video as irrefutable evidence that their view is correct. Video must be used as a shared starting point for the conversation that follows and to help justify views and opinions together.

How do we support coach development?

Along with our four forms of coaching, we also have four different coach training programmes. These programmes run every third week and are led by the Deputy Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher. The sessions are pre-planned and there are 12 sessions over the course of the academic year.

In addition to this, coaching sessions take place in the school hall, all together. This means that the Deputy Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher can observe coaching sessions and can then plan responsive elements to upcoming coach training sessions. In this way, we believe we find a balance between being strategically planned and personally responsive.

Closing thoughts

Above all, coaching is about helping teachers to improve so they do an even better job for the pupils in their classes. Improvement will be sustained and deep if teachers have made the decision to change and improve themselves. Coaching has the function of increasing awareness of what is currently going on, providing knowledge to help teachers effectively evaluate what is happening in their classes and why, helping teachers to make decisions about the part of the teaching process to aim their development at and make the strategy choices that run alongside that.

Of course, I would be much quicker for coaches to just tell teachers what to do but this is not coaching and more importantly, this does nothing to give people the purpose and meaning in their jobs that will keep them in the profession for years to come. Coaching helps people improve from their own start point. Coaching at EduPulse Primary school gives agency back to teachers.