

What is peer coaching?

Broad Definition of Coaching: a cooperative, ideally collaborative relationship, with both parties mutually engaged in efforts to provide better services to students.
(Hasbrouck & Denton, 2005)

Why is coaching so important?

- Research has identified peer coaching as a highly effective element of successful professional development.
- Coaches are used to tighten the connection between formal training and teachers' application of instructional practices.
- Successful coaching is provided by accomplished peers and includes supportive critiques of practice, and classroom observation and modeling.

Consider this:

- **5%** of learners will transfer a new skill into their practice as a result of theory
- **10%** will transfer.....with theory and demonstration
- **20%** will transfer.....with theory, demonstration, and practice within the training
- **25%** will transfer.....with theory, demonstration, practice within the training, and feedback
- **90%** will transfer.....with theory, demonstration, practice, feedback, and coaching

Joyce, Bruce & Showers, B. Designing Training and Peer Coaching: Our need for learning. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, VA 2002

We know from research and personal experience that in order to get the most out of professional development, initial training must be followed up with ongoing professional development in order to be more than just “drive-by” training. As a result, Keys to Literacy encourages schools to develop a plan for supporting teachers after our trainers have delivered initial training. That plan includes identifying and training individuals to be building-based peer coaches. They are key to successful professional development because they provide:

- Sustained, long-term professional development
- Ongoing consultation and coaching
- Specific follow up activities
- Guided practice

Peer coaching is a time for teachers to take risks, to try out new ideas and approaches, and to discuss results with trusted colleagues. Peer coaching is NOT supervision or evaluation of teachers, nor should peer coaches be expected to improve the overall performance of ineffective teachers.

The difference between supervision and peer coaching is easier to understand if you consider the purpose of each (Hasbrouck & Denton, 2005):

- Coaching: purpose is to help teachers provide students the best possible instruction; should never be about making evaluative decisions.
- Supervision: purpose is to provide information so a supervisor can make evaluative judgments - is the teacher performing in a professionally

What is the role of a Keys to Literacy peer coach?

The most basic but important role of the peer coach is to be a champion for Keys to Literacy – that is, believe that the instructional practices will help students and should therefore be used by teachers.

Three KTL Coach Roles

Facilitator	helping effective and skillful teachers continue their success
Collaborative Problem Solver	using a strategic and structured process to work with teachers in addressing issues that arise in the classroom
Teacher/Learner	sharing effective, proven strategies, methods, and techniques with groups of teachers

It is important to note that a coach is **not** trained to deliver initial training for Keys to Literacy routines – this must be delivered by Keys to Literacy Trainers.

Who Should Become a Peer Coach?

Here are a few suggestions:

- Coaches do not have to be literacy specialists or English teachers! Successful building coaches can be classroom teachers, librarians, curriculum coordinators, reading coaches or teachers, department chairs, team leaders, or master teachers.
- Content teachers (e.g., science, history) often make good coaches because they can support peers in the same subject areas.
- The most effective coaches are well-respected by their peers and possess the following skills: organization and planning, group facilitation, effective interpersonal communication.
- Coaches can be based at the school or district level.

Ideally, a school should have at least one peer coach for each grade level, with a minimum of two peer coaches per building.

Common Types of Coaches

Typically, educators who become KTL peer coaches fit in one of the categories below.

Teacher Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> classroom teachers who provide KTL coaching in an informal way; have a full teaching load
Master Teacher Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> classroom teachers who are identified as master/mentor teachers; part of their job is to coach peers
Formal Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> building or district based literacy coaches, instructional coaches, and others whose main job is coaching teachers
Administrators. Department Heads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> building or district based educators who play a role in evaluating teachers as well as coaching

Time and Approach Will Vary

Depending on the type of KTL Coach you become, the following will vary:

- The amount of time you have to provide support to teachers
- The degree of autonomy you have to coach
- How peer teachers view your role

Regardless of your role, you can support implementation of KTL!