

Coaching Styles: Coach as Useful Resource

Sensing and Thinking (ST)

Teacher strengths include administrative tasks, setting up systems, using data, working with established curriculum. They take a pragmatic approach to teaching and learning.

- Hands-on, relevant exercises or tips that produce tangible results are the best forms of information. If it *does* work, they'll take the time to learn more.
- Give examples that are easily customized to their jobs. They may discount examples that do not deal with their specific responsibilities.
- Listen carefully to their concerns about new methods or theories. Often their informational needs have not been met.
- They naturally prefer to see results rather than read about theories. Background information is almost irrelevant. Their concern? "Show me it works."

Effective Coaching Roles

- Modeling. STs often thrive when using Margaret Mooney's "Gradual Release of Responsibility Model". They want to hear about a strategy, see it used with their students (or students like theirs), talk through questions and anticipated problems before they try it themselves, and finally try it while the coach watches so they can ask for help if they need it and receive suggestions afterward. *Keep your schedule open; they may request a second modeling or co-teaching—reflecting their hands-on learning style.*
- Lesson planning. STs may not engage in revising or creating new lesson plans until they have enough evidence of the worthiness of the change. These teachers often like being handed a ready-to-go lesson. If it works, they'll be ready to sit down and plan another one with you.
- Providing resources. These teachers are seldom insulted when coaches hand them relevant curriculum supplements, activities, or project directions. Offer to locate what they need to deepen the coaching relationship.
- Providing alternatives. ST teachers want your ideas and are often unmotivated by facilitative questioning designed to draw ideas out of them. They may bluntly say, "If I had an idea I'd be using it." Instead, start with concrete alternatives, answer all their questions, and then choose.

Preferred Information

- Immediate applications with specific, step-by-step directions
- Implementation details—their responsibilities, time line, training, trouble-shooting contact
- Proof that the new is better than their current practices. ST teachers have often modified practices over time and believe they work quite well.

Coaching Styles: Coach as Encouraging Sage Sensing and Feeling (SF)

Teacher strengths include handling details, working one-on-one with students, creating a respectful classroom atmosphere, implementing curriculum, day-to-day classroom routines.

- Meet the teacher’s needs for encouragement, clear goals, and concrete tasks. They take personally the day-to-day events in their workplace, assuming that deviations from perfect results or performance are their fault.
- Offer to join them on the job when applicable. Show them what is going right and make concrete suggestions to fix “molehills” that seem like “mountains” because of their desire to serve each student.
- Don’t provide too many choices—they may be overwhelmed.
- Model one new strategy at a time and provide methods to document progress. Keep the focus on the overall objective; otherwise, the teacher may get sidetracked by perfectionism over details.

Effective Coaching Roles:

- Data coach. You’ll often need data as evidence that a favorite practice isn’t effective, but a high percentage of people with math anxiety prefer Sensing and Feeling! A coach may need to compare test scores, disaggregate data, and engage in more of the data analysis, presenting conclusions for discussion with the teacher. The teacher may gradually take over more of the tasks.
- Modeling. SF teachers often gain confidence by watching and also respond to the Gradual Release of Responsibility model. Often, once they’ve seen a coach model a practice, they easily find ways to improve it for their particular students.
- Co-teaching. SF teachers like to work with people, so co-teaching is a great activity. They often need immediate feedback as to whether they’ve done something correctly. Also, being present allows a coach to point out what is working well—things seldom go smoothly when students are introduced to something for the first time and the SF teacher may need that objective voice before they’re willing to try it again.
- Co-planning. SF teachers often enjoy brainstorming ideas with others. They may not see themselves as inherently creative, but a suggestion, or an example of what worked for another teacher, often jump-starts their ability to innovate. Also, co-planning provides a vehicle for answering the teacher’s questions immediately.

Preferred Information

- Stories and examples from peers who have used the strategy or technique. They also respond to stories of specific students who experienced growth.
- Specific, step-by-step instructions.
- A clear understanding of what is expected of them. Most SFs are very conscientious. Give them a list of alternatives and they may assume they’re expected to try them all!

Coaching Styles: Coach as Collegial Mentor

Intuition and Feeling (NF)

Teacher strengths include starting new programs, motivating others, developing creative projects, engaging students in large-scale creative writing/dramatization/simulation units. Provide space for their creativity and they can become staunch supporters of any strategy.

- These teachers march to their own beat and coaches need to keep this in mind. Engage in conversations to help these teachers use their creativity. Let them generate their own ideas for critique rather than work only from a coach's suggestions.
- Show them how to communicate with concrete examples of abstract concepts and techniques, providing demonstrations and directions for each technique.
- Demonstrate how to provide structure while still allowing for student creativity. Provide examples of rubrics or objectives that give clear direction yet avoid the over-structuring that NF's hate.
- Let them talk through several scenarios before deciding on strategies.

Effective Coaching Roles:

- Study groups. NF teachers often like to read about and discuss new ideas. If they prefer Introversion, their best route to change is independent study. They enjoy trying things in their classrooms and then sharing results and student work.
- Collegial observations. NF teachers may appreciate specific feedback when implementing classroom changes. Use a pre-observation conference to identify the information they'd like to receive from you. They are less open to modeling and co-teaching—unless a new strategy is out of their comfort zone.
- Consultant. NF teachers often prefer to go as far as they can on their own with a new idea. Instead of working with them in the early stages of lesson planning or strategy implementation, ask if they'd like to outline their ideas and then run them by you.
- Trouble-shooter. Advertise coaching as assistance for reaching the most reluctant learner, the most difficult class, the subject they least prefer to teach, and so on.

Preferred Information

- The big picture. These teachers are motivated by improving students' motivation, self-esteem or altruism more than by improving test scores, even though they're well aware of the importance of data.
- A vision of how each student will be affected. Objective data leaves them cold unless it's accompanied by qualitative evidence that students will also grow personally.
- Stories of systemic change. They'll often pursue in-depth knowledge of a model or theory if it's presented with case studies of how a school changed, or how a targeted group of students embraced academics.

Coaching Styles: Coach as Expert

Intuition and Thinking (NT)

Teacher strengths include theorizing about ways to improve student learning and then logically testing them, providing rigorous assignments, getting students to think, using data.

- When coaching these teachers, prepare to be challenged—not intentionally, but because NT teachers learn by comparing any new instructional strategy or change to the models and schemas they've developed about how students learn. The coach can't take things personally! Provide credentials and references to establish trust in your expertise.
- Provide instructional methods for balancing theory and creativity with hands-on experimentation and structure. NTs can assume that everyone is as interested in models as they are.
- Allow them to probe suggestions and then improve upon them. A response of "That's plausible" to your most brilliant idea is *high praise* from these teachers. Often, people with this learning style are viewed as contrary, resistant, or abrasive rather than the deep thinkers they are.
- Meet their needs for evidence and data. If they embrace a change as valid and important, they often become enthusiastic.

Effective Coaching Roles:

- Co-leadership. NT teachers thrive when they have a say in implementation planning. Carefully considering their critiques often increases buy-in. Ask about areas where they feel competent enough to coach other teachers or perhaps lead a study group.
- Observation. NT teachers are generally interested in making improvements and appreciate the preconference/observation/postconference model.
- Study groups. Group discussions allow NT teachers to formulate ideas and receive feedback. They may prefer a more in-depth approach—research or theory-based books or more than one meeting on the same topic—than other teachers.
- Collaborative conversations. Ask these teachers about the problems they want to solve in their classroom. Offer a hypothesis of the root source of the problem and a few alternatives. Then provide time for an extended conversation (perhaps via email if the teacher also prefers Introversion). Expect to discuss alternative hypotheses, the pros and cons of each alternative, and the possible implementation difficulties.

Preferred Information:

- Depth of knowledge. If you can't answer an NT's questions, make available websites, books, articles and other resources to satisfy the teacher's need to know.
- Data and statistical studies. This is the one group of teachers who are very interested in objective research studies.
- Logical theories and models. NT's need to know how and why things work