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# Effective Coaching Strategies for Increased Use of Research-Based Instructional Strategies for Linguistically Diverse Classrooms

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**EFFECTIVE COACHING STRATEGIES FOR INCREASED USE OF  
RESEARCH-BASED INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR  
LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE CLASSROOMS**

By

Cindy Sno Sandman West

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

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June, 2012

EFFECTIVE COACHING STRATEGIES FOR INCREASED USE OF  
RESEARCH-BASED INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR  
LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE CLASSROOMS

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University of Nebraska, 2012

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This thesis explores effective coaching strategies that support the classroom teacher in implementing research-based instructional strategies designed to assist English language learners (ELLs) in language acquisition and content learning. Through individual interviews, ELL instructional coaches assisted in the identification of coaching strategies they perceived to be most supportive as classroom teachers learned and implemented instructional strategies for supporting ELL students.

The data gathered from the interviews is organized under four main themes: Developing Partnerships, Identifying Student and Teacher Needs, Practical Applications, and The Role of Professional Development. The data indicated participants strongly endorsed instructional coaching as an effective form of professional development, especially when partnered with formal professional development. This study supports previous scholarship delineating the promise and potential of high-quality coaching for developing coach-teacher partnerships and affecting teaching practices in the classroom.

*Keywords:* English language learners, coaching strategies, instructional strategies

## DEDICATION

To my parents, Virgil and Eda Marie Sandman, for teaching me the importance of education and modeling what it is to be a lifelong learner.

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## Introduction

“Help me! I have English language learners in my classroom and I don’t know how to meet their needs.” As an ELL Instructional Coach who works with content area secondary teachers, I hear statements like this all too frequently. Occasionally, I even hear, “Get those ELL kids out of my classroom! You teach them English first, then they can come back into my room.” In my role as an instructional coach, it is my job to assist teachers, and I understand that in most instances such statements are expressions of a teacher’s own frustration and insecurity about what to do to provide meaningful instruction, rather than a personal dislike of ELLs.

My work revolves around addressing such frustrated teacher statements, and I am continually working to answer the question, “How do I meet the learning needs of teachers, particularly in regard to teaching with ELLs?” This question is truly at the heart of effective coaching. Understanding how teachers learn, and using that knowledge to inform coaching strategies, will determine the effectiveness of the coaching relationship and thereby assist in “closing the achievement gap” for teachers.

This paper pursues the identification of coaching strategies perceived by coaches themselves to be effective in building partnerships between ELL instructional coaches and classroom teachers. My goal, and the goal of my district’s ELL coaching program, is to assist teachers in incorporating research-based instructional practices into their teaching, thereby raising the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms. This thesis sets out to explore this issue through both a research review and a research study of instructional coaching strategies.

First, the reader will be presented with a review of literature that begins with a description of an effective teacher and the skills needed to meet the diversity of student needs. Six models of coaching are then identified and defined, followed by a look at what the literature says about instructional coaching and good strategies to support teaching and learning. The specific application to coaching in a linguistically diverse classroom will come into focus as research-based instructional strategies are identified for English language learners. This discussion is followed by a comparison of Aster Public Schools' coaching implementation in comparison to recent scholarship on coaching. The review of literature closes with the identification of similarities and differences between the Aster Public Schools' coaching model and the six models identified earlier.

Following the review of literature, the original research undertaken as part of this thesis is introduced by a description of the participants and the interview protocol used in conducting individual interviews with ELL instructional coaches for the purpose of gathering data on coaching strategies that participants in this study perceive as effective in equipping teachers to support linguistically diverse students. Four themes emerged from the data gathering interviews and are reported in the findings of the study.

The discussion connects the findings to previous research cited in the review of literature, and notes the importance and potential impact of these findings. Limitations of this study and recommendations for further study on this topic are also included. The conclusion revisits the research question and provides closing statements.



## Review of Literature

### Teaching and Teacher Support

In John Hattie's book, *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-analyses Relating to Achievement*, he writes the following description of teaching:

The act of teaching requires deliberate interventions to ensure that there is cognitive change in the student. . . . It involves an experienced teacher who knows a range of learning strategies to provide the student when they seem not to understand, to provide direction and re-direction in terms of the content being understood and thus maximize the power of feedback, and having the skill to “get out of the way” when learning is progressing towards the success criteria. The key ingredients of what it means to be strategic in teaching and learning relates to teachers finding ways to engage and motivate students, teach appropriate strategies in the context of various curricula domains, and constantly seeking feedback about how effective their teaching is being with all the students (Hattie, 2009).

A teacher's responsibility is prodigious and demanding. In addition to the extensive demands of skill and time, the federal government adds the demands of No Child Left Behind and the requirements of meeting AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress). School districts across the country continue to look for ways to raise student achievement and, along with the measurement of student achievement through test scores, districts have begun to review all the factors that affect those scores. One of those factors is teacher effectiveness.

The message of research on the relationship between teacher effectiveness and student achievement is simple –teachers *do* matter. The Year Three Report of the

Pennsylvania High School Coaching Initiative (Brown, Reumann-Moore, Christman, Riffer, & Liu, 2008) states, “Research has indicated that effective, high quality teachers are one of the most important factors in student success, with a growing body of studies showing that students learn more from skilled and experienced teachers”. This information should be no surprise to us, but our task then becomes how best to develop effective, high quality teachers.

In-service professional development is provided by most school districts as a tool for developing such teachers, but there is now more scrutiny regarding the effectiveness of traditional professional development. Therefore, the implementation of alternative or additional methods of teacher support needs to be closely examined for its efficacy.

Instructional coaching has become a popular option for providing additional support and follow up with teachers. Research shows that traditional in-service training with no follow up is likely to result in about a 10 percent implementation rate, while well-constructed coaching programs can generate implementation rates of at least 85 percent (Knight, 2004b). Coaching is quickly becoming a popular model for providing job-embedded, individualized, and sustained professional development to teachers (Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009).

Supporting teachers to improve their practice is central to improving learning outcomes for students, and although the field still lacks conclusive research linking instructional coaching to student achievement, there are studies that indicate that coaching helps teachers better understand new instructional practices and incorporate new strategies into classroom instruction (Brown et al., 2008). Instructional coaching, therefore, is a promising, though largely understudied, approach to teacher professional development and in-service growth.

To be effective, professional development must be ongoing, deeply embedded in teachers' classroom work with children, specific to grade levels or academic content, and focused on research-based approaches (Russo, 2004). Coaching as professional development helps to open classroom doors and creates more collaboration and sense of community among teachers in a school (Russo, 2004).

Jim Knight, a research associate at the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning, has conducted extensive research on developing a model of professional development that provides the kind of teacher support required to implement new, proven practices. Some of Knight's research work includes (a) *Studying the Impact of Instructional Coaching* (Knight & Cornett, 2007), which was conducted to evaluate whether or not instructional coaches have any impact on implementation of proven practices learned in a professional development workshop, or any impact on the quality of teacher implementation of new teaching practices; (b) *A primer on instructional coaching* (Knight (2005) including three studies: one study using interviews to determine if teachers were implementing interventions they had learned during workshops they attended during the summer, the second comparing student success with how close teachers' practices matched those outlined in instructional manuals, and the third regarding feedback from teachers who had watched an instructional coach model instructional practices in their classroom; (c) *Instructional coaches make progress through partnership: Intensive support can improve teaching* (Knight, 2004) an article which reports on the Pathways to Success project; (d) *Another damn thing we've got to do: Teacher perceptions of professional development* (Knight, 2000), a qualitative study on teacher perceptions of professional development; (e) *The partnership learning fieldbook* (Knight (2000), which utilized a counterbalanced design using two similar learning

strategies. After 10 years of research, Knight confidently states that instructional coaching is one approach that does provide the necessary support for implementation (Knight, 2007), and Knight is not the only scholar of teacher professional development advancing instructional coaching.

### **A Review of Coaching Models**

We continue the conversation regarding coaching as a potential support for improving classroom practice by looking at six models of literacy coaching as described by Vogt and Shearer (2011) in their book, *Reading Specialists and Literacy Coaches in the Real World*, (Third Edition). As the authors explored various ways in which different groups looked at the roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches, they discovered six basic models in which most could be grouped: Informal Coaching, Mixed Model Coaching, Formal Literacy Coaching, Peer Coaching and Mentoring, Cognitive Coaching, and Clinical Supervision. Following are brief descriptions of each model.

Model 1: *Informal Coaching* places the emphasis on coaching outside the classroom. The goal is to improve student achievement by helping teachers realize their self-identified goals. The coach creates a positive one-to-one relationship with the teacher and assists in setting and following through on the teacher's personal goals through listening, consultation and conversation.

Model 2: *Mixed Model Coaching* has elements of both informal and formal coaching. While this model is rooted in supporting teachers primarily outside the classroom, the coach may spend limited time in the classroom at the teacher's request. In this case, the coach's task is to observe in the classroom for a limited time, then guide reflection with the focus on meeting the teacher's personal goal.

Model 3: *Formal Literacy Coaching* is still focused on supporting teacher goals through conferring, planning, and analyzing outside the classroom, but also includes more time spent in the classroom where the coach is involved in model teaching or co-teaching classroom strategies and providing support for differentiation. The coach in this model also provides professional development workshops combined with sustained in-classroom support.

Model 4: *Peer Coaching and Mentoring* usually refers to the partnering of beginning teachers with experienced, nurturing teachers with strong communication and teaching skills. The coach/mentor in this model assists the teacher in negotiating her way through the multiple responsibilities in the school as well as conferring on lesson planning and problem solving. This model may include model teaching by the coach or co-teaching with the coach as well as observation of lessons and focused feedback.

Model 5: *Cognitive Coaching* is more structured than most models and is built around a three-part process: a planning conference (clarification of goals and objectives, teaching strategies, and determining the data the coach is to gather), observation (teacher as researcher and coach as data collector as determined in planning conference), and a reflective post-conference (reflect on success of implementation of plan). One of the major goals of cognitive coaching is for the coach to question the teacher in such a way as to promote and stimulate the teacher's thinking.

Model 6: *Clinical Supervision* is administrative in nature, with the "coach" being in a supervisory role with responsibilities to evaluate lessons and provide feedback on teaching performance. Typically this would include a cyclical process of a preconference with the

teacher, observation in the classroom, analyzing and interpreting the observation, concluding with a post-conference with the teacher.

As we consider the various coaching models identified by Vogt and Shearer (2011), we look further at the role and responsibilities of the instructional coach.

### **Coaching Strategies to Support Teaching and Learning**

Individual school districts define the tasks and goals of instructional coaches in different ways, but for the sake of a common descriptor, we will be referring to instructional coaching as a method for providing support to teachers that features the coach coming alongside the teacher in the classroom in order to strategize together and have educational conversations. The goal is to ultimately strengthen the instructional skills of the teacher, and in turn, increase the likelihood of academic success for students.

In general, the job of a school-based instructional coach is to raise the quality of the teaching and learning in every classroom in the school by building a culture in which:

- Teaching is public and itself the focus of study among professionals
- Planning for instruction is thorough and collaborative and digs deeply into the content
- Conversation and questions about improving student results among teachers are constant, evidence-based, and non-defensive (Saphier & West, 2009)

At its core, instructional coaching involves two people – the classroom teacher and the coach. Coaches work one-on-one with teachers in their classrooms, providing guidance, training, and other resources as needed. Together, they focus on practical strategies for engaging students and improving their learning. Coaches also are often responsible for providing or arranging professional development activities for teachers in a school or district (Pennsylvania Institute for Instructional Coaching, 2008).

According to Knight (2007), evidence is emerging that coaching can improve classroom teaching and learning, but he theorizes, only if these conditions are met:

- **Sufficient time.** Coaches spend most of their time working directly with teachers on instruction; supervisors ensure that coaches are not assigned tasks such as substitute teaching or ordering supplies.
- **Research-based practices.** Coaches are highly trained in proven classroom management, content knowledge, instruction, and formative assessments, and they are skilled at communicating and demonstrating what works in classrooms.
- **Professional development.** Coaches receive ongoing training and development about their coaching functions and in instructional theory and practice.
- **Trust.** Coaches build trusting partnerships with teachers before offering them suggestions for change.
- **Collaboration.** Coaches work closely with principals to improve teaching and learning.
- **Selection.** Coaches are excellent and respected teachers who teach model lessons. They are flexible in daily duties, and are friendly and likable.
- **Evaluation.** Coaches help design rubrics and other assessments for their job evaluations; coaches never evaluate teachers on their job performance.
- **School leadership.** Coaches are a significant strategy in a comprehensive plan and commitment to raise student achievement.

Knight's list of conditions demonstrates the importance of establishing an intentional approach to planning and implementing coaching as a form of professional development.

### *Characteristics of an Effective Instructional Coach*

As our discussion of instructional coaching intimates, hiring the right instructional coach is important to successful implementation. In addition to being disciplined, organized, and professional, instructional coaches also must be flexible, likable, good listeners with great people skills, and committed to learning. Most importantly, instructional coaches have to be outstanding teachers (Knight, 2004). Hattie (2009) would describe, an outstanding teacher to be one skilled in finding ways to engage and motivate students, teach appropriate strategies in the context of various curricula domains, and constantly seeking feedback. A good instructional coach must be able to go into any classroom and provide a model lesson that responds to an individual teacher's needs (Knight, 2004a). Outstanding coaching programs begin with outstanding coaches. Hiring coaches who embody both ambition and humility helps create a successful experience (Knight, 2007).

Coaches, according to Brown (Brown et al., 2008), should be experienced, highly accomplished, and well respected educators. Coaches must have credibility with teachers and administrators, the ability to juggle several roles, and the skills needed to work one-on-one with teachers as well as to oversee a wider professional development effort in the school. Coaches are expected to have a wide skill set and a significant depth of knowledge in many areas. Coaches need a personal knowledge of best practices, but also an ability to communicate in a way that engages the teacher in a desire to try out the practices.

Characteristics of 'good' coaches have been presented by such professional organizations as the International Reading Association (IRA), which identified the following skills and expertise as essential for literacy coaches: (International Reading Association in collaboration with National Council of Teachers of English...[et, 2006).



- Understanding of school culture and students
- Familiarity with the latest research on literacy, including ELL literacy development and concepts of adult learning and motivation
- Deep knowledge of particular high school content areas
- Ability to help teachers make evidence-based current research applicable to their classrooms
- Ability to develop a comprehensive assessment program with formal and informal measure of achievement
- Ability to work with teachers individually and in groups and to provide professional development in a wide range of strategies and skills.

### ***The Role of an Instructional Coach***

As the above review of scholarship indicates, there are a plethora of perspectives on the role of an instructional coach. Following is a compilation of several lists of identified roles that may be used to determine the responsibilities of an instructional coach.

By narrowing the range of roles, coaches focus their work more intensely on those roles that have the greatest potential for impact on teaching and student learning. Following are ten such identified roles (Knight, 2009):

1. **Data Coach** – assists teachers in examining student achievement data and in using these data to design instruction that addresses student learning needs.
2. **Resource Provider** – coaches need to be knowledgeable about what is available within the school and district.
3. **Mentor** – serve the needs of new teachers or new-to-the-school teachers.

4. **Curriculum Specialist** – helps a teacher understand and use the district’s adopted curriculum, know how to break concepts into attributes, use the pacing guide, and understand the scope of concepts taught.
5. **Instructional Specialist** – help teachers choose appropriate instructional methodologies and differentiate instruction to meet students’ different learning preferences and academic readiness levels.
6. **Classroom Supporter** – works side by side with the teacher in the classroom – modeling effective teaching practices, co-teaching, and/or observing and giving feedback.
7. **Learning Facilitator** – enhances or enriches teachers’ instructional repertoire, deepens teachers’ content knowledge and expands their understanding of how students learn.
8. **School Leader** – lead reform within schools and classrooms.
9. **Catalyst for Change** – not about change for change sake, but rather for continuous improvement and fine-tuning to meet clearly articulated goals.
10. **Learner** – model learning for peers by talking about what they are learning and reading, their mistakes, their insights, and their discoveries.

The Pennsylvania High School Coaching Initiative (PAHSCI), as one example, was very purposeful and intentional in its design and implementation of instructional coaching. PAHSCI had a literacy and mathematics focus, placing one literacy and one math coach for every 600 students in 24 participating high schools. Coaches were trained to provide in-class coaching and modeling, facilitate peer collaboration, lead data-driven assessments, and promote teacher leadership. Following are their design steps for the initiative:

- Define the program components so that all participants and stakeholders are aware of program goals, expectations, services, and anticipated outcomes;
- Recruit and hire highly trained individuals to become coaches and mentors;
- Train the coaches and mentors in content areas and interpersonal skill sets that are aligned with school and district improvement plans as well as the goals of PAHSCI;
- Integrate coaching and mentoring with existing school and district initiatives;
- Include school and district leaders as participants in the training to empower them to be *informed* supporters and nurturers of coaches and teachers;
- Create district- and school-based leadership teams to design, implement, and monitor PAHSCI action plans aligned with state standards and district goals;
- Provide ongoing opportunities for data-driven decision making, reflection, and reviewing the outcomes from PAHSCI implementation *across* participating schools and districts;
- Create a pipeline of school, district, and state educational leaders well-equipped to move up a career ladder; and finally,
- Contribute to shaping a statewide model of coaching (Brown et al., 2008).

Roles and expectations for PAHSCI were clearly identified and both short and long-term outcomes were determined. Mentors were provided for the coaches and played a key role in helping coaches develop their coaching skills, functioning like a coach for the coaches. Key aspects provided structure for the coaches' role by determining that the coaches would:

- Spend the majority of their time working in classrooms with teachers
- Facilitate teacher study groups and other forms of professional development

- Be part of the school leadership team and thereby be connected to the process of whole school change
- Have deep content knowledge and also be able to work with teachers across disciplines
- Play a lead role in analyzing student data and in supporting teachers in using this data for instructional planning
- Work collaboratively in assigned teams rather than in isolation (Brown et al., 2008)

Research was conducted during the three-year initiative by visiting classrooms and using a Classroom Visitation Rubric designed to assess indicators of both teacher practices and student engagement. From the executive summary of the Year Three Report on PAHSCI, they highlighted teachers and coaches building trust and collaboration, and demonstrating the ability to make substantive changes in their own instructional practices by placing student engagement and achievement at the center of the learning (Brown et al., 2008).

### ***Professional Development and Strategies for Instructional Coaches***

One of the biggest obstacles to institutions interested in coaching is identifying mechanisms to support the professional development of the coaches themselves (Burkins & Ritchie, 2007). Even though coaches are already master teachers, professional development is essential as they switch their focus from students to teachers and work toward becoming proficient in this new role.

The key to a successful coaching program is a trusting relationship between teachers and coaches, but training and support for administrators are vital as well. Coaching is confidential, non-evaluative, and supportive. Coaches work one-on-one with teachers on

specific teaching strategies or problems, focusing on practical changes they can make in their classrooms. This ongoing one-on-one work is supplemented by other professional development activities, and skillful mentors often help support and extend the work of coaches (Pennsylvania Institute for Instructional Coaching, 2008).

Knight proposes seven principles as the theoretical foundation for instructional coaching: (Knight, 2007)

- ***Equality*** – believing the people we collaborate with are no less important than us or anyone else, and that consequently their ideas, thoughts, and opinions are no less important than our own.
- ***Choice*** – believing that choices lie at the heart of professional practice, and that when we take away others’ choices, we treat them as if they are not professionals. We have found that when we offer others choices, we actually increase the likelihood that they will embrace what we have to offer. Taking away choice is a bona fide recipe for resistance.
- ***Voice*** – believing that a part of learning is helping people find the words they need to say what matters to them. Another important part of voice is making it possible for others to openly communicate what they think.
- ***Dialogue*** – believing in the importance of conversations that enable people to think together.
- ***Reflection*** – believing that learning can be enhanced when we have numerous opportunities to consider how what we are learning might impact what we have done in the past, what we are doing now, and what we will be doing in the future.

- ***Praxis*** – believing that learning is most meaningful when we reflect and recreate knowledge so that we can use it in our personal or professional lives.
- ***Reciprocity*** – believing that every learning experience we create provides as much of a chance for us to learn as it does for our learning partners.

Instructional coaches need to identify the teaching practices, learning strategies, tools and other interventions that have the greatest likelihood of helping students. Instructional coaches affiliated with the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning use the Big Four as a framework for organizing interventions and providing focus to coaching practice. Focusing on the Big Four is about providing focus to instructional coaching by considering how to manage ***behavior***, by enhancing ***content knowledge***, by improving ***direct instruction***, and by implementing ***formative assessment***. (Knight, 2009).

Coaching conversations are an integral part of the coach/teacher partnership. Instructional coaches believe in others' abilities to grow and excel and they communicate through their coaching conversations that they see themselves as partners – not bosses. Coaching conversations encourage others to be reflective and exercise responsibility. (Reilly, 2010).

The focus in coaching conversations is on the teacher and fosters the deep reflection necessary to establish new thinking patterns. Long-term change through coaching conversation requires ongoing, thoughtful, and intentional practice. Committed listening is foundational to all coaching conversations. When a coach is focused on listening to a teacher, she opens the door to gaining clarity about issues and understanding the perceptions

and needs of the teacher. Everyone knows when he/she is speaking with a committed listener. Listening without any obligation to act allows the listener to hear what the other person is saying rather than formulating her/his next response (Reilly, 2010). For example, as the teacher describes the struggle to communicate instructions to a beginning ELL student, the coach gives full attention to the teacher, demonstrated through eye contact and nodding appropriately in response to what is being said, with no interjection of ideas and without interruption. Focused listening on the part of the coach allows for better understanding of the concern and the teacher can feel that she/he has been heard. It sets the stage for reflective conversation to ensue.

### ***Gentle Warnings***

Despite the apparent promise and newfound popularity of instructional coaching, school leaders are cautioned to think carefully before hopping on the coaching bandwagon (Russo, 2004). Educators should be clear about their goals and expectations before making an investment in any type of coaching initiative. Implementing an instructional coaching program requires considerable resources from a school district including finding enough coaches without draining schools of their most successful teachers, training and support for coaches, securing release time and buy-in from the teachers, the issue of funding, and a number of cultural challenges at the building level (Russo, 2004)

Based on a review of research and interviews, frequently the job of an instructional coach is poorly defined and many times invented “on the fly”. Many instructional coaches may feel isolated and unclear about expectations for their job. Alan Richard uses the phrase “When school-based staff developers survive their own induction period . . .” (page 2) to indicate the potential challenge. He goes on to describe the fate of this emerging model of

coaching as being dependent largely on the willingness of district and school leaders to devote the time and resources needed to transform a promising but often poorly focused school improvement tactic into a coherent, well-supported school reform strategy (Richard, 2003).

### **Research-Based Instructional Strategies that Support English Language Learners**

My thesis question assumes that there is benefit in using research-based instructional strategies in linguistically diverse classrooms. This assumption is based in a large body of literature on the value of research-based strategies. *Classroom Instruction that Works* (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001), for example, offers research to support nine categories of instructional strategies that are believed to assist in maximizing student learning, and *Classroom Instruction that Works with English Language Learners* (Hill & Flynn, 2006) focuses on the same nine categories, with adaptations for English Language Learners. The partnering of these two resources is a strong support for working with classroom teachers on instructional strategies that support all students.

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) conducted a study in which McREL staff reviewed over 100 studies on instruction, covering a period of more than 30 years, to identify strategies with a high probability of enhancing student achievement for all students, grade levels, and content subject areas. McREL reported its findings in terms of effect size: the increase or decrease in achievement of the experimental group when using a particular strategy. Effect size can be interpreted in terms of percentile gains. McREL identified the following nine categories of strategies that have a high probability of enhancing student achievement through meta-analysis:



1. **Identifying Similarities and Differences** enhances students' understanding of and ability to use knowledge by engaging them in mental processes that involve identifying the way items are alike and different.
2. **Summarizing and Note Taking** increases students' ability to synthesize information and organize it in a way that captures the main ideas and supporting details.
3. **Reinforcing Effort and Providing Recognition** enhances students' understanding of the relationship between effort and achievement by addressing students' attitudes and beliefs about learning; provides students with rewards or praise for their accomplishments related to the attainment of a goal.
4. **Homework and Practice** extends the learning opportunities for students to practice, review, and apply knowledge; increases students' ability to reach the expected level of proficiency for a skill or process.
5. **Nonlinguistic Representations** enhance students' ability to represent and elaborate on knowledge and using mental images.
6. **Cooperative Learning** provides students with opportunities to interact with each other in groups in ways that enhance their learning.
7. **Setting Objectives and Providing Feedback** provides students a direction for learning and information about how well they are performing relative to a particular learning goal so that they can improve their performance; provides students information about how well they are performing relative to a particular learning goal so that they can improve their performance.

8. **Generating and Testing Hypotheses** enhances students' understanding of and ability to use knowledge by engaging them in mental processes that involve making and testing hypotheses.
9. **Cues, Questions, and Advance Organizers** enhances students' ability to retrieve, use, and organize what they already know about a topic.

Appendix A displays the meta-analysis results on the nine categories of instructional strategies as determined through the research of McREL (Hill & Flynn, 2008). Appendix B is a chart of the categories of instructional strategies, which includes a definition, classroom recommendations, and ELL applications. This chart was developed through collaborative contributions from teachers across Nebraska, using as resources *Classroom Instruction that Works* (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001) and *Classroom Instruction that Works with English Language Learners* (Hill & Flynn, 2006) as well as personal classroom experience.

### **ELL Instructional Coaches in Aster Public Schools - Connection to Research**

The four ELL instructional coaches first hired in 2008 by Aster Public Schools (the first year of the district's use of an ELL instructional coaching program) were tasked to spend the year studying and researching about coaching as well as following up on the academic success of advanced ELL students who were in mainstream classes without direct ELL instruction. If concerns were expressed in teacher/coach conversations, the coach may observe, and/or work with the student to identify the needs and then consult with the classroom teacher regarding language acquisition strategies that would help support the student.

The second and third years, 2009-11, the school district hired Jim Knight, a research associate at the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning, to provide training for

all content area instructional coaches in the district through six all day training sessions over a two year period. The ELL instructional coaches reported that they benefited significantly from the research-based training, and continued to improve in the implementation of coaching strategies, including the seven principles Knight proposes as the theoretical foundation for instructional coaching (Knight, 2007) referred to on pages 14 and 15 of the literature review.

Aster Public School's decision to provide this extensive training for instructional coaches directly supports the recommendation by the Pennsylvania High School Coaching Initiative (Brown et al., 2008) and Burkins and Ritchie (2007) regarding the importance of professional development for improving coaching skills and thereby influencing teacher learning and effectiveness in the classroom. The research-based training, in my experience as the district's ELL secondary coordinator and subsequently my experience as an ELL coach, has provided the ELL instructional coaches with a framework for effective coaching.

### **Aster Public Schools ELL Instructional Coaching Model**

Referring back to Vogt and Shearer's (2011) identified coaching models, the ELL instructional coaching model in Aster Public Schools most closely resembles model 3, *Formal Literacy Coaching*. The summary statement formulated to describe this model could serve as an excellent description of the ELL instructional coach. Restated, the ELL instructional coach is focused on supporting teacher goals for English language learners through conferring, planning, and analyzing outside the classroom, but also includes time spent in the classroom where the coach is involved in model teaching or co-teaching classroom strategies and providing support for differentiation for English language learners.

The ELL instructional coach also provides professional development workshops combined with sustained in-classroom support.

### **Conclusion**

As this review of research illustrates, implementation of effective coaching strategies has the potential to produce significant outcomes for students, teachers, and districts, and, as a next step, it is critically important to identify coaching strategies that are most effective in increasing teachers' use of research-based instructional strategies which support learning for English language learners. We therefore arrive at the thesis question: What instructional coaching strategies are effective for increasing teachers' use of research-based instructional strategies in linguistically diverse classrooms?

## **The Study**

### **ELL Instructional Coaches in Aster Public Schools**

(All names and locations are pseudonyms.)

Since the 2008-09 school year, one professional development initiative in our district is the implementation of an ELL instructional coaching model. In this model ELL coaches are tasked to support teachers who have English language learners in their general education classroom. The coaches' assignment is to assist teachers in acquiring skills for adapting curriculum and implementing instructional strategies that meet the language acquisition needs of ELLs as they acquire content knowledge. In addition, coaches provide cultural information that assists teachers in becoming culturally responsive in their teaching, thereby make learning more appropriate and effective for diverse students through using cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and various performance styles.

The ELL instructional coach's role is unique as compared to coaches supporting other content areas including math, literacy, technology, and media in that ELL coaching assignments transcend all grade levels and content areas. ELL coaches need to be able to initiate conversation and build bridges with teachers in a variety of contexts and content areas. Assignments of coaches are made to schools in the district; coaches' contact and connection with classroom teachers result from the identification of ELL students in the classroom. Principals and teachers are informed of the coach's availability and role in providing support as the educators strive to meet the educational needs of ELL students.

The coaching partnership is designed to be a voluntary commitment to a collaborative effort between the teacher and the coach. There are situations, however, where teachers are "strongly encouraged" or even required to work with an instructional coach due to poor performance or inexperience with ELLs. This required participation does not set up the ideal

environment for teacher learning and implementation. In some cases, however, the required collaboration has proven to affect positive change in classroom practice, while in others has not had the desired effect.

In the 2010-11 school year there were approximately 2,261 ELL students in 55 schools speaking 49 different languages, making the challenge great with regard to meeting the diversity of needs. ELL centers in the district include 13 elementary schools, 2 middle schools and 2 high schools, with a transition process in place for all elementary students to ultimately receive ELL services in their neighborhood schools.

### **Participants**

To gather data for my research, I chose to conduct interviews with the four ELL instructional coaches in Aster Public Schools (all names and locations are pseudonyms). Each coach was contacted in person and invited to participate in a personal interview format. All four coaches agreed to participate in the study.

Following are profiles of the four ELL instructional coaches:

- **Brooke** taught pre-school for 3 years at an elementary school, during which time her classroom included many ELL students. She then moved to a different elementary school where she taught kindergarten and first grade ELL students for 5 years, serving 4½ years as ELL team leader. At the time of the study, she had just completed her first year as an ELL instructional coach serving 12 elementary schools.
- **Amber** taught ELL for 16 years in two Aster middle schools, and served as ELL team leader for 14 of those years before moving to the position of ELL instructional coach in the 2008-09 school year. She has been working in 5 middle schools and 3 high schools across the district in her role as coach.

- **Clara** taught ELL at three Aster elementary schools for a total of 13 years, serving 3 years as team leader. The 2010-11 school year was her first year as an ELL instructional coach serving 14 elementary schools.
- **Maggie** taught ELL at two Aster elementary schools for a total of 12 years before moving into the coaching position in the 2008-09 school year. She has served 11 elementary schools during her tenure as ELL instructional coach.

### **Interview Development**

In preparing for the interview, I crafted questions that were designed to elicit responses that would identify specific coaching strategies that had been implemented, and feedback on the effectiveness of the strategies. I provided a conversational format in which the coach was invited to describe various interactions and partnership roles they had experienced with classroom teachers, along with enumerating intentional strategies implemented. The interview questions began and ended with the guiding question, “What coaching strategies have you found to be most effective for increasing teachers’ use of research-based instructional strategies for ELLs?” A copy of the questions was provided to each participant on May 4, 2011, two weeks in advance of the first interview. Please see Appendix C for the interview questions.

### **Procedure**

The individual interviews were conducted in a conference room at Edgar Middle School and lasted approximately one hour each. The four interviews were scheduled and conducted between May 18 and May 25, 2011.

In the interview, the coach and I were seated in comfortable chairs at a table in a conference room where I had my laptop set up to record our conversation using Photo Booth. The coaches all preferred not to be videotaped, which was acceptable because my goal was to record what they said, so Photo Booth was used only to record the audio of our conversations.

I began the interview by extending my thanks for their willingness to participate in the study and then posed the guiding question, “What coaching strategies have you found to be most effective for increasing teachers’ use of research-based instructional strategies for ELLs?” Using their response as a lead, I continued the interview, attempting to include all of the interview questions while using a natural, conversational style as opposed to a numbered list of questions asked sequentially. I completed the interview by posing the guiding question once more and asking if there was anything else they would like to add. Following the interview, I thanked them once more for sharing their expertise and their time. Each interview took approximately one hour.

Following the completion of the interviews, I transcribed the four hours of interviews. Using the typed interviews, I reviewed the information, highlighting any coaching strategies mentioned by name along with any strategies that emerged through their descriptions. I compiled a list of the identified strategies and then began to look at verbs used in participants’ descriptions to isolate behaviors and actions of the coaches. After reviewing the identified strategies and actions, I began looking for themes and was able to group the strategies into four major themes – Developing Partnerships, Identifying Student and Teacher Needs, Practical Application, and The Role of Professional Development.



The following chart demonstrates the organization of data by themes and provides examples of strategies listed and the actions involved.

Themes	Strategies	Action Verbs
<b>Developing Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of self as coach</li> <li>• Describing ELL coaching role</li> <li>• Scheduling meeting times for conversation</li> <li>• Engaging in conversation</li> <li>• Being trustworthy</li> <li>• Following through</li> <li>• Being a good listener</li> <li>• Being reflective and thoughtful</li> <li>• Being visible and available</li> <li>• Providing ELL information</li> <li>• Offering cultural information</li> <li>• Inspiring teachers to say, “I want to learn.”</li> <li>• Being present</li> <li>• Making contact – e-mail, phone, face-to-face</li> <li>• Affirming and encouraging</li> <li>• Persisting</li> <li>• Gaining support from the administration</li> <li>• Supporting ELL and general education teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introducing</li> <li>• Describing</li> <li>• Providing</li> <li>• Building</li> <li>• Engaging</li> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• Reflecting</li> <li>• Providing</li> <li>• Offering</li> <li>• Inspiring</li> <li>• Contacting</li> <li>• Following</li> <li>• Affirming</li> <li>• Encouraging</li> <li>• Persisting</li> <li>• Gaining</li> <li>• Supporting</li> </ul>
<b>Identifying Student and Teacher Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation and feedback</li> <li>• Brainstorming with teacher</li> <li>• Providing information on the ELL student</li> <li>• Conducting teacher survey to identify needs</li> <li>• Reviewing student data</li> <li>• Drawing up a plan</li> <li>• Questioning to gather information</li> <li>• Identifying priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing</li> <li>• Brainstorming</li> <li>• Providing</li> <li>• Surveying</li> <li>• Identifying</li> <li>• Reviewing</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Questioning</li> </ul>
<b>Practical Application</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom observation</li> <li>• Planning together</li> <li>• Co-teaching</li> <li>• Modeling a lesson</li> <li>• Repeated modeling over time</li> <li>• Work with the students to get to the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Co-teaching</li> <li>• Modeling</li> <li>• Working</li> <li>• Providing</li> <li>• Narrowing</li> </ul>

	<p>teacher . . . then work with the teacher to get to the students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing resources – PowerPoint, flash cards, websites, sentence frames, etc.</li> <li>• Narrowing the focus to reach small successes</li> <li>• Being explicit in your descriptions</li> <li>• Adjusting and accommodating</li> <li>• Sharing research-based strategies</li> <li>• Generating ideas</li> <li>• Releasing for independence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describing</li> <li>• Adjusting</li> <li>• Accommodating</li> <li>• Sharing</li> <li>• Generating</li> <li>• Releasing</li> </ul>
<b>The Role of Professional Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading and studying</li> <li>• Attending professional development</li> <li>• Teaching professional development</li> <li>• Developing courses</li> <li>• Defining purpose and setting goals</li> <li>• Making connections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Studying</li> <li>• Attending</li> <li>• Presenting</li> <li>• Teaching</li> <li>• Developing</li> <li>• Defining</li> <li>• Making</li> </ul>

Completing the identification of the four themes, I reviewed each interview and created a document for each theme then cut and pasted quotes from each coach into the respective theme. It was then a matter of piecing the quotes together, much like assembling the pieces of a quilt, to create an expression of their statements in an organized whole.

## Findings

The four themes that developed from the interviews, as outlined in the previous table, will individually be addressed in the findings with supporting quotes from the interview participants.

### Developing Partnerships

This section talks about the importance of coaches developing trusting relationships with teachers. As noted in the review of literature, “Instructional coaches believe in others’ abilities to grow and excel and they communicate through their coaching conversations that they see themselves as partners – not bosses. Coaching conversations encourage others to be reflective and exercise responsibility.” (Reilly, 2010) The interview data supports this idea of partnership and demonstrates the importance of developing good partnerships, describes the process of enrolling teachers and administrators in the partnership, and gives examples of both strong and challenging partnerships.

The following chart is a compilation of coaching strategies and action verbs described by participants in their interviews that support the theme of Developing Partnerships.

Theme	Coaching Strategy	Action Verbs
<b>Developing Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of self as coach</li> <li>• Describing ELL coaching role</li> <li>• Scheduling meeting times for conversation</li> <li>• Engaging in conversation</li> <li>• Being trustworthy</li> <li>• Following through</li> <li>• Being a good listener</li> <li>• Being reflective and thoughtful</li> <li>• Being visible and available</li> <li>• Providing ELL information</li> <li>• Offering cultural information</li> <li>• Inspiring teachers to say, “I want to learn.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introducing</li> <li>• Describing</li> <li>• Providing</li> <li>• Building</li> <li>• Engaging</li> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• Reflecting</li> <li>• Providing</li> <li>• Offering</li> <li>• Inspiring</li> <li>• Contacting</li> <li>• Following</li> <li>• Affirming</li> <li>• Encouraging</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being present</li> <li>• Making contact – e-mail, phone, face-to-face</li> <li>• Affirming and encouraging</li> <li>• Persisting</li> <li>• Gaining support from the administration</li> <li>• Supporting ELL and general education teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persisting</li> <li>• Gaining</li> <li>• Supporting</li> </ul>
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All research participants identified developing good partnerships as the key element to coaching being an effective strategy for professional development. Maggie, as an example, summarized partnership as, “. . . having that trusting relationship, being a listener, and enrolling [teachers] in the [learning] process, being visible and available with information.” Clara seconded, “Partnership is being able to work with somebody in a true collaboration . . . If I can just add one thing to a teacher’s structure that’s going to be helpful, I think that’s been a successful partnership.”

The manner in which a coach initiates contact with teachers was identified by participants as critical in establishing a positive relationship. As a means of initial introduction, Amber shares, “Usually I introduce myself through an e-mail stating, ‘The reason that I’m contacting you is because this is my role. I would love to set up a time. What works best for you?’” She approaches working with general education teachers in a couple of ways, depending on the ELL students in their classroom. When working with teachers who have students who are more proficient in English, Amber says, “I really come in and offer assistance with cultural information and any kind of background information. I tell them I’d be happy to brainstorm with them if they’re seeing any kind of language concerns, but I feel that it is more just checking in.” When meeting with teachers who have students who are more limited in their English language skills, Amber notes, “I usually talk a little bit about the differences between a learner who is a native English speaker and one who

is an ELL student. The teachers then tend to ask, ‘What kind of things can I do to help my ELL student to understand my content?’ And that’s usually when I’ll offer to come and observe and offer any suggestions.”

In the initial contact with a teacher, participants agreed that it was helpful to have information available on the ELL student(s) in the classroom. Information may include cultural background, previous schools attended, performance on previous assessments, ELL language proficiency level, and an outline of what teachers may expect regarding student abilities and skills. The coach may also share specific background information about a student, as demonstrated by Brooke’s modeled conversation, “Last year I worked with this student’s teacher and we noticed that his needs were *this*, and we also saw him struggle with *X, Y and Z*, and these are the strategies that were helpful.” or “Last year it was really tough for her to do *this*. Is that still a problem, or is she doing okay with that?”

As well as providing and gathering information about the students, the participants indicated the importance of gathering information about the teachers with whom they were working. Clara indicated, “I always make sure to ask if they have worked with ELL students before, and then work from their knowledge base.” Coaches found that this demonstrated equality and respect for the educator and was key in partnership building.

Building partnerships with administrators was also found to be an essential component in coaching success. In the first year of her position as a coach, Brooke states, “When I first meet with principals in the fall, I didn’t know what I was talking about. I didn’t know what to tell them I could do. I didn’t know what I was going to do. I didn’t know what I was supposed to do. I had a huge learning curve! I had to start from scratch and figure this out!” However, knowing what she knows now and planning for next year, Brooke says,

“I want to approach principals with questions like:

- What are your plans for your building?
- What would you like to see me do?
- What are some things that you see building-wide that your ELL kids are struggling with?
- Is there a grade level where kids have more trouble than others? For example, 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade is a big jump in academic content.
- Would it be helpful to ask to join those teachers in PLC?
- Would it be helpful if I set some goals with them?
- What are things I can do for your building as a whole?
- Would you be interested in me coming and doing a flex session for the staff?

I need to be talking more specifically about what their building needs are rather than just scatter shot with the teachers who happen to enroll with me. Now that I feel like I have been able to define my role better, I can define myself in buildings. I feel a lot more knowledgeable than I was last August.”

Enrolling an administrator in the partnership sets the tone for effective partnerships with teachers in the building.

Maggie, supporting the need for developing relationships with administrators, describes a positive partnership with an administrator as one where the principal “. . . asked a lot of questions because she wants to make a difference for her kids. She knows that there are a lot more ELL kids coming to her building [in the future] so she wants to be prepared. A

couple of her teachers came to several staff developments and one of her teachers came to ISELL [Instructional Strategies for ELLs staff development course] and when they would have staff meetings she [the teacher] would mention things that she was learning in ISELL. So then she [the principal] invited me to present at a staff meeting.”

All participants confirmed that partnership building is a process and takes time, as demonstrated in Brooke’s experience. “We had done [co-taught] these lessons since October and when we got to December or January, this same teacher had grown to trust me enough that she asked me if I would come in and model a guided reading lesson and not just co-teach . . . it was a slow building of trust. . . . When it becomes more of a partnership with another person, then it starts to seem to them like it isn’t just one more thing they have to do, and they don’t just ask for a list of strategies but instead have a desire to learn more about how to shift their thinking to language acquisition, and that’s when it’s been really successful.”

A common occurrence among all coaches was experiencing positive partnerships as well as challenging partnerships. Maggie describes a challenging partnership. Maggie had been working individually with an ELL student on his writing to determine his needs. “The teacher came over and said, ‘I really like what you’re doing with him. Do you think you could do that with the whole class?’ I said, ‘Yes, that will be great!’ I did it once and then she asked me to do it again, and then she said, ‘How about every Tuesday and Thursday, you come and teach writing class?’ I thought it would be like a working partnership, but really I just came and taught the class for two days a week for about a month – not as a partnership - I just taught the class. I thought, ‘Maybe she will catch on to some things.’ But she would just sit at her desk. I think I should have been more aggressive in saying, ‘Okay let’s do this

next one together and I'll do this part and maybe you can do this part.' "I felt like I spent a lot of time there [with the teacher] and I don't think I affected her teaching practices at all."

Clara, on the other hand, describes a positive partnership-building experience with a classroom teacher at an elementary school. "I introduced myself and then talked about the student in her class saying, 'This is what I know about this ELL student in your classroom. What can you tell me about her?' The teacher responded with, 'I'm noticing that she's having difficulty with this, this, and this.'" This informed further conversation and finally Clara's response, "What's the most important thing you want to work on right now? We could work on all these things, but I think we just need to hone in on one thing." The teacher made a choice and Clara reports, "We started with math and I observed her [the student] in the math class and used that as an opportunity to diagnostically look at her [the student's] day at math time and see how she was interacting with the information and peers and making sense of things." After observing, Clara was able to go back and report, "Here are some really good things that I'm noticing, and it looks like she's made a lot of friends. It looks like she's attempting to do things and she's trying to follow in class, but she's very quiet. Are there ways that we can help encourage her rehearsal of language, her rehearsal of concepts?" This was a positive first step in the partnership development. Through following up later with an e-mail, Clara was invited back into the classroom once more with an opportunity to review needs and in turn was invited to model a three-day guided reading lesson. "The teacher took notes and then we conversed over e-mail because time was so hard to schedule with this teacher. After the e-mail, she started to try some of the strategies she saw [in the model]. Any time I would see her she would be like, 'Hey, I'm trying this. I'm trying that



word splash. It's great!' Or 'I'm still doing this.'" By January, Clara had been pulled back into the classroom repeatedly to work on a variety of strategies that supported student needs.

Brooke provides a summary of the challenges of developing partnerships and the desire to affect change. "There are some teachers that, no matter what your best efforts are, they don't want to change and they don't want anybody in there telling them otherwise . . . I want to go where I can create change. What are the things that I have power over? Those are the only things I can control. If I can't help change your practices, what can I be effective with? Where can I put myself to be most effective?"

Completing our look at Developing Partnerships, we move on to Identifying Student and Teacher Needs. This is a move from initial connections and relationship building to specifically identifying language acquisition needs of students and in turn identifying teacher needs with regard to implementing effective instructional strategies.

### **Identifying Student and Teacher Needs**

This section talks about the importance of effectively identifying student and teacher needs as key in the process of affecting change in the classroom. In this section we will take a look at coaching strategies that aid in the identification of student needs and assist the teacher in recognizing the importance of adapting instruction to meet those needs.

The following chart represents the coaching strategies and action verbs described by participants in their interviews that affirm the importance of identifying student and teacher needs as part of a successful coaching partnership.

Theme	Coaching Strategy	Action Verbs
<b>Identifying student and teacher needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observation and feedback</li> <li>• Brainstorming with teacher</li> <li>• Providing information on the ELL student</li> <li>• Conducting teacher survey to identify needs</li> <li>• Reviewing student data</li> <li>• Drawing up a plan</li> <li>• Questioning to gather information</li> <li>• Identifying priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working</li> <li>• Observing</li> <li>• Brainstorming</li> <li>• Providing</li> <li>• Surveying</li> <li>• Identifying</li> <li>• Reviewing</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Questioning</li> </ul>

All interview participants agreed that it is critical that the classroom teacher recognize the unique instructional needs of ELL students. Brooke states, “Teachers need to be able to see the needs of the ELL student and recognize their own need for support in order to show any interest in a coaching partnership.” It is the responsibility of the coach to assist in that recognition through providing information about the student and posing questions that help the teacher recognize the student’s needs as well as their own need for support in language acquisition strategies. Brooke continues, “I want to help teachers look really carefully at student data and the performance of what these kids are actually doing in their classroom. A lot of the comments I get from teachers are, ‘Oh, he’s a really good kid. No I don’t think we’re having any troubles.’ But then, if you can say, ‘Can you show me how they’re doing on their theme tests? Can you show me how they are doing on the NESAP practice? What’s their comprehension like? Are they reading on grade level?’ If I can help them slow down and look at the student’s actual performance, then that creates the need for them to do something different and then that’s where my ‘in’ is.” Continuing with that thought, Clara states, “Sometimes I’ve learned to start sharing traits of what they might be seeing that could be language acquisition-based and that seems to have helped because then all of a sudden it’s like, ‘Oh, wait a minute. Yeah, they do do that.’ or, ‘Yeah, I do see that.’ And maybe they

don't actually see anything at that time, but I have had people contact me later and say, 'You know I think we do need some help.'"

Once the teacher and coach have identified the areas of need, it is at that point that the coach is able to offer instructional support. Brooke provides an illustration. "When I can create a moment for us to look over student data together and then talk about where to go from there, it becomes more about the student and less about the teacher. If I'm talking about how the student is doing and not about what the teacher is doing or not doing, then it feels like there is a shift in their thinking. After an observation I might say, 'Your teaching is very effective for general education students. This ELL student, however, comes with unique needs and that's something that I happen to be able to speak to. We could talk about how you might adapt your general education curriculum and what extra things you could layer on top that would meet the extra needs of this particular student while working for your whole group.' Then it becomes more about meeting the student's needs and less about their teaching specifically, which feels safer for them to be able to talk about."

It is critical for coaches to be able to craft good questions that assist teachers in recognizing student needs. Clara notes, "I start asking questions about content areas and what they [ELL students] already know about the content areas. How are they doing in reading? What are you noticing in math? When you ask them questions, are they able to answer coherently? Do you notice if are they talking a lot in class or are they pretty quiet? Do they have friends? And there is a big one that I like to ask – Socially how are they doing?"

Engaging teachers in conversation to identify student concerns can be as simple as asking where the teacher sees the students struggling. In response this question, one teacher pulled out the common math assessments (CMAs), and Brooke describes, "We discovered

that the language on the CMAs was really tripping them up. I came in and I modeled for a few weeks and then I suggested that we could plan a few more lessons where the teacher and I were really sharing the floor [co-teaching]. After the co-teaching we talked one more time and then I watched her do it [teach the lesson].” Reviewing student data is a powerful tool for identifying student needs, and offers a concrete foundation from which to plan instruction. It also offers opportunity for conversation that is directed toward the needs of students rather than assessment of a teacher’s instructional skills.

Challenging teachers to think differently about the language acquisition needs of students can be difficult. Amber reflects, “How do you get teachers to ask the questions – ‘Is there something I can learn? Is there something I need to change?’” In attempting to encourage these questions, Amber has invited teachers to participate in a survey that includes thoughtful questions such as, “How comfortable do you feel having an ELL student in your classroom? How comfortable are you with language acquisition practices? How comfortable are you with building vocabulary, using visuals, doing any kind of cooperative learning in your class? How comfortable are you with setting language objectives as well as content objectives, providing feedback, and all of the strategies from the book, *Classroom Instruction that Works with English Language Learners*. Then you can also give them an opportunity to request assistance.” A survey can be a non-threatening way to identify needs and indicate the need for support.

A coach needs to be skilled at identifying student and teacher needs and engaging teachers in educational conversations that stimulate interest in pursuing new strategies and/or adapting current strategies. Once the teacher recognizes the need and has a desire to learn, the practical applications in the next section come into play.

## Practical Applications

This section will demonstrate the applied practices of partnering with teachers. As we look at these practical applications, consider that the coach has already built a relationship with the teacher, identified the needs of students, and determined the instructional strategies that may be effective in supporting student learning. In this section you will hear coaches' stories of hands-on examples of working with classroom teachers. For the sake of definition, the term "model" describes a lesson in which the coach prepares and delivers the instruction, allowing opportunity for the classroom teacher to observe and take notes. The model lesson is usually followed up with a conversation between the teacher and coach regarding what was observed, along with plans for future lessons.

Themes	Coaching Strategy	Action Verbs
<b>Practical Application</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom observation</li> <li>• Planning together</li> <li>• Co-teaching</li> <li>• Modeling a lesson</li> <li>• Repeated modeling over time</li> <li>• Work with the students to get to the teacher . . . then work with the teacher to get to the students</li> <li>• Providing resources – PowerPoint, flash cards, websites, sentence frames, etc.</li> <li>• Narrowing the focus to reach small successes</li> <li>• Being explicit in your descriptions</li> <li>• Adjusting and accommodating</li> <li>• Share research-based strategies</li> <li>• Generating ideas</li> <li>• Releasing for independence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing</li> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Co-teaching</li> <li>• Modeling</li> <li>• Working</li> <li>• Providing</li> <li>• Narrowing</li> <li>• Describing</li> <li>• Adjusting</li> <li>• Accommodating</li> <li>• Sharing</li> <li>• Generating</li> <li>• Releasing</li> </ul>

Knowing the importance of being intentional in an observation, Amber describes her approach. "One of the things I'm watching for during an observation is the teacher's instruction. I'm looking at what kinds of things are beneficial for the students and what the

teacher could do that would be more beneficial for the students. Are they using visuals? Are they using gestures? How are they breaking down the vocabulary? How are they scaffolding their directions? What are they asking the students to do? I also look at student engagement. That gives me an indication as to whether they [the students] are getting what they need to be getting. I also look around at the layout of the classroom. What are the practices? What are the routines that the students know? Do they know what they are to do when they come in? Do they know what to do if they need help with something?" The gathering of this observation data can provide information for positive affirmation of the teacher and their current practices, and can also assist in the identification of topics for further educational conversation and recommendations for adapted or added strategies.

Brooke offered an example of what may happen when a classroom observation does not occur before delivering a model lesson. "When you go into these classrooms, you don't know those kids and you don't know what you're getting yourself into. I discovered that the students in this particular class had no idea how to work in cooperative learning structures and they had very limited experiences working with manipulatives. The kids didn't know how to manage that and it was a huge mess. The first mistake I made was that I didn't observe in her classroom [before the model teaching]. Looking back now, I would first go in and observe in the classroom and then say to the teacher, 'One of the things I'd like them to do is more cooperative learning and one of the things I would like us to add is opportunities to practice language. Let's use sentence frames and do some of those types of things. Can your class do this? Have you done this in the past? How much pre-teaching do I need to do for these kids?'" Brooke's experience exemplifies the importance of the classroom

observation being part of building the partnership through gaining insight and understanding of the classroom setting.

Approaching the teacher in a positive manner while communicating respect and offering support is crucial to gaining a welcome response to participate in the classroom. Clara describes an approach that she found to be effective. “I might say [to the teacher], ‘I have some ideas about how we might help this student or these students. Would you mind if I showed them to you?’ And then through that [modeling the strategy], I am able to facilitate conversation afterwards because the teacher actually had an opportunity to see her kids in action and see her classroom from a different perspective. I actually had three or four teachers who made a comment after watching a model lesson saying, ‘Wow, the kids were engaged!’ I also had comments of, ‘If I gained nothing else from this experience, it was really interesting to watch my kids as learners.’ Even at the very basic level, teachers get a chance to see their class from a different perspective. I think modeling and follow through conversations have the most impact. That’s when they [classroom teachers] can actually see the strategies in practice.” Showing as well as telling provides the learning structure for teachers to gain new insight about their students and consider alternative or additional practices in their classroom because they have seen it applied with their own students.

Sometimes a coach will first work with the ELL student in order to reach the teacher with strategies. Clara notes, “Direct work with the student has not ever been anything that is long-term because my purpose and intent for doing it is to communicate with the teacher and create a forum for how we could discuss things. After working with the student I might say [to the teacher], ‘Well, this is what I tried and I think it was effective, but it’s going to need to be practiced and I can’t be here every day, so maybe it’s something that you could

continue. Would you mind doing that?” In an indirect manner, Clara has been able to communicate strategies that may prove to be effective for the student, and the teacher also has an opportunity to practice the strategy and potentially transfer that to other students as well. This scenario would be an example of working with the students to get to the teacher, which has the potential to benefit all students.”

Brooke shares the story of her partnership with a teacher with whom she has already built a trusting relationship and made an observation in the classroom. She reports, “After being in the classroom a few times and modeling a couple of lessons, the teacher and I met again and we talked about the fact that the students were having a really hard time in math with problem solving in tables. So I said, ‘Part of this is just them filtering through all this information. What [information] do they really need?’ And so the teacher actually came up with the idea. She said it would be nice if we could have it in a PowerPoint or something where you could take some of the information away. And I said, ‘Oh, I can do that. I’ll make that.’ So I created one [PowerPoint] and I went out to the school and did the lesson in its entirety and then I created another one [PowerPoint] where we really shared the instruction time and she did a lot of the up front review and I did the PowerPoint but she took the lead on a lot of the lesson. Then I created another PowerPoint that she used on her own. She was grateful that I had the time to create the things [materials], and that was a lot of it. She was very hungry for the handouts that I made and wanted to make sure she had copies to start out next year. As it comes to the end of the year and reviewing the lessons, she’s very comfortable now with letting those kids interact more with the language and she’s starting to talk about how they’re going to address word problems. I can tell now that she sees the value of the talk and the repetition and having sentence frames in place as a resource.” Brooke



concludes with, “I think she might still need some direction and support for deciding what language to choose and where to go to figure out how to set up the sentence frames, which I think is kind of a skill. I did a lot of that, so that is something that I would want to talk about with her more. As far as the cooperative learning and just the buy-in with the fact that these kids need a chance to play around with the language before they’re asked to do everything with it, I think she has really progressed and taken it on.” Brooke’s example demonstrates the complete coaching cycle of building relationship, identifying the needs, participating in joint planning, modeling the lessons, co-teaching, release with support, and then total release. This could also be referred to as the “I do, we do, you do” model which is a way to describe the gradual release method for teaching new practices.

These coaching stories have provided an inside look at the relationships and interactions between teachers and coaches and have demonstrated the practical aspects of working in a partnership to support and encourage teachers with regard to meeting the needs of the English language learners in their classrooms. We now move from practical application to professional development and the role it plays in preparing coaches for their work and for training teachers.

### **The Role of Professional Development**

This section will address the role of professional development from two perspectives – Professional Development *for* Coaches and Professional Development *by* Coaches. The first is the training of coaches for their professional growth and development in preparation for their role as an instructional coach. The second addresses the coach’s role in developing and delivering professional development training as part of building coaching partnerships. The following chart represents the strategies and action verbs identified by ELL coaches as

being descriptive of the part professional development plays in the success of instructional coaching partnerships. The reader may note that when referring to teacher training, interview participants use the terms professional development and staff development interchangeably.

Themes	Coaching Strategy	Action Verbs
<b>The Role of Professional Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading and studying</li> <li>• Attending professional development</li> <li>• Attending conferences and workshops</li> <li>• Teaching professional development</li> <li>• Developing courses</li> <li>• Defining purpose and setting goals</li> <li>• Making connections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Studying</li> <li>• Attending</li> <li>• Presenting</li> <li>• Teaching</li> <li>• Developing</li> <li>• Defining</li> <li>• Making</li> </ul>

### **Professional Development *For* Coaches**

As noted in the review of literature, “One of the biggest obstacles to new coaches and to districts hiring them is how to support the professional development of the coach (Burkins & Ritchie, 2007). Even though coaches are already master teachers, professional development is essential as they switch their focus from students to teachers and work toward becoming proficient in this new role.”

In an attempt to prepare newly hired instructional coaches in the district, Aster Public Schools hired Jim Knight, a research associate at the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning and experienced instructional coaching trainer, to come to our district to train the various content area instructional coaches that had been hired by the district. Brooke reflects on her training experience with Knight, “Having the opportunity to get professional development from Jim Knight was very helpful. While some of the things he suggested are still hard for me to implement, I did get a lot out of his sessions about approaching teachers and what a personal [private, close to the heart] profession teaching is.

I think those things have really influenced how I approach meeting and working with teachers. I think I've been able to make more connections with teachers as a result of that [training].”

The ELL coaches have also been afforded the opportunity to attend various conferences and workshops that relate to their assignment as instructional coaches. Amber offers personal reflections on being able to participate in these learning opportunities. “I have grown both personally and professionally because I have had the opportunity to attend TESOL and other conventions. I have learned about programs and ideas in other school districts across the country and I have been inspired and challenged to improve our program and myself. The conferences have also given our [coaching] team the encouragement to collaborate and design new professional development sessions. It is also great that I have been able to visit places and meet people from all over the world.”

Brooke adds, “When I attended TESOL, I felt like I didn't really come away with anything that was really new information. It affirmed a lot of things that we were already doing. In fact, it made me think that if we were ever to attend TESOL again, we would need to go as presenters because some of the things that were presented, we'd already been doing and had improved upon, in my humble opinion. However, even though the information wasn't new, it gave me a lot more confidence in what we were doing. I think I came away from that conference feeling like the work I'd been doing was on track. So it did influence me as a coach in that it made me more confident in my work and I think that translated into my work for the remainder of the school year and also in planning for the upcoming school year. I feel more confident speaking out and trying to influence some change in the way that ELL students and our program are perceived by the district.”

Brooke continues, “I also had the opportunity to attend ASCD, and I felt like I came away with a lot of new learning. I was especially happy to have had the opportunity to see Doug Reeves. He said many things that I identified with and I tried to take as much of it down verbatim as I could. I know I will use his words as I meet with teachers and principals, and develop our own staff development. I do feel like ASCD gave me more to think about in terms of our coaching role as it applies to curriculum and staff development. I feel like it [the information] will influence me less when I'm out in classrooms but more when I'm planning and meeting with others on our [coaching] team about developing checklists [progress assessments], looking at curriculum, planning programming for ELLs, and developing professional development.”

ELL coaches agree that the benefits of participating in professional development opportunities have strengthened their skills and their confidence in making a difference for students and teachers through their role as instructional coaches.

We now transition from talking about professional development *for* coaches to professional development *by* coaches, and the importance of teacher training in establishing coaching partnerships.

### **Professional Development *By* Coaches**

All interview participants agreed that preparation for teaching professional development sessions is an extremely valuable part of a coach's learning. Amber comments, “Preparing for staff development sessions has helped me grow because it is a constant learning process. As a [coaching] team, we are always searching for quality information as well as methods of delivery that inspire our teachers. Our purpose is to help ELL students be successful and prepare teachers to be the best at what they do. It always stretches me when I

prepare for a staff development session because I want to do the best job I possibly can.”

Brooke adds, “Preparing for staff development sessions has probably helped me grow more professionally and personally than any other thing I've done since becoming a coach. We try to be as thorough in our planning and preparation as possible. We've worked hard to make the content accessible to teachers and principals, and that has caused me to study it deeply and think about how it applies in the classroom. . . . Hopefully, I have grown more polished in my presentation skills and ability to present without being too nervous or anxious. This year we've presented to several leadership groups in the district and I felt so prepared and assured in what we were saying, so practiced and comfortable with our presentation, that I really wasn't nervous at all. These chances to prepare and present staff development have made me much more confident in our message and our work.”

Reading, thinking and planning are essential components of preparation for the coaching role. Maggie says, “Doing professional development training this year has made me reflect on the basics that people need to know and then just stick to those basics as I work with teachers. The questions I use are:

- Do the kids understand what you're teaching them?
- What's the key vocabulary they need?
- What are the main ideas that you want them to learn?
- What are you doing to make sure they understand?
- Are you giving them time for guided practice and independent practice?”

A well-crafted set of guiding questions can provide a foundation for identifying student needs and directing further educational conversation.

Professional development can be powerful when coupled with classroom support. “In order for teachers to actually use strategies in their classroom that benefit ELL kids, it’s not just a one time presentation in a training session and then they go back and implement it”, says Amber. “It’s an ongoing process. It takes a partnership and the support coming back again and again into the classroom.” Brooke’s experience has also indicated that, “The implementation of research-based strategies is really most effective when coaching is paired with professional development training. I think there are strategies that teachers can become very adept at using that they just don’t know about.” Training sessions can provide the initial information and stimulate interest in the implementation of new strategies; the coach then comes alongside to help make the implementation of the strategies a reality in the classroom.

Professional development courses are developed for providing extended learning opportunities. Maggie describes how ISELL (Instructional Strategies for ELLs), a course designed for teachers who are new to ELL, weaves together training and practice. “Part of the structure of the course is that following the teacher training, the teachers were each asked to choose a strategy they wanted to work on in their classroom. The coach would go to the teacher’s classroom and model a lesson or co-teach a lesson [using that strategy] and then return another day to observe the same teacher doing a lesson on their [his or her] own. Then they would talk afterwards about what worked or what didn’t work.” Making coaching collaboration part of the course assignment provided a non-threatening way to support the new ELL teacher and provided the connection to a coach who would be available for future support.

Professional development sessions can also serve as the impetus for connecting with a coach and requesting assistance. Maggie noted, “After a teacher has been in a session where

I presented, it seems like they feel more open to contact me. For me, professional development sessions have helped me make connections.” Opportunities for brief or extended presentations in staff meetings, team meetings or other gatherings of educators can open the door for partnering connections.

## Discussion

### Reflections

This study sought to discover coaching strategies found to be effective for increasing teachers' use of research-based instructional strategies in linguistically diverse classrooms. The findings of this study indicate four major themes. I have chosen to represent a summary of those themes in the following table format. You will note that the findings of this study support many of the same strategies described in the review of literature.

Theme	Content
<b>Developing Partnerships</b>	Describes the importance of coaches developing trusting relationships with teachers and administrators, and demonstrates what that might look like.
<b>Identifying Student and Teacher Needs</b>	A look at the coach's use of non-threatening questioning skills to assist in the identification of student and teacher needs.
<b>Practical Application</b>	Examples of the applied practice of partnering with teachers and what that looks like in practical application in the classroom.
<b>The Role of Professional Development</b>	Addresses the importance and role of professional development from two perspectives – professional development <i>for</i> coaches and professional development <i>by</i> coaches.

It has been my experience that teaching is very personal, and it is therefore essential that a positive, trusting relationship be developed before a teacher opens her/his classroom and her/his instructional world to another. The interview participants share this belief. Therefore, identifying coaching strategies which contribute to the building of strong working relationships that turn into partnerships is key in creating an environment in which teachers can learn from each other and, in so doing, increase their skills and fine tune their practices. Beyond the initial establishment of the partnership, effective coaching strategies for



instructional practices and classroom management continue to influence the effectiveness and productivity of the teacher/coach relationship.

In the interviews conducted to gather data, coaches were asked to describe a working relationship they have had with a classroom teacher that exemplified what they considered to be a successful coaching partnership. The coaching strategies that came up consistently were, first and foremost, building a positive, trusting partnership of mutual respect, with both participants having a voice, experiencing meaningful and reflective conversations, some form of practical application of instructional strategies, and the teacher being empowered to independently implement the strategy.

The common theme woven through every interview was the necessity of being able to build trusting partnerships with teachers. A teacher's classroom is their "kingdom". Teaching is very personal and there are teachers who may feel intimidated or intruded upon if a coach comes into their classroom. It is therefore essential that the teacher is the one who invites the coach into their "kingdom". Opportunities for teachers to get to know the ELL instructional coach and build an initial trusting relationship is key for the development of a positive, working partnership.

Conversations which focus on evaluating a student's actual performance assist in the identification of student needs and become an easy transition to conversations about how one might help meet those needs. Results from the interviews with ELL Instructional Coaches have confirmed that partnering to plan lessons, co-teaching and model teaching are all effective coaching strategies for implementation of instructional and learning strategies. As part of effectively implementing these coaching strategies, the coach needs to be a good

listener, reflective and thoughtful, supportive, encouraging, consistent in following up and following through, and able to narrow the focus to reach small successes.

The ELL instructional coaches reported that professional development for their own personal and professional growth was key in equipping them to more effectively provide the support and direction needed by classroom teachers and administrators to better meet the needs of ELL students. It was also noted that the study and research required in preparing for presenting professional development sessions caused them to be reflective about best practices and intentional in demonstrating effective instructional strategies through the method in which the presentation was delivered.

The ELL instructional coaches interviewed also agreed that providing professional development training is an effective coaching strategy that offers exposure to information about instructional strategies as well as providing an opportunity for teachers to get to know the presentation style and personality of the coach. It has been my experience that professional development presents a forum for information to be disseminated and allows the teachers to feel connected to the coach and sets the stage for educational conversations about instructional strategies and connections to the classroom. This training could include district level professional development sessions, building staff meetings or training, and district workshops or course work.

Instructional coaching is becoming more widely implemented by school districts as a supportive model for traditional professional development training sessions. The coaching role offers the opportunity for a classroom teacher to have an experienced, skilled teacher come alongside and provide support as they learn to implement the strategies required to meet the complex needs and demands of the classroom. The complexities include

preparation and implementation of curriculum, application of appropriate instructional strategies, problem-solving student and instructional needs, classroom management, and accommodation for a variety of student needs (i.e. ELL, special education, gifted).

Our district has committed to instructional coaching as an approach to professional development, and it is therefore essential that instructional coaches are skilled in strategies that equip them for being effective in their role. ELL instructional coaches in Aster Public Schools are tasked to support teachers who have English language learners in their classroom, with the purpose of assisting teachers in incorporating research-based instructional practices into their teaching and thereby supporting the language acquisition needs of ELLs and raising the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to gather data regarding coaching strategies that have been found to be effective in establishing strong partnerships that are supportive of teachers as they learn and implement instructional strategies that provide for the needs of English language learners.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The interviews were conducted with just four ELL instructional coaches, two of which had just completed their first year in the coaching role. It would be interesting to repeat these same interviews in a couple of years to check for personal and professional growth and whether they would answer questions in the same way that they did for this study. In the future, for the sake of gathering and evaluating the feedback from interviews, I would limit the length of interviews and provide more structure, adhering precisely to the questions asked.

A valuable addition could be a survey to be administered to participating classroom teachers for their response as to the perceived influence the coaching support had on their teaching practice and student success. It would also be interesting to consider differences between elementary and secondary with regard to effectiveness of instructional coaching and the coaching strategies found to be most effective in enrolling teachers in the coaching relationship and affecting real change in teacher practice.

### **Conclusion**

As we refer back to the review of literature, let us look once more at Hattie's description of strategic teacher skills. "The key ingredients of what it means to be strategic in teaching and learning relates to teachers finding ways to engage and motivate students, teach appropriate strategies in the context of various curricula domains, and constantly seeking feedback about how effective their teaching is being with all the students." (Hattie, 2009). With this list of teacher expectations in mind, especially when thinking of a first year teacher or one who has not previously worked with ELL students, consider the possibility of having a master ELL teacher provide training, then come alongside in the classroom to strategize and model research-based teaching strategies for the purpose of positively affecting the classroom teacher's instructional practice and thereby supporting academic success for English language learners.

The coaching model seems well designed to improve both teacher professional practices and student outcomes. This study helps identify the strategies coaches might use to make coaching as successful as possible with regard to meeting the needs of English language learners.

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## APPENDIX A

## Meta-analysis Results for Categories of Learning Strategies

Category	Average Effect Size	Average Percentile Gain	Number of Studies
1. Similarities & Differences	1.61	45	31
2. Summarizing & Note Taking	1.00	34	179
3. Reinforcing Effort & Providing Recognition	.80	29	21
4. Practice & Homework	.77	28	134
5. Nonlinguistic Representation	.75	27	246
6. Cooperative Learning	.73	27	122
7. Setting Objectives & Providing Feedback	.61	23	408
8. Generating & Testing Hypotheses	.61	23	63
9. Cues & Questions & Advance Organizers	.59	22	1,251

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## Instructional Strategies

Category	McREL Definition	Classroom Recommendations	ELL Application
<b>Identifying Similarities &amp; Differences</b>	Enhance students' understanding of and ability to use knowledge by engaging them in mental processes that involve identifying the way items are alike and different.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide students with explicit instruction in identifying similarities and differences.</li> <li>• Ask students to independently identify similarities and differences.</li> <li>• Have students use graphic or symbolic to identify and understand similarities and differences and explain the nonlinguistic representations.</li> <li>• Use a variety of ways to identify similarities and differences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have students use a variety of methods when identifying similarities and differences.</li> <li>• Provide a model for students to use.</li> <li>• Use a familiar topic.</li> <li>• Use graphic organizers.</li> <li>• Guide ELLs, but lessen the support as activities are repeated.</li> </ul>
<b>Summarizing &amp; Note Taking</b>	Enhance students' ability to synthesize information and organize it in a way that captures the main ideas and supporting details.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach students the "Rule-Based" Summarizing strategy.</li> <li>• Use Summary Frames.</li> <li>• Teach the "Reciprocal Teaching" Strategy.</li> <li>• Give student teacher-prepared notes.</li> <li>• Teach a variety of formats.</li> <li>• Use combination notes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use reciprocal teaching.</li> <li>• Teach text structures.</li> <li>• Encourage students to supplement written notes with visual representations.</li> </ul>
<b>Reinforcing Effort &amp; Providing Recognition</b>	<p>Enhance students' understanding of the relationship between effort and achievement by addressing students' attitudes and beliefs about learning.</p> <p>Provide students with rewards or praise for their accomplishments related to the attainment of a goal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personalize recognition.</li> <li>• Use the pause-prompt-praise strategy.</li> <li>• Use concrete symbols of recognition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicitly teach about the importance of effort.</li> <li>• Recognize student improvement of academic achievement and increase in the English language proficiency.</li> </ul>



Category	McREL Definition	Classroom Recommendations	ELL Application
<b>Homework &amp; Practice</b>	<p>Extend the learning opportunities for students to practice, review, and apply knowledge.</p> <p>Enhance students' ability to reach the expected level of proficiency for a skill or process.</p>	<p><i>Homework</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish and communicate homework policy.</li> <li>Design homework assignments that clearly articulate the purpose and outcome.</li> <li>Vary the approaches to providing feedback</li> </ul> <p><i>Practice</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask students to chart their speed and accuracy.</li> <li>Design practice that focuses on specific elements of a complex skill or process.</li> <li>Plan time for students to increase their conceptual understanding of skills or processes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign tiered content homework.</li> <li>Assign homework for language development.</li> <li>Assign some practice as homework</li> <li>Be clear about purpose of homework.</li> </ul>
<b>Nonlinguistic Representation</b>	<p>Enhance students' ability to represent and elaborate on knowledge using mental images, physical models, pictures, and kinesthetic activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use <i>graphic organizers</i> to represent knowledge.</li> <li>Have students generate <i>physical models</i> of the knowledge.</li> <li>Have students generate <i>mental pictures</i> of the knowledge they are learning.</li> <li>Use <i>pictures or pictographs</i> to represent knowledge.</li> <li>Have students engage in <i>kinesthetic activities</i> representing knowledge.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students apply nonlinguistic representations to enhance their content understanding, AND</li> <li>Talk about their choices to increase academic language.</li> </ul>
<b>Cooperative Learning</b>	<p>Provide students with opportunities to interact with each other in groups in ways that enhance their learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use a variety of criteria to group students.</li> <li>Use informal, formal, and base groups.</li> <li>Keep the groups to a manageable size.</li> <li>Combine cooperative learning with other types of classroom instruction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach the five elements of cooperative learning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive interdependence</li> <li>Face to face supportive interaction</li> <li>Individual accountability and personal responsibility</li> <li>Interpersonal and small group skills</li> <li>Group processing</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Category	McREL Definition	Classroom Recommendations	ELL Application
<b>Setting Objectives</b>	Provide students a direction for learning and information about how well they are performing relative to a particular learning goal so that they can improve their performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set learning objectives or goals that are specific but flexible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set both <i>language</i> objectives and <i>content</i> objectives.</li> </ul>
<b>Providing Feedback</b>	Provide students information about how well they are performing relative to a particular learning goal so that they can improve their performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contract with students to obtain specific learning objectives or goals.</li> <li>Use criterion-referenced feedback.</li> <li>Focus feedback on specific types of knowledge.</li> <li>Use student-led feedback.</li> </ul>	<p>Use Word-MES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Words</u>: Provide vocabulary for <i>Preproduction</i> students</li> <li><u>Model</u> correct usage for <i>Early Production</i> students.</li> <li><u>Expand</u> by using adjectives, adverbs, and new vocabulary for <i>Speech Emergence</i> students.</li> <li>Help students Sound like a book (use academic language) for <i>Intermediate and Advanced Fluency</i> students.</li> </ul>
<b>Generating &amp; Testing Hypotheses</b>	Enhance students' understanding of and ability to use knowledge by engaging them in mental processes that involve making and testing hypotheses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use a variety of tasks that emphasize generating and testing hypotheses.</li> <li>Require students to clearly verbalize their hypotheses and conclusions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure students can explain their hypotheses and conclusions.</li> <li>Use a variety of structured tasks to guide students through generating and testing hypotheses.</li> </ul>
<b>Cues, Questions &amp; Advanced Organizers</b>	Enhance students' ability to retrieve, use, and organize what they already know about a topic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use explicit cues.</li> <li>Ask questions that elicit inferences.</li> <li>Use analytical questions.</li> <li>Teach students how to use graphic advance organizers.</li> <li>Use expository and narrative advance organizers.</li> <li>Use skimming as a form of advance organizers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask higher-level questions of all English language learners.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX C

**Interview Questions for ELL Instructional Coaches**

1. Overarching question: What coaching strategies have you found to be most effective for increasing teachers' use of research-based instructional strategies for ELLs?
2. How do you initiate the coaching relationship with a teacher?
3. What are your key considerations when beginning to work with a classroom teacher?
4. How do you plan for your first meeting with a teacher?
5. What are you looking for as you do a classroom observation?
6. Describe your thought process as you evaluate the needs of the multilingual students in the classroom and determine how you might help support those needs.
7. What coaching strategies have you used that have successfully encouraged teachers to implement the ELL instructional strategies you have recommended?
8. Describe a working relationship you have had with a classroom teacher this year that exemplifies what you consider to be a successful coaching relationship.
9. Describe a working relationship you have had with a classroom teacher this year that exemplifies what you consider to be a less than successful coaching relationship.
10. What has been your greatest challenge as a coach this year? What has been your greatest accomplishment?
11. Do you believe coaching to be an effective method of professional development?
12. How have you grown personally and/or professionally as a coach as a result of your attendance at conferences and professional development opportunities?
13. How have you grown personally and/or professionally as a coach through the preparation for and presentation of professional development sessions/workshops?
14. What will you change as you plan for next year? What will you do the same?
15. Is there anything else you would like to include in response to the overarching question, "What coaching strategies have you found to be most effective for increasing teachers' use of research-based instructional strategies?"