Coaching to Support Inclusion:

A Principal's Guide

Alberta

Introduction

This resource guide is designed for school principals as a self-paced program to explore the use of coaching to support the development of inclusive practices. Coaching is defined in this resource as a professional development strategy in which coaches work with teachers to meet the needs of all students within an inclusive school environment. *Coaching to Support Inclusion* reflects the collegial and collaborative culture of Alberta schools and encourages principals to work with their teachers to consider the academic and social needs of students with exceptionalities in an inclusive learning environment. The information and workshop outlines included in this resource support dialogue and collaboration at the school level by providing a multitude of meaningful and engaging activities for school staffs. Thanks go to Noreen O'Haire, lead writer; Jacqueline Skytt, editor; and the Alberta Teachers' Association administrator instructor corps, who provided feedback to guide revisions. This publication is a result of a grant from Alberta Education and in-kind support from the Alberta Teachers' Association.

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Purpose

This resource and the accompanying workshop material are intended to guide and support Alberta school leaders to work collaboratively with the school staff to develop and implement coaching to support inclusion in their schools. Research shows that the leadership role of the principal is critical to the success of collaborative practice that is the foundation of coaching.

Inspiring Education (Alberta Education 2010e) identifies values and principles that will shift our thinking and move us toward an education system that is centred on the learner and embraces, values and celebrates diversity. To do this, school leaders across the province need continuing conversations with their school staff about inclusive education and how coaching can support teachers in meeting the diverse learning needs of students.

Coaching to Support Inclusion: A Principal's Guide is prompted by the *Setting the Direction Framework—Government of Alberta Response* (Alberta Education 2010d) strategic direction #5, "Implement a province-wide expectation that school-based expertise will be in place to support teachers in meeting the needs of students with disabilities and diverse needs within learning environments." In response to this strategic direction the Alberta government responded "Government will work with stakeholders to develop guidelines outlining role descriptions for teachers, learning coaches, educational assistants, administrators, parents and specialized service personnel who are working in an inclusive education system. Government will also work with stakeholders to build capacity to support an inclusive education system. This would include appropriate instruction and training for undergraduate students enrolled in Bachelor of Education programs and continual professional development opportunities for teachers as their careers progress" (page 4).

Coaching can be described as a professional development strategy in which coaches work with teachers to meet the diverse learning needs of students within an inclusive school environment. Learning coaches should have expertise in teaching students with a range of diverse learning needs in an inclusive environment; they also need the personal characteristics necessary to build relationships and maintain positive interactions with teachers. In their role of collaboratively assisting teachers in meeting the needs of students who have been identified as needing additional support, coaches require a wide range of experience and knowledge, including knowledge about inclusion.

Like so many innovations in education, there is no one model or formula for effective coaching. The innovation in this resource is relatively new and shares some of the characteristics of many similar innovations; this has advantages, in that some of the terms and processes are familiar, but also disadvantages because in coaching to support inclusion, these terms, processes and systems need to be reinterpreted and combined in a new and holistic approach for students with special needs and/ or diverse learning needs. Although the details of implementation depend on the local

jurisdiction and the school context, the role of school leaders is key to achieving the changes necessary for the school to move toward the vision of an inclusive learning community in which all students are successful.

School administration should use a holistic approach to planning and implementing a school program such as coaching to support inclusion (Reeves 2009). The Principal Quality Practice Guideline (Alberta Education 2009a) sets out seven dimensions of leadership and corresponding indicators, for which school leaders in Alberta are accountable. The seven dimensions of leadership provide a useful framework for developing and implementing a program of coaching for inclusion that considers the school context. This principal's guide contains a variety of leadership strategies from which principals can choose as they work with the school community to create an inclusive school where all student can be successful.

The focus of this resource is for the learning coach to actively and intentionally support the inclusion of students who have special education needs. The information in this guide is presented in a sequential format, but principals may select the starting point that best meets their particular school context, staff knowledge about inclusive learning and coaching models, and the collaborative nature of the school community.

The Principal's Role

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Change Leadership

Implementation of any new initiative requires attention to the process of educational change. With each new initiative the principal will work with the school staff to achieve the desired outcome.

Effective leadership for leading a school change is not finding the magic or silver bullet, it's not ordered through pronouncements at a staff meeting, it's not achieved by delegating responsibility to one or more staff, and it's not diminished by pressure from individuals to keep the status quo (Reeves 2009). Change leadership is holistic in that it requires a school leader to have a clear vision of the future, develop effective relationships with staff implementing the change, monitor how the change supports teaching and student learning, ensure that the necessary resources are provided for the change, and proactively involve the school community in supporting the change.

Rarely does an educational leader believe *my mandate is to keep things as they are and ensure that we do not change*. Almost every leader wants to achieve some change. In Alberta schools the principal is key to creating an environment where everyone strives for continuous improvement. Change leaders, as described by Douglas Reeves in his book *Leading Change in Your School* (2009), know that they do not change organizations without changing individual behaviour, and they will not change individual behaviour without affirming the people behind the behaviour. Some leaders think that their defining moment for effective change will be the speech to their staff, an address to the community or their remarks to the board. But of all the things leaders do in order to create conditions for change, the most important are the thousands of moments of truth when their actions speak louder than words.

When principals embark on change in their school, they start with a set of people with ingrained habits and ways of thinking. If the principal can get them to work together for a common purpose, definitely the odds tip in favour of working toward the change. And steering change in schools is never easy. Instead of facing an equal opponent across the table, it's more as if we're competing against a superforce named "the status quo." Change means loss; loss means abandonment. Deutschman (2007) notes that the loss of personal identity and sense of individuality is threatened by change even when the change is tremendously positive. Thus, change is defeated by personal anxiety almost every time. Part of the challenge is reframing issues that create irrational anxiety (Burns 1999; Deutschman 2007). Successful reframing depends on placing new behaviours into perspective by identifying what will not change. The effective change leader looks for the qualities, values and stories that can be reaffirmed while focusing on the elements that do need to change.

In the context of educational change, *culture* is simply defined as "the way we do things around here," where culture is reflected in the behaviour, attitudes and beliefs

of individuals and groups. The single greatest impediment to meaningful cultural change is the gap between what leaders say that they value and what they actually demonstrate. Reeves (2009) outlines four imperatives of cultural change:

1. Define what will not change. Articulate the values, practices, traditions and relationships that will not be lost. Effective change leaders must place change in the context of stability.

2. Organizational culture will change with leadership actions (speeches and announcements are not enough). Leaders speak most clearly with their actions.

3. Use the right change tools for your system. Differentiate *cultural tools*, such as rituals and traditions; *management tools*, such as training, procedures and measurement systems; and *leadership tools*, including role modelling and vision. To change the collective behaviour and beliefs of complex organizations such as schools, leaders must apply the right combination of change tools, varying their strategies to meet the changing needs of the system.

4. Change in culture requires relentless personal attention and "on-the-ground work" by the leader.

Planning for Implementation

This guide is founded on the belief that leading for change in Alberta schools is a collaborative, holistic activity. Reeves's (2009) big ideas about leading change, consistent with this belief, are outlined below:

- Implementation plans should be very clear and very brief—the one-page plan.
- Deep and sustainable implementation plans requires change in behaviour, even among those who do not welcome the change.
- Professional collaboration is very important, but not easy to attain.
- Sustainable change is a function of a shared value system.
- The most important resource any educational leader allocates is teachers.
- Leadership of professional development comes from the faculty and often takes place in classrooms while teachers are engaged in authentic teaching.
- Effective leaders provide time for teacher collaboration during the school day.
- Promising practices to improve schools include classroom observations, data analysis and review of student work.

Reeves (2009) advocates that principals develop one-page action plans and share their strategic plans with staff. The one-page plan should be clearly focused and sufficiently simple so that all participants in the process understand their role in executing the plan. In addition, principals can embrace action plans for strategic implementation that are focused and brief, and that provide for consistent monitoring and evaluation.

Schools with action plans that include strategies for monitoring, evaluation and inquiry experience two to three times the gains of schools that have less-developed action plans. Monitoring encompasses consistent and frequent analysis (at least monthly) of student performance, teaching strategies and leadership practices (Reeves 2009). Evaluation of inclusive learning strategies challenges staff members to find relationships between professional practices and changes in student learning and to identify unproductive strategies to stop doing. Inquiry that attributes the cause of student learning to teachers and leaders rather than student demographics supports a culture of professional accountability.

Principals can close the implementation gap by creating short-term wins, recognizing effective practices throughout the year and making a compelling case for change. The essential drivers in any educational change are teaching, leadership, time and feedback. To sustain change, leaders must refocus their energies beyond the short-term effectiveness and look to the greater good.

Coaching to Support Inclusion—Self-Reflection Tools

In Alberta, the Principal Quality Practice Guideline (PQPG) outlines the knowledge, skills and attributes consistent with the principal's role. This guideline includes the statement of Principal Quality Practice and seven leadership dimensions with supporting descriptors. The PQPG is to be used as a basis for many activities, including principal preparation and recruitment, principals' self-reflection and daily practice, principals' initial and ongoing professional growth, and principal supervision, evaluation and practice review (Alberta Education, 2009a). School administrators should draw on these leadership dimensions and descriptors when they lead change and school improvement initiatives.

In the pages that follow, each provincial leadership dimension and its descriptors appear in a box, followed by self-reflection questions related to establishing a successful coaching for inclusion program within the Alberta context. These questions are intended to lead school principals through a comprehensive self-reflection that encompasses all aspects of their role as defined by the PQPG. Every administrator has his or her own strengths and areas for growth that they must consider as they develop a leadership plan for coaching to support inclusion. As well, the leadership decisions and strategies of the school principal, to be effective in implementing this initiative, must respond to the school context. What is the current situation? What needs to change? And how will the outcomes be measured? It is hoped that these self-reflection tools will help you identify areas of focus upon which you will develop an implementation action plan.

Leadership Dimension #1—Fostering Effective Relationships

The principal builds trust and fosters positive working relationships, on the basis of appropriate values and ethical foundations, within the school community— students, teachers and other staff, parents, school council and others who have an interest in the school.

Descriptors

The principal

- a) acts with fairness, dignity and integrity;
- b) demonstrates a sensitivity to and genuine caring for others and cultivates a climate of mutual respect;
- c) promotes an inclusive school culture respecting and honouring diversity;
- d) demonstrates responsibility for all students and acts in their best interests;
- e) models and promotes open, inclusive dialogue;
- f) uses effective communication, facilitation, and problem-solving skills;
- g) supports processes for improving relationships and dealing with conflict within the school community; and
- h) adheres to professional standards of conduct.

Key Question for Reflection

How does a school leader build trust and foster effective working relationships within the school community that support coaching for inclusion?

Leadership Strategies

- Be sensitive that implementation of coaching for inclusion may be perceived both positively and negatively by various members of the school community.
- Promote inclusive, safe and respectful relationships in the school community.
- Model and promote processes that support open, collaborative professional dialogue among school staff.
- Model effective communication, facilitation and problem-solving.
- Nurture positive working relationships that will support coaching and develop strategies to deal effectively with conflict.
- Discuss how the ATA Code of Professional Conduct will be adhered to by a) the school principal, b) the learning coach and c) all teachers.

Leadership Dimension #2—Embodying Visionary Leadership

The principal collaboratively involves the school community in creating and sustaining shared school values, vision, mission and goals.

Descriptors

The principal

  a) communicates and is guided by an educational philosophy based upon sound research, personal experience and reflection;
  b) provides leadership in keeping with the school authority's vision and mission;
  c) meaningfully engages the school community in identifying and addressing areas for school improvement;
  d) ensures that planning, decision making and implementation strategies are based on a shared vision and an understanding of the school culture;
  e) facilitates change and promotes innovation consistent with current and future school community needs;
  f) analyzes a wide range of data to determine progress towards achieving school goals; and
  g) communicates and celebrates school accomplishments to inspire continuous growth.

Key Question for Reflection

What are the shared mission, vision, values and goals for coaching to support inclusive learning in this school context?

Leadership Strategies

- Develop an understanding of the research that influences an effective learning coach program.
- Use collaborative processes to develop a shared mission, vision, values and goals for coaching to support inclusion.
- Conduct an environmental scan to identify the areas of needs that will form the focus and goals of the program.
- Use shared leadership strategies that include staff in planning, decision-making and implementation.
- Measure success by collecting data that matches the mission, vision and goals of the coaching to support inclusion program.
- Work with staff to reflect on and share outcomes of the coaching to support inclusive learning program.
- Celebrate success and plan for continuous improvement.

> ### Leadership Dimension #3—Leading a Learning Community
>
> The principal nurtures and sustains a school culture that values and supports learning.
>
> ### Descriptors
>
> The principal
>
> a) promotes and models life-long learning for students, teachers and other staff;
>
> b) fosters a culture of high expectations for students, teachers and other staff;
>
> c) promotes and facilitates meaningful professional development for teachers and other staff; and
>
> d) facilitates meaningful parental involvement and ensures that parents are informed about their child's learning and development.

Key Question for Reflection

How does the inclusive learning coach program contribute to a school culture that values and supports learning and success for all students?

Leadership Strategies

- Promote acceptance that student success is a shared responsibility of everyone in the school community—not just the learning coach or the classroom teacher.
- Nurture a school culture that reflects the shared belief that all students can learn.
- Model an inclusive school approach in which diversity is celebrated and every student belongs and is valued as a contributing member of the community.
- Engage in professional development on leadership for inclusive education.
- Support professional development for staff to become engaged in coaching to support inclusion.
- Develop processes and structures for coaching and collaborative professional learning (PLC teams).
- Ensure that the learning coach is knowledgeable about coaching processes and is applying these skills to his or her work with teachers.
- Ensure that parents are involved in students' learning and understand the benefits of inclusion.
- Facilitate partnerships with community agencies that support sharing of resources and strategies for inclusion.

Leadership Dimension #4—Providing Instructional Leadership

The principal ensures that all students have ongoing access to quality teaching and learning opportunities to meet the provincial goals of education.

Descriptors

The principal

  a) demonstrates a sound understanding of current pedagogy and curriculum;
  b) implements strategies for addressing standards of student achievement;
  c) ensures that student assessment and evaluation practices throughout the school are fair, appropriate and balanced;
  d) implements effective supervision and evaluation to ensure that all teachers consistently meet the Alberta Teaching Quality Standard;
  e) ensures that appropriate pedagogy is utilized in response to various dimensions of student diversity;
  f) ensures that students have access to appropriate programming based on their individual learning needs;
  g) recognizes the potential of new and emerging technologies, and enables their meaningful integration in support of teaching and learning;
  h) ensures that teachers and other staff communicate and collaborate with parents and community agencies, where appropriate, to support student learning; and
  i) supports the use of community resources to enhance student learning.

Key Question for Reflection

How can teaching and students' opportunity to engage in quality learning experiences be enhanced by coaching to support inclusion?

Leadership Strategies

- Maintain supervision of all teachers to ensure inclusive classroom practices and engage in evaluation as required.
- Maintain supervision of the learning coach appropriate to the role and engage in evaluation as required.
- Facilitate and supervise the development and management of IPPs and Success in School plans.
- Ensure that all students have access to appropriate programming and opportunities to learn.
- Promote the use of effective pedagogies for diverse learning needs.
- Facilitate the effective use of appropriate technologies to support inclusive education.

- Ensure assessment for and of student learning consistent with an inclusive education approach.
- Communicate and collaborate with parents and local community agencies to support student learning and success.

Leadership Dimension #5—Developing and Facilitating Leadership

The principal promotes the development of leadership capacity within the school community—students, teachers and other staff, parents, school council for the overall benefit of the school community and education system.

Descriptors

The principal

  a) demonstrates informed decision making through open dialogue and consideration of multiple perspectives;

  b) promotes team building and shared leadership among members of the school community;

  c) facilitates meaningful involvement of the school community, where appropriate, in the school's operation using collaborative and consultative decision-making strategies; and

  d) identifies and mentors teachers for future educational leadership roles.

Key Question for Reflection

What actions are required to build leadership capacity within the school staff to effectively utilize coaching to support inclusion?

Leadership Strategies

- Develop processes that support open dialogue and informed decision making regarding the development and implementation of coaching to support inclusion.
- Incorporate actions and activities that support team building and shared leadership among the school staff.
- Ensure that school council and parents are knowledgeable about coaching and inclusive education.
- Identify the selection criteria for the learning coach.
- Provide orientation, induction and professional growth for staff involved in coaching to support inclusion.
- Identify an appropriate mentor and provide professional development for the teacher named as inclusive learning coach.
- Monitor the impact of the learning coach and his or her ability to facilitate/support effective working relationships; provide support as required.

Leadership Dimension #6—Managing School Operations and Resources

The principal manages school operations and resources to ensure a safe and caring, and effective learning environment.

Descriptors

The principal

   a) effectively plans, organizes and manages the human, physical and financial resources of the school and identifies the areas of need;
   b) ensures that school operations align with legal frameworks such as provincial legislation, regulation and policy, as well as school authority policy, directives and initiatives; and
   c) utilizes principles of teaching, learning and student development to guide management decisions and the organization of learning.

Key Question for Reflection

What will be the impact on school operations and what resources are required to develop a coaching program to support inclusion?

Leadership Strategies

- Review the provincial regulations, policies and funding for inclusive education and learning coaches.
- Be knowledgeable about the district policy, program, funding and supports for learning coaches.
- Align with district reporting requirements.
- Consider budget and educational implications of different models of coaching to support inclusion.
- Create a school timetable to provide teacher and student access to the learning coach.
- Provide office and meeting room to support coaching activities.
- Provide budget for the program, inclusive education professional development, and teaching and learning resources.

Leadership Dimension #7—Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context

The principal understands and responds appropriately to the political, social, economic, legal and cultural contexts impacting the school.

Descriptors

The principal

   a) advocates for the needs and interests of children and youth;
   b) demonstrates a knowledge of local, national, and global issues and trends related to education;
   c) assesses and responds to the unique and diverse community needs in the context of the school's vision and mission; and
   d) advocates for the community's support of the school and the larger education system.

Key Question for Reflection

How does coaching to support inclusion reflect the broader societal values and trends related to inclusion and diversity in Alberta and Canada?

Leadership Strategies

- Understand the range of diverse learning needs in the school population.
- Consider advocacy strategies, as required, given the community response to issues of inclusion and diversity.
- Promote school–community awareness and understanding of the new inclusive education framework.
- Become knowledgeable about issues and trends related to inclusive education.

Strategic Leadership Plan for Coaching to Support Inclusion

Purpose of Coaching to Support Inclusion:

Vision of Success (Goal):

	Priority	Strategies	Measures
1. Fostering Effective Relationships		• • • •	
2. Embodying Visionary Leadership		• • • •	
3. Leading and Learning Community		• • • •	

	Priority	Strategies	Measures
4. Providing Instructional Leadership		• • • •	
5. Developing and Facilitating Leadership		• • • •	
6. Managing School Operations and Resources		• • • •	
7. Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context		• • • •	

Resources:

Critical Conditions for Coaching to Support Inclusion

Critical Conditions for Coaching to Support Inclusion ———

On the surface, coaching for inclusion seems a deceptively simple, even familiar, notion, but a closer examination shows that conceptualization, design and implementation of coaching to support inclusion require a significant change in how schools operate and how teachers and administrators work. Both the literature and educators' professional experience reveal an interrelated set of factors that must be understood and considered if the approach is to succeed. Even though each school and each system is different, a common set of conditions must be in place:

- A collaborative culture
- A principal who is a strong leader
- Clearly defined roles for all
- Teachers who are seen as competent professionals
- A focus on learning and equity for all students
- Adequate resources

Collaborative Culture

In the consultation process leading to the development of the *Setting the Direction Framework* (Alberta Education 2010c), one of the building blocks that participants identified was labelled as Collaboration for Student Success. Participants noted that people have been talking about collaboration for years, but not necessarily doing it. Participants in phase two of the consultation concluded that "A new direction for special education will require more than just 'tinkering' with the existing system. It will require a major cultural change."

A successful coaching program requires a commitment to a genuinely collaborative culture that moves beyond collegiality and beyond contrived collaboration to a genuine form of collaboration in which people collaborate on work that leads to improvement through exploring challenging questions about practice (Hargreaves and Fullan 2012).

An important feature in a collaborative approach is the voluntary nature of the coaching. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012, 119) note that if it is mandated it runs the risk of becoming contrived; further, it will waste already scarce time (Robbins 1991). The voluntary nature of participant involvement in coaching and in particular peer coaching has been well documented, as is the recommendation that teachers should select their peer coach and determine the focus of the peer coaching (Desrochers and Klein 1990; Hargreaves and Dawe 1990).

Collaboration must become the norm; it must be evident in how coaching to support inclusion is introduced, developed and implemented. In a collaborative way of operating, the coaching program is neither introduced in a top-down method, nor

mandated; rather, it is introduced, discussed and planned with all the stakeholders who are affected.

Research by Susan Rosenholtz in the 1980s, which has been supported by study after study, shows that collaborative schools do better than individualistic ones. Although what counts as collaboration may vary, the overall evidence is consistent—teachers who work in professional cultures of collaboration do better than teachers who work alone (Hargreaves and Fullan 2012). Collaborative teaching, which includes planning, designing, implementing, and evaluation of results, may provide increased opportunities for improving academic gains for all students (Cole, Waldron, Majd and Hasazi 2004).

Teachers have worked so long in isolation that working in learning-focused collaborative relationships with peers may make them uncomfortable. Therefore, the principal has an important role in establishing norms that reflect and reward collegial planning, public teaching, co-teaching and team problem solving.

The literature consistently notes that without a collaborative way of working, a coaching program cannot be successful. Part of that collaboration involves creating a climate of mutual respect between teacher, coach and principal. Coaching exists in name only unless the coach and the person being coached share trust and a sense of common purpose (Slater and Simmons 2001).

In a culture characterized by collaborative norms, teachers are empowered to take action together and make wise choices related to instruction, curriculum and student learning (Robbins 1991). Much collaboration is informal and involves building trust and establishing relationships, but in order for collaborative schools to thrive, they need deliberate arrangements of meetings, teams, structures and protocols combined with commitments to build better relationships. Professional learning communities may embody this form of collaboration (Hargreaves and Fullan 2012).

Good communication is essential for collaboration in general and for specific coaching models. Coaching appears to facilitate professional dialogue and collegial relationships through the development of shared language and a focus on improving learning opportunities for students. There is a body of research about critical conversations (Chapman and Hart Hyatt 2011) and "fierce conversations" that delve deeply into teaching beliefs and strategies and help build and strengthen a culture of collaboration.

Strong Leadership Role of the Principal

In Alberta, principals as the instructional leader in the school have a responsibility to ensure that all students have the opportunity to engage in quality learning experiences that lead to achievement of the goals of education and that address their learning and development needs (Alberta Education 2010a). To develop and implement coaching to support inclusion, principals must

- demonstrate a knowledge of local, provincial, national and global issues and trends related to inclusive education;
- cultivate a climate of mutual respect;
- promote an inclusive, safe school environment that respects and honours diversity;
- model and promote open and collaborative dialogue;
- use effective communication, facilitation and problem-solving skills;
- provide leadership that leads to achieving the school's mission and vision;
- ensure that students have access to appropriate programming based on learning needs;
- promote and facilitate meaningful, collaborative professional learning for staff; and
- promote team building and shared leadership.

The leadership role of the principal is arguably the most significant of all the components because principals provide both symbolic and direct support for coaching. They also show philosophical support by modelling coaching processes, allocating time and resources, promoting collaborative norms, including coaching on meeting agendas, and discussing the concept as part of the school operation with parents, students, board members and district office staff.

The principal has a key role in establishing the vision for the school and in establishing the collaborative culture in which the coaching program operates. The leadership is manifested in priority setting, resource allocation and logistics as well as in substantive and social leadership. The roles that the principal might play in coaching to support inclusion include coach, program coordinator, program supporter, facilitator and program champion (Robbins 1991).

In supporting a coaching for inclusion approach, principals demonstrate that they value it; they also provide a focus for the coaching activity and training for the coaches, and they model positive coaching behaviours (Glickman 2002). Principals also have an important role in ensuring that coaching is embedded in the school's ongoing professional development plan and monitored in their supervision of teachers. Principals can be coaches, but it is essential that principals distinguish their work with teachers as coaches from their work as supervisors and evaluators. They can perform both functions effectively if three conditions are met: (1) teachers know when principals are supervising and when they are evaluating, (2) the principal's behaviour is congruent with the function he or she is performing and (3) trust exists in the relationship (Garmston 1987).

Clearly Defined Roles

Education literature uses several terms to characterize the role of the coach, including *cognitive coaching, peer coaching, content coaching, technical coaching, data*

coaching, literacy coaching and *instructional coaching*. These coaching models commonly define coaches as partners who work together with teachers to solve classroom problems and who engage in professional conversations, rather than dictating particular practices.

Coaching to support inclusion can be described as a professional development strategy in which coaches work with teachers to meet the diverse learning needs of all students within an inclusive environment. Learning coaches should have expertise in teaching a range of students with diverse learning needs in an inclusive environment; they also need the personal characteristics necessary to build relationships and maintain positive interactions with teachers. In their role of collaboratively assisting teachers to meet the needs of students who have been identified as needing additional support, coaches require a wide range of experience and knowledge, including knowledge about inclusion. This might mean providing professional resources, assisting with assessment methods and analysis, modelling effective strategies, working with the teacher in a collaborative problem-solving approach and working with the teacher to reflect upon and improve his or her teaching practice. Coaches will require training and support as they assume these roles (Morel and Cushman 2012).

The role of the learning coach in the school will be determined by many factors—the purpose of the coaching strategy, which should be collaboratively decided by the principal and staff; the school context; student needs; and the skills and expertise of the coach. However, the coach is neither a quasi-administrator nor a paraprofessional nor a clerical support. Using the coach for these roles wastes the valuable time that the coach should spend helping teachers improve learning opportunities for all students. When the coach is chosen or assigned, meetings and discussions with the principal are critical in clearly outlining and understanding the coaching role.

There must be a clear distinction between the roles of the principal and that of the coach. This is particularly true when it comes to teacher supervision and evaluation, which are the responsibility of the principal as educational leader in the school. Coaches do not do supervision or evaluation—this must be clear from the start if teachers are to trust in the model and the coach. The Alberta Teachers' Association Code of Professional Conduct must be followed at all times. It is not the role of the coach to report on the teaching of a teacher to the principal.

Teachers as Competent Professionals

The seven principles of partnership outlined by Knight (2011) start with *equality*, meaning that the coach has faith in and respect for a teacher's competence and expertise. Coaching is more effective when the coach trusts the professional judgment of the teacher and allows him or her to select the focus of the coaching. In a culture characterized by collaboration, teachers and coaches are empowered to take action together and make wise choices to meet the learning needs of their students (Showers 1985).

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) note that there is widespread agreement that of all the factors in a school that affect children's learning and achievement, the most important is the teacher. Naylor (2005) concludes that there is a great deal of research that states that the classroom teacher is pivotal to the success or failure of inclusion in general and learning coaches in particular. Considering teachers as competent professionals and valuing their voluntary participation is key to successful coaching.

Alberta teachers are competent professionals who are committed to improving their practice through professional growth. Coaching for inclusion has the potential to enhance the skills and competencies of principals, coaches and teachers and should be considered part of the professional development plan, not only for individuals but as a school-based initiative.

The Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy of Alberta Education[1] aims to ensure that each teacher's actions, judgments and decisions are in the best educational interests of the students and support optimum learning. Every teacher is responsible for completing an annual teacher professional growth plan. Teachers who participate in coaching may choose to include this strategy as a significant portion of their professional growth plan.

To teach as a professional is a personal commitment and a collective responsibility for the learning and achievement of all of the students in an inclusive environment. It means planning teaching, improving teaching and doing teaching, not as an isolated individual but as a member of a high-performing team (Hargreaves and Fullan 2012).

Focus on Learning and Equity for All Students

All students must have equitable access to quality teaching and an education that will help them reach their full potential academically and socially. Although much of the emphasis in the coaching literature is on a collaborative culture, the roles of the participants and the models and strategies used in the classrooms, it is important to acknowledge that the underlying purpose is to improve the learning of all students and ensure that the strategy is driven by student needs.

Learning coaches must broaden their practices to consider the needs of all students in the school, including students who have disabilities or other unique learning needs. Coaching for inclusion should ensure that teachers have strategies so these students have an equitable opportunity to be included and to be successful in the school learning community.

In viewing inclusive education as social justice, George Theoharis (2009) focuses on the concerns and needs of marginalized students and stipulates that they should be addressed in inclusive settings and that attention be paid to creating and increasing access to core teaching for every student. There are also barriers to learning for

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[1] Available at http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/certification/standards/teacher.aspx.

students in public schools, such as poverty and racism, both of which have been connected with special education. For example, for years children with disabilities and English language learners have been educated in segregated settings and have been denied opportunities to receive the same education as their non-disabled and/or English-speaking peers. A program of coaching for inclusion should provide additional supports to staff to meet the needs of these students in an inclusive setting (Skytt and Turville 2012).

Teacher collaboration has been shown to be highly effective in including students with significant disabilities in general education classes (Downing and Peckham-Hardin 2007). Studies suggest that the more training educators have on students with disabilities and their needs, the more comfortable they are providing various accommodations, modifications and adaptations (Harvey, Cotton and Koch 2007).

Adequate Resources

Research and common sense agree that there must be an adequate and intentional allocation of resources to meet the learning needs of all students and the professional needs of all teachers if coaching for inclusion is to be successful. Many jurisdictions have started implementation of inclusive education while continuing the programs and services typical of traditional special education. As a result, the two systems could end up competing for scarce resources.

Participants in the consultations that led to the development of the *Setting the Direction Framework* (Alberta Education 2010c) identified ensuring that schools and classrooms are adequately resourced as a main concern. In discussions participants mentioned other concerns—smaller class sizes to reflect the number of special needs students, time for the coaching process to work, changes in infrastructure to meet needs of students and service providers, and professional development opportunities for the design and implementation of the program. Some of these concerns can be addressed by changing existing structures, but many come with a significant price tag.

The coaching for inclusion strategy may require additional staff members or the reallocation of staff. Training or professional development for the coaches and the teachers being coached is essential to the implementation process and must be adequately funded over time. Depending on the skills of the person engaged as the coach, there may need to be a significant training process.

One of the major resources that must be provided is time for the coaching process. This includes time for coaches and teachers to meet to plan for the coaching, time to reflect on the experience, time for collaborative team meetings and time for professional development. Some of this time can be created through creative timetabling and scheduling changes. However, there may be a financial component to increased staffing that needs to be considered in these discussion. Obviously, smaller classes can facilitate an inclusive environment in which students with a wide range

of diverse learning needs are not only included but provided with meaningful learning experiences so that they can reach their full potential.

Resources also include support from district office, not only in financial terms but also in ensuring a consistent communication of the value of the strategy and advocacy with parents and the community.

The chart on the following pages summarizes the characteristics of inclusive schools.

Characteristics of Model Inclusive Schools

Characteristic	Explanation
A sense of community	This provides a philosophy and vision that all children belong and can learn together. Diversity is valued. Self-worth, pride in own accomplishments and mutual respect are developed.
Leadership	Responsibility is shared among the school administrators and the entire school staff in planning and carrying out strategies to make the school successful.
High standards	High levels of educational outcomes and high standards of performance are established appropriate to students' needs. Levels of achievement, instructional content and instructional delivery vary based on an individual's needs.
Collaboration and cooperation	Staff and students support one another through collaborative strategies that may include co-teaching, student-assistance teams, cooperative learning, peer tutoring and other collaborative arrangements.
Changing roles and responsibilities	Old roles for teachers, staff and students are changed. Teachers facilitate more than lecture, students participate actively in learning, system and interagency specialists such as psychologists and speech-language pathologists work in the schools and so forth.
Wraparound services	Services that include health, mental health, social services and instructional services are all coordinated and collaborative.
Partnerships with parents	Embraced as equal and essential partners, families of all kinds are actively involved in the education of their children.

Characteristic	Explanation
Flexible learning environments	Individual paths to learning are expected and encouraged, rather than lock-step traditional approaches. Flexible grouping, meaningful individualized instruction and appropriate content delivery are everyday occurrences.
Strategies based on research	Recognized as helping teachers obtain best practice ideas and strategies, research is used regularly to inform practice, rather than eschewed for being impractical.
New forms of accountability	There is less reliance on test scores and more reliance on forms of accountability and accessibility that demonstrate true student growth and progress toward individual goals.
Access	All aspects of the physical building are accessible to students and families, and technology is used to ensure that all aspects of learning and instruction are accessible as well.
Continuing professional development	Recognizing that learning is ongoing, professional development is designed and obtained to ensure continuous improvement by faculty and staff in meeting the needs of all students.

Source: Adapted from Working Forum on Inclusive Schools (1994).

Developing a School-Based Coaching Program

Developing a School-Based Coaching Program

This section gets down to the planning and implementation of coaching for inclusion; it is divided into seven steps that are somewhat sequential but may also be used cyclically. The starting point will depend on the school culture and context, and the skills and expertise of the teachers and coaches. The steps listed below reflect the research and provide suggestions on how to operationalize the critical conditions.

- A. Understanding the Big Picture
- B. Awareness of Theory and Research
- C. Assessing School Context and Enhancing the Collaborative Culture
- D. Clarifying Purpose and Defining Roles
- E. Choosing the Coaching Model and the Coach
- F. Implementing the Program
- G. Assessing, Modifying, Evaluating and Celebrating

Examining the big picture, studying the research and theory, analyzing the collaborative culture of the school, and committing to participating in coaching are preliminary steps to designing and implementing coaching for inclusive learning. Principals may use a consensus process with the staff or may simply judge the readiness of the staff to move forward.

Principals may wish to form a team to guide the process. A team to facilitate the design and implementing process should be selected by participants volunteering and/or by invitation. Team members should represent a cross-section of the groups in the school. The coaching model selected, the number of coaches and the time allocated will determine how many and which staff are directly involved, but general support from the entire staff is important.

The accompanying workshop outlines and resources beginning on page 71 can be used with the whole staff, learning teams and parent groups. The workshops may form a sequential program or be used as needed, based on the nature and readiness of the school staff.

Implementation can also be planned using the Principal Quality Practice Guideline (Alberta Education 2009a) by reflecting on the current situation in the school and comparing it to the key questions and leadership strategies for inclusive schools provided earlier on pages 14–22 of this guide.

A. Understanding the Big Picture

A school leader must understand and appropriately respond to the political, social, economic, legal and cultural contexts of a school. Developing this knowledge and understanding is an ongoing process for school leaders. In the context of this guide, a leader should explore how coaching for inclusion and inclusive education reflect the broader societal trends in Alberta and Canada.

How society thinks about students with disabilities and how such students should be included in the education system has undergone a major shift in the last 100 years. Central to the philosophy of contemporary special education is the concept of inclusive education, a philosophy of student placement and program delivery that has tended to dominate discussion in recent years.

Participants in Alberta Education consultations and in the Alberta Teachers' Association surveys and focus groups were clear in their demands for change to reflect a changing world view in which all children are included in "so-called regular classrooms" in such a manner that they receive a meaningful education using strategies that suit their social and academic learning needs (Alberta Teachers' Association 2009).

Building an authentic inclusive education learning environment requires leadership and a commitment from everyone in the school community. First, there must be an acknowledgement that access to quality education for all is a basic human right in Alberta. Second, the principal must work to obtain commitment from all stakeholders to the social justice principles of a spirit of equality and a spirit of diversity. Third, the school staff must be willing to accept the risks in testing new policies, procedures and strategies. Fourth, resources must be provided and allocated based on equity principles. Last, principals must recognize their responsibility to initiate courageous conversations when they see that the system or individual actions are contributing to the marginalization of students in need (Skytt and Turville 2012).

Understanding of the larger societal, political and legal context is facilitated by personal reading and professional reflection and by activities such as study groups, conference attendance and dialogue at the school and district level. Principals should include staff in the exploration of the trends and issues. Understanding the big picture can help staff realize the importance of new approaches and of supporting the collaborative relationships important for success.

One of the important questions to consider prior to implementation is how inclusive education is reflected in the overall mission, vision and values of the school. It is also important that principals work with staff to develop a shared mission, vision and values for coaching as a strategy for inclusive learning in the school.

B. Exploring Theory and Research

Although coaching as a method of increasing skills and competencies has been common practice in sports and business, educational coaching is not a usual practice. The work of Joyce and Showers demonstrated that (peer) coaching was an integral step in a professional development strategy as a follow up to training to acquire new teaching skills and strategies (Showers and Joyce 1996). A considerable body of research has developed on the effectiveness of peer coaches that can apply to coaching for inclusion.

Researchers on teacher training, curriculum implementation and curriculum reform agree that transferring skills and strategies foreign to a teacher's existing repertoire requires more training than is typically allotted to such enterprises. Coaching appears to be more appropriate when teachers want to acquire new configurations of teaching patterns and master strategies that require new ways of thinking about learning outcomes and the processes by which students achieve them. Minor changes—fine-tuning existing skills—can be achieved more easily by teachers themselves (Showers 1985).

Slater and Simmons (2001) observed that few scholars debate the usefulness of peer coaching. Some believe its success may stem from the importance assigned to reciprocity (Mills 1994). Others note that its success may result from its focus on improving teaching rather than rating teachers (Munro and Elliot 1987). However, there are several qualities that all successful coaching programs must have. First, peer coaching "must not be confused with or used for supervision and evaluation of teachers" (Showers and Joyce 1996, 14). It is vital that participants (coaches) "be clear about the nature of the (coaching) relationship, and not use it for evaluation or judgment" (Costa and Kallick 1993). Peer-coaching models based on evaluation were not successful as non-evaluative models because no collaboration or teacher-initiated change was exercised (Nolan, Hawkes and Francis 1993).

Much of the research indicates that if a coaching program is to be successful, participation should be voluntary and a collaborative culture be present. The emphasis on flexibility should be included in classroom models of peer coaching. Further emphasis should be placed on agreement and volunteerism as the basis for the program. (Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon 1998). [Editor's note: references cited in Slater and Simmons 2001.]

According to the research, peer coaching has many benefits. For example, peer coaching
- breaks down isolation and uses the knowledge of others,
- develops norms of collaboration,
- develops a wider repertoire of strategies and techniques for addressing diverse needs,
- identifies a valuable source of support,
- helps transfer newly acquired skills,

- modifies behaviour as a result of data analysis,
- provides time for reflection and discussion,
- improves teaching performance and
- enhances student learning. (Robbins 1991)

It is useful to review the literature for characteristics of successful programs when the staff develop the shared vision and values for the coaching program. *Powerful Designs for Professional Learning* (Easton 2004, cited in Robbins 1991) lists the following critical elements of a successful coaching program:
- *Climate:* The school's climate supports innovation and change.
- *Voluntary participation:* While all staff members should be invited to participate in peer coaching, in many schools not all will agree in the beginning stage. Positive comments and outcomes will draw more participation.
- *Commitment:* The district and school administrators demonstrate commitment to coaching by providing resources of time, money and symbolic support.
- *Common language:* Participants share a common language about student learning needs, curricula and teaching practices.
- *Professional development:* Participants are provided with professional development that is timely and focused on the goals of the program
- *Control:* The classroom teacher maintains responsibility for his or her students and determines which students the program will support.
- *Choice:* The classroom teacher has final decision-making authority with regard to the strategies that will be employed and how to include coaching for inclusive learning in classroom instruction.
- *Trust:* Coaching protocols are negotiated in detail so that partners trust their agreements.
- *Data:* Decisions are data informed and based on specific, observable data of student learning.
- *Examination:* The practices and consequences of a coaching for inclusive learning program are examined as thoughtfully as the practices and consequences of classroom teaching.
- *Leadership support:* Leadership provides ongoing support, has courageous conversations, monitors the program, supervises classroom teaching and student learning, and makes adjustments as necessary.

It is critical that staff engage in collaborative activities to understand the value and importance of coaching for inclusive learning and also that coaching be part of a larger strategy to ensure that all students have opportunities to succeed in the regular classroom.

Teachers must believe that a new strategy or approach will improve their abilities to meet the diverse learning needs of their students. Making a successful case for coaching is critical to its viability (Annenberg Institute n.d.). The activities in the workshop section are designed to help teachers develop a shared understanding

of the research and of how coaching for inclusive learning can help them meet the diverse learning needs of the students they meet daily in their classrooms.

Workshop outlines for Exploring Theory and Research begin on page 77.

C. Assessing the School Context and Enhancing Collaborative Culture

After examining the theory and research on inclusive education in general and coaching for inclusion in particular, the next step is to assess the school context by asking questions that will provide a broad perspective of the current situation. What special or diverse needs are present in the school population—learning, physical, emotional, cultural, economic, language? Who are the students with diverse learning needs and how are they served now? How collaborative is the school culture? How ready are staff to engage in collaborative work? What collaborative structures exist in the school (physical space and time allocation)? What are the self-identified PD needs of the teachers to work with student diversity?

In *How to Plan and Implement a Peer Coaching Program*, Pam Robbins (1991) suggests a comprehensive set of contextual factors that should be considered in relation to school readiness:

- What is the pre-existing climate of collegiality? A climate of effective collaboration is essential to the success of coaching.
- Are there norms supporting risk taking and experimentation for all staff?
- Has the supervisory experience been a pleasant or unpleasant one for teachers? Though coaching for inclusive learning has nothing to do with evaluation, a teacher's previous experiences of teaching in front of an adult will affect his or her feelings about teaching in front of colleagues.
- What is the school's track record in staff development? If a bandwagon mentality prevails, teachers may be inclined to think that coaching for inclusive learning will be another bandwagon topic.
- What are the core values of the school? What do members of the school community believe to be important and what is the commitment to learning and success for students with diverse learning needs?
- Does leadership support inclusive education? The coaching for inclusive learning strategy?
- What else is going on? Time is a precious resource in schools. A major consideration in determining whether a coaching for inclusive learning program might become a way of life in a school is to examine what it must compete with in terms of teacher time, focus and resources.
- Will the organizational structure of the school support coaching for inclusive learning activities? Scheduling is inextricably tied to the opportunity for collegial interactions.
- What are the existing structures of collaboration at the school? If staff members have a history of working together, coaching for inclusive learning

will not represent a major departure from the norm. What structures will support planning, decision making and implementation?

- What is the nature of decision making in the school? Truly collaborative cultures use a structure of shared decision making. Were collaborative processes used to develop a shared mission, vision, values and goals?
- How flexible is the school culture? It is important to examine how readily new ideas are incorporated in the school to determine the prospects for a coaching for inclusive learning program to succeed.

Enhancing the collaborative culture of the school often requires the principal's leadership and support. Showers (1984) outlines five ways that principals can enhance the collaborative working relationships in their schools:

1. Principals must work to establish new norms that reward collegial planning, public teaching, constructive feedback and experimentation.
2. Professional growth must be seen as a valuable and expected process and clearly separated from the evaluation of performance.
3. Principals need to facilitate the implementation of peer coaching systems through collaborative problem solving with their teachers.
4. Parent and community support can be solicited by explaining the purpose and expected outcomes of the coaching for inclusive learning program.
5. Principals can use their influence to ensure that quality inservice programs are provided to teachers. Coaching programs must have some content to coach, and the greater the expertise brought to bear on identified problems, the greater the dividends of the coaching program.

Research has shown that the characteristics of a collaborative staff include a sense of community, shared leadership, high standards, collaboration and cooperation, changing roles and relationships, partnership with parents, flexible learning arrangements, research-based strategies, new forms of accountability, accessible building, and continuing professional development. The following chart, adapted from Murawski and Spencer (2011), describes leadership strategies to enhance collaboration in schools.

Strategies to Enhance Collaboration in Schools

Strategy	Description of Strategy
Create a culture of expectancy	Create an atmosphere in which there is a bit of peer pressure to work with colleagues; expect collaboration by immersing the school in the concept; keep the concept out in front, and create multiple opportunities to collaborate on different topics/activities.
Increase sharing of information	Open meetings with faculty talking about successes and concerns; rotate through different departments, grade levels, and people; allow for personal sharing of successes and concerns as well as school-related ones; have faculty create a "central clearinghouse on students" with information gleaned by teachers regarding learning styles, grading preferences, parent feedback, multiple intelligences, etc (do not add confidential information).
Encourage sharing of expertise	Help school members recognize and appreciate their shared expertise; have an expert-in-the-lounge day each week (with experts on anything from grading, to foldables, skateboarding jargon, organizational tips, knitting and working with parents); ask for newsletter articles; create an ask-the-expert website and include parents, staff, students, and community members as experts; ask teachers to conduct staff development programs so that it is not always experts from afar who are presenting.
Enable sharing of ideas	Support professional learning communities or communities of practice within the school so that teachers can collaborate on instructional planning and share effective strategies; encourage teams to share good lesson plans and not have to recreate the wheel; hold classroom walkabouts where teachers get to visit one another's rooms and share ideas; organize meetings of staff who work with particular students to share information about successful teaching and learning strategies.

Strategy	Description of Strategy
Allow sharing of concerns	Create opportunities for roundtable discussions of ongoing concerns; anyone who wants to can post an issue to discuss and a small group would get together to discuss and then share results for one hour or less; invite community members.
Promote sharing of knowledge	Facilitate book studies by ensuring that the school has multiple copies of books on differentiation, collaboration and strategies; get funding to send teachers and related staff to conferences (send people from different areas when possible); start Critical Friends groups or Action Research groups; make a connection with a local university's faculty of education and invite ongoing communication and collaboration with faculty there.
Model sharing of consideration, humour, compassion, and other positive personality traits	Regularly recognize the positive attributes of others and model them yourself; set up opportunities for rapport building that do not have ulterior motives (eg, a family picnic that is not also a fundraiser); allow risk taking, sharing of nontraditional ideas and constructive criticism; laugh often and help others do so as well.

Adapted from Murawski and Spencer 2011, 137.

Time for Collaboration and Coaching

Although collaborative relationships in a school are the most important condition for success, the physical arrangements and organizational structures of the school also influence the coaching process. There are several questions that can help you assess this characteristic. Does the physical organization of the school lend itself to a coaching process? Are there private spaces that teachers and coaches can use for conferences and discussions? Are the classrooms big enough to support the work of co-teaching teams? Are the classrooms of team members in the same area of the school? Are there spaces available for the learning teams to work? What changes can you make to support the coaching process? How can the coaching program be modified to fit into school structures that cannot be changed?

Time is an important aspect of school structure and organization and it has a major effect on the success of coaching for inclusive learning—that is, the coach and the teacher being coached must be able to meet during the school day. The provision of time for the coaching process is visible proof that the activity is valued and supported by the school and the school division leadership.

Several authors suggest the following ways to gain time for the coaching process:
- Establish common planning time during the school day.
- Use staff development days for the entire staff to evaluate progress and establish long-term goals.
- Hire substitute teachers to provide release time for teachers to attend meetings with parents and community resource personnel.
- Hold professional development activities to support student learning during the school day.
- Allow teachers to have team meetings and plan as part of staff meetings.
- Schedule meetings for collaborative teams during special student activities or assemblies. (Honigsfield and Dove 2010)

The following is a compilation of suggestions for how to create opportunities for teachers to meet during the school day:

1. Adjust the school schedule
- Establish one period per week at the beginning or end of the school day (when students are on the playground or in a whole-group activity in the gym) so that teachers can meet.
- Devise a common planning period for teachers.
- Employ substitute teachers to cover classes.
- Reduce the number of periods that teachers have contact with students.
- Modify the time frames of the school timetable.

2. Provide incentives
  • Employ school aides to release teachers from lunch or recess duty.
  • Increase access to professional development workshops.

3. Use resources more efficiently
  • Have teachers with special expertise provide guest lessons in classrooms to free up general education teachers (counsellors, school admin, special education coordinator).
  • Redistribute students for one period so that three classes become two.
  • Invite community members to share their expertise with students.
  • Organize field trips or community activities where a larger group of students can be escorted by one teacher and other adults (for example, a music festival).
  • Organize cross-graded activities to free teachers to meet.
  • Consider applying for external funding for a collaborative initiative.

4. Find time when students are not in the school
  • Use staff development days for collaborative long-term planning.
  • Schedule short staff meetings twice a month, provide information items in writing and use regular staff meeting time for collaborative planning.

Self-Identified Needs of the Teaching Staff

A necessary condition for a successful coaching program is staff volunteering for the program and identifying their own needs:
  • How *relevant* is the concept of coaching for inclusion to an individual staff member? If teachers see a connection between their lives as teachers and coaching for inclusive learning activities, they will participate.
  • Is participation feasible? *Feasibility* addresses the considerations of time (whether a teacher believes she can make the time to become involved in a coaching for inclusive learning program) and philosophy (whether collaboration and peer coaching are consistent with a teacher's belief about how teachers should practise).
  • Has the teacher been involved in deciding whether or not to participate in coaching for inclusion? *Involvement* in the decision-making process will clarify what coaching for inclusive learning is all about. Adult learners need a sense of control over what happens to them. What is the degree of trust among teachers at the school and those promoting collaboration and coaching? Trust is one of the most fundamental variables in collaborative working relationships. (Roberts et al 1987, cited in Robbins 1991)

Another feature to consider in the self-identification process for teachers is their expertise and skills in teaching students with diverse learning needs. Teachers have to believe that they need help in improving learning for these students and that coaching

will improve their teaching. They should then identify the specific skills and knowledge that will form the basis for the coaching relationship.

Does a teacher's personal growth plan identify needs that could form the basis for a coaching opportunity? Teachers are encouraged to include goals in their plans to address areas of teaching that they feel are important areas of improvement. Participation in the coaching plan may provide a valuable professional development opportunity for teachers and coaches.

Needs of Students Who Require Additional Supports in the Inclusive Classroom

Who are the students with diverse learning needs in a school? Given that the focus of coaching for inclusion is on helping teachers meet the needs of students with diverse learning needs in an inclusive classroom, it is important to identify those student needs before choosing the coaching models and implementing the program.

A team consisting of the principal, the special education or resource room teacher(s), guidance counsellor and a few interested teachers should meet to identify the students who require additional support. How many are there and what is the range of special needs within the group? Data can be obtained from permanent records, recommendations from special education specialists, parents and teacher assessments. Collecting this information is critical before designing the coaching program.

Workshop outlines for Assessing School Context and Enhancing the Collaborative Culture begin on page 92.

D. Clarifying Purpose and Defining Roles

At this point in the process, the administrator and the staff have examined the big picture relative to inclusive education and students with special and diverse learning needs; studied the research on coaching, particularly coaching for inclusion; assessed the school context and the collaborative climate and structures in the school; and committed to developing and implementing a coaching for inclusive learning program.

The next steps are to clearly define the specific purposes for the program relative to the school context and to clarify the role of the inclusive learning coach in working with school staff.

Purpose of Coaching for Inclusive Learning

Ideally, coaching is a continuing process firmly embedded in the ethos and organizational context of a school. In education, coaching has been operationally defined as the provision of onsite personal support and technical assistance for teachers.

The purpose of a typical coaching program is usually twofold: increased student performance and improved professional collaboration (Killion and Harrison 2006). In general terms, the purpose of coaching for inclusion is to support teachers of students with diverse needs, in particular students who require additional help. This generic purpose should be modified to fit the specific needs of the school as identified by the analysis of the school context. To be effective and sustained over time, coaching for inclusion must have a deliberate focus, and the focus must matter to the people involved (Robbins 1991).

Even in situations where coaching for inclusion is organized centrally, the school principal must work with school staff to develop a shared mission, vision, values and goals for the program specific to the school. Working collaboratively with the school staff will produce a unity of purpose and transparency about what the coaching is intended to achieve and an opportunity to adjust the program to address student and teacher needs. When school staff are involved in making these decisions, there will be a higher level of trust and increased buy-in for the program.

Role of the Inclusive Learning Coach

The only thing the literature agrees on is that there is no agreement about the role of a learning coach, just as there is no agreement about the coaching models that should be used. In other words, it depends on the school context, the purpose for coaching, the coach, the teachers being coached, the students that are the focus of the assistance, and the district policy and focus. In spite of this ambiguity it is important that the position be as clearly defined as possible in the school.

This section suggests possible tasks to include in the role of learning coaches and the characteristics of effective coaches that might be useful in defining their role in the school.

Jim Knight (2011) describes a *coach* as a thinking partner for teachers and *coaching* as a meeting of minds. The actions of coaches includes enrolling teachers, identifying teacher goals, listening, asking questions, explaining teaching practices and providing feedback. An important role of an inclusive learning coach is facilitating professional dialogue and collegial relationships through
- development of shared language,
- development of school norms that support continuous study and improvement,
- building capability for other kinds of change and
- building permanent structures for collegial relationships.

In the classroom, the coach can *observe* (collect information that will inform discussions about student behaviour and learning), *collaborate* (co-plan and/or co-teach a lesson), *consult* (a coach with more experience with an issue or topic helps the teacher or refines particular strategies), or *coach* (when invited, the coach mentors the teacher on areas of interest).

Coaching activities outside the classroom can include problem solving, data analysis, participation in study groups/learning teams, materials development, curriculum development, idea sharing, co-planning and co-teaching.

Possible tasks for a learning coach can include
- helping teachers meet the diverse learning needs of students,
- providing support for individual program planning,
- demonstrating and modelling inclusive instructional practices and learning activities,
- demonstrating an ability to make educational decisions based on assessment data,
- observing instruction and providing feedback,
- co-planning lessons and units,
- co-teaching lessons,
- applying strategies for differentiated instruction,
- supporting the application of universal design for learning,
- promoting reflection,
- analyzing student work and progress,
- managing assessments and materials,
- conducting professional development activities,
- developing and finding materials and sharing resources,
- providing assistance to modify materials,
- developing methods of collaborative planning,
- providing information to teachers about students,
- sharing research and new information,
- facilitating learning team meetings, and
- mentoring teachers.

Sometimes in defining and describing a role it is helpful to understand what a role is not. For example, a learning coach is not
- someone who teaches small groups or classes in a pull-out situation,
- a paraprofessional,
- someone who administers individual student diagnostic assessments,
- an administrator who supervises and evaluates teachers,
- a substitute teacher,
- a clerical assistant,
- a data analyst or
- a tutor.

There must be a clear distinction between the roles of the principal and the coach. Questions often centre on the relationship of coaching to teacher evaluation, distinctions between coaching and supervision, and the roles of principals and central

office staff. In the coaching process, the learning coach helps teachers acquire new skills or teaching strategies and apply them skillfully and effectively for instruction. The evaluation of a teacher typically implies judgment about the adequacy of the teacher's professional practice, whereas coaching implies assistance in the student learning process. As coaching is practised, every aspect of professional development is carefully applied and studied. Coaching teams measure their transfer of skills into the workplace and study the effectiveness of teaching skills and strategies with their students. In this sense, everything is studied and reflected upon. However, nothing could be further from the atmosphere of coaching than the practice of traditional evaluation. The norms of coaching and evaluation are antithetical and should be separated in our thinking as well as our practice (Showers 1985).

Alberta Education's Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation Policy[2] clearly outlines the responsibility of the principal in conducting supervision and evaluation. During the process a principal may suggest that the teacher be part of a coaching process as one strategy to improve his or her practice. This, however, does not negate the principle that voluntary participation is an essential criterion of coaching for inclusion.

An effective learning coach has the following characteristics:
- *Knowledge*—coaches must have expert knowledge about how to apply strategies and processes for diverse needs.
- *Credibility*—a coach must demonstrate success in the classroom, not as an observer but as a participant teacher. When a coach works side by side with a teacher, the teacher realizes that the coach has useful ideas and can execute them in the classroom.
- *Support*—a coach must encourage a teacher's efforts and couch constructive comments in praise. Teachers need time and support to implement new strategies.
- *Facilitation*—a learning coach is skilled at facilitating teacher collaboration, problem solving and sharing promising practices, but the coach is a "tenant" in another teacher's classroom, and it is essential that the teacher maintain ownership of the lesson, students and classroom.
- *Availability*—a learning coach must be accessible to the teacher for planning, team teaching and conferencing.
- *Personal qualities*—coaches should be open and approachable in their approach; another important quality is having a reflective and questioning nature.
- *Trust*—a defining characteristic in the coach–teacher relationship; the professional conversations between them should be confidential.

Broadly speaking, the literature asserts that effective coaches need skills in three key areas: (1) content-specific instructional expertise, (2) strong interpersonal skills and (3) sensitive communication skills (Killion and Harrison 2006). The content-specific

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[2] Available at http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/certification/standards/teacher.aspx.

instruction for learning coaches includes expertise on special education techniques and strategies and knowledge of differentiated instruction; the interpersonal-skill component focuses on collaborative communication and problem solving.

Other Professionals in the Classroom

Unlike the isolation in the classrooms and schools of the past, in today's classrooms and schools collaborative teams of professionals often work together. These teams may include education and health care providers in the wrap-around delivery system who provide additional supports in meeting the diverse needs of the students. The role of the learning coach must be clearly defined in relationship to this team.

Some schools have staff in the roles of resource room teacher, student support teachers and special education facilitators. General learning coaches and specific subject coaches may be part of the mix as well. If coaching for inclusion is to be successful, people need to understand how their roles intersect.

Workshop outlines for Clarifying Purpose and Defining Roles begin on page 101.

E. Choosing the Coaching Model and the Coach

The research on educational coaching shows a range of coaching models and strategies, and there is no right answer to the question of which model is best. Each model has its merits, its own success stories and its own share of challenges. Zigler and Weiss (1985, cited in Honigsfeld and Dove 2010) advise that research on program effectiveness must go beyond the question of whether or not a program "works" and instead should ask what works, how, when, why and for whom. All stakeholders in a local decision-making process should work collaboratively to decide which model to use, how to pilot a new program, how to maintain existing programs, and when and how to revise them (Honigsfeld and Dove 2010).

To choose between coaching models and strategies, administrators must identify the outcomes they want to achieve and the resources they are willing to commit. In keeping with the collaborative relationships so important for the success of any coaching model, principals should involve their staff in selecting the most appropriate coaching model. Some of the purposes of coaching identified by Showers and Joyce (1996) are listed below. Principals should consider these when making their decision. The coaching model should

- build communities of teachers who continuously engage in the study of their craft,
- allow teachers to develop a shared language and set of common understandings for collegial study,
- allow for constant improvement of curriculum and instruction and expansion of the teaching repertoire, and
- provide a structure for professional development, which is essential to acquiring new skills.

The most critical action in selecting a coaching model most likely to produce the outcomes the school desires is the level of support for the program at both the school and district level. Implementation should not start until the program has been discussed and teachers understand the coaching model being used.

This section briefly reviews some of the most common coaching models, including collegial, technical, challenge, instructional, peer coaching, collaboration and co-teaching. Further study of the chosen method(s) and strategies can form the basis of ongoing professional development.

Collegial Coaching

In collegial coaching the major goals are to refine teaching practices, deepen collegiality, increase professional dialogue and help teachers think more deeply about their work. This model assumes that teachers acquire and deepen career-long habits or self-initiated reflection about their teaching when they have the opportunity to develop and practise their skills. The long-range goal is self-coaching for continuous self-perpetuating improvements in teaching. The observed teacher's priority determines the coaching focus. The coach routinely gathers classroom data about the teacher's priority area, evidence of student learning, and the teacher's instructional decisions and behaviours. The coach helps the observed teacher analyze and interpret data and encourages the teacher to apply it to future teaching.

Cognitive coaching, an example of collegial coaching, uses dialogue strategies to enhance teacher's perceptions, thinking and instructional approaches. In cognitive coaching, teaching is viewed as a highly professional activity requiring a repertoire of specialized techniques and the exercise of professional judgment about applying them. Cognitive coaches are trained to facilitate the thinking processes that underlie those professional judgments and pedagogical decisions. Collegial/cognitive coaching creates open professional dialogue and helps teachers feel efficacious. Suspension of judgment in collegial coaching helps teachers establish open professional interchange more quickly.

Technical Coaching

Technical coaching, which grows out of the work of Joyce and Showers (1983), has a traditional coaching role in which an expert decides what is to be coached, shows how to perform the skill and evaluates how well the teacher replicates the skill. Teachers who are given technical coaching generally practice a new skill with greater frequency and develop greater skill, use the strategies more appropriately, retain knowledge about the skill with the new strategies for longer periods of time, teach the new strategies with the students, and understand the purposes and uses more clearly.

The positive effects of technical coaching are not without their price. Teachers in technical coaching programs required between 40 and 60 hours of professional development and coaching to attain high-level skills. Also, teachers report that technical coaching tends to inhibit collegiality and professional dialogue. When

teachers complete the technical observation form, the observer must evaluate the adequacy of the teacher's decisions. Because technical coaching gives observers an evaluative function there is a tendency for teachers to give each other advice or constructive criticism. In contrast, suspension of judgment in collegial coaching helps teachers establish open professional interchange more quickly (Showers 1985). Technical coaching may be useful when a school is adopting a specific approach such as guided reading or when teachers have agreed to use a common approach to dealing with a student's behaviour.

Challenge Coaching

The term *challenge* refers to resolving a problematic state. Challenge coaching starts with the teacher's identification of a persistent problem or a desired goal. Challenge coaching may be done in small groups; technical and collegial coaching are often done in pairs. Unlike technical and collegial coaching, non-teachers such as teacher's assistants, community professionals and interagency support staff are sometimes included in challenge teams for their special perceptions, expertise or potential role in the solution. This model assumes that team problem-solving efforts by those responsible for carrying out instruction can produce insightful, practical improvements. Since trust, collegiality, and norms supporting problem solving in professional dialogue are prerequisite conditions, challenge coaching often evolves from the other coaching approaches. Challenge coaching differs from technical and collegial coaching in two ways: process and product. Collaborative action research can be used as a form of challenge coaching where an issue is identified and, through team problem solving, a decision is made to test a strategy to address the issue. Data is then gathered for the teacher and the coach to determine how the strategy is working and whether to continue the strategy or test a new strategy.

Instructional Coaching

Instructional coaching is a research-based, job-embedded approach to instructional intervention that provides the necessary assistance and encouragement for teachers to implement new programs that improve student learning. An instructional coach is an on-site professional developer who teaches his or her colleagues how to use proven teaching methods. The instructional coach uses a repertoire of effective instructional practices to collaborate with teachers, identify practices that will effectively address teachers' needs and help teachers implement those practices. The instructional coach may work one-to-one or in small groups to help teachers identify their most pressing issues, guide them through resource material and engage in collaborative planning. In the classroom, the instructional coach can model instructional strategies, observe teachers when they use interventions and provide feedback to teachers.

Research into the effectiveness of instructional coaching identified three benefits. First, coaching was found to support effective implementation when the right conditions were in place. Second, instructional coaches were able to increase teachers' fidelity to the instructional practice that was being promoted, which in turn

increased teachers' confidence and implementation of the new practice. Third, the implementation of an instructional coaching program promoted positive conversations in the school (Knight 2006).

Peer Coaching

Peer coaching is a confidential process through which two or more professional colleagues work together to reflect on current practices; expand, refine, and build new skills; share ideas; teach each other; conduct classroom research; and solve problems in the workplace. It may be called peer support, consulting colleagues or peer sharing and caring. The participants operate in a collaborative non-hierarchical relationship. Peer coaching has nothing to do with evaluation. It is not intended as a remedial activity or strategy to "fix" teachers. The teacher who invites a coach in steers the process. The inviting teacher identifies the focus of the observation, the form of data collection, guidelines for the coach's behaviour in the classroom during the observation, the parameters of the discussion of observed teaching, and the date and time of the observation (Showers 1985).

The benefits of a peer coaching program are more than mastery and integration of new knowledge and skills for individual teachers. The development of school norms that support inclusive student learning and continuous improvement of teaching builds capability for any kind of change, whether it be adoption of a new curriculum, schoolwide discipline policies or the building of teaching repertoire. By building permanent structures for collegial relationships, schools can organize themselves for improvement. Peer coaching offers an opportunity to build a community of learners who are committed to lifelong learning within the school. Properly implemented peer coaching can celebrate individual work and accomplishments, yet simultaneously help teachers learn from one another rather than from errors alone (Robbins 1991).

Robbins, in *How to Plan and Implement a Peer Coaching Program* (1991), describes what peer coaching is and is not:
- Peer coaching has nothing to do with evaluation.
- Peer coaching is based on professional, not social, dialogue.
- Interactions should be collegial rather than competitive in nature.
- Coaching should be supportive rather than evaluative.
- Interactions between the coach and the inviting teacher should be confidential.
- The focus of coaching visits should change to meet the needs of the inviting teacher.
- Teachers need to choose whether or not to participate in coaching.

The principles that define the peer coaching model are as follows:
- All teachers must agree to be members of peer-coaching study teams. Teams must collectively agree to (a) practise or use whatever change the faculty has decided to implement, (b) support one another in the change

process, including sharing the planning of instructional and development materials and lessons, and (c) collect data about the implementation process and the effects on students relative to the program outcomes.

- The primary activity of peer-coaching study teams is planning and developing curriculum and instruction in pursuit of shared goals. Collaborative planning is essential if teachers are to divide the labour of developing a new lesson and unit sequence and use one another's products. When teachers provide mutual feedback, collaborative activity tends to disintegrate. Peer coaches reported that they found themselves slipping into "supervisory and evaluative comments" despite their intention to avoid them. "Remarkably, omitting feedback in the coaching process has not depressed the implementation or student growth" (Showers and Joyce 1996) and the omission has greatly simplified the organization of peer coaching teams.

- The term *coach* needs to be redefined when pairs of teachers observe each other: the one teaching is the coach and the one observing is the coached. In this process, teachers who are observing do so in order to learn from their colleagues.

- The collaborative work of peer-coaching teams is much broader than observations and conference. Teachers learn from one another while planning for instruction, in development of support materials, watching one another work with students and thinking together about the impact of their behaviour on students' learning. (Showers and Joyce 1996)

In peer coaching, who should coach? Teachers may coach each other. The logistics involved in continuous professional development favour peer coaches, and collegial teams that learn and apply new skills together. Also, teaching teams

- need to be familiar with the new skill or strategy to be applied,
- require access to other teachers in their classrooms for purposes of coaching and
- must be open to experimentation and willing to persist and refine skills. (Showers 1985)

Teachers were strongly opposed to a coach not being a peer because they may have felt that such a person has no experience with the realities of teaching. Therefore, the non-classroom teacher coach would be well advised not to observe but to team teach. Teachers and coaches stress that the coach must be more knowledgeable than the teacher about the method being learned (ASCD 1989).

How should coaching pairs be formed? Coaching needs to occur in a psychologically safe environment. Therefore, teachers should select their own partners. This selection is often based on shared interests, areas of expertise, friendship patterns, geographic proximity, similar teaching styles or the grade levels taught. There should be a process for peer coaches to "get a divorce" if the relationship is not working (Showers and Joyce 1996).

Collaboration

Collaboration, like peer coaching, is a style of interaction between at least two equal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making and working toward a common goal (Cook and Friend 1995). Collaboration depends on the voluntary effort of professional educators to improve their schools and their own teaching through teamwork (Smith and Scott 1990). Collaboration is important for two crucial reasons. First, many of the difficulties that schools face today cut across a wide range of disciplines and can often be bridged only through teamwork. Second, by interacting with others, we can often discover new approaches to problems (Reich, cited in Thornburg 2002). One of the most compelling reasons for collaboration is that it moves professionals and families from a deficit model to an affirming model that is responsive to (student) strengths, backgrounds, beliefs and values. Collaboration reduces role differentiation between teachers and specialists, resulting in shared expertise for problem solving that yields multiple solutions to problems related to literacy and learning (Risko and Bromley 2001). [Editor's note: references cited in Honigsfeld and Dove 2010.]

Many Alberta schools initiated teaming and collaboration with the development of professional learning communities and already use a team approach to supporting students with diverse learning needs.

Co-Teaching

Over the last decade, co-teaching has gained prominence as a powerful collaborative strategy in research and educational publications. "Co-teaching has been found effective for students with a variety of instructional needs, including English language learners (Mahoney 1997); students with hearing impairments (Compton et al 1998; Luckner 1999); students with learning disabilities (Rice and Zigmond 1999; Trent 1998; Welch 2000); high-risk students in social studies class (Dieker 1998) and students in a language remediation class (Miller, Valasky and Molloy 1998). To illustrate, Welch (2000) showed that the students with disabilities and their classmates all made academic gains in reading and spelling on curriculum-based assessments in the co-taught classrooms" (Santamaria and Thousand 2004).

Co-teaching has been defined as the pairing of a general education teacher and a specialist educator in an inclusive general education program for the purpose of providing high-level instruction to meet the diverse needs of a wide range of students. It's important to note that in co-teaching, both teachers are participating in co-planning, co-instructing and co-assessing (Garmston 1987).

In collaborative co-teaching arrangements in model schools where all students (including students with severe disabilities) are educated in general classrooms, interviews with 95 peer-collaborators and 96 others who were not collaborating (Pugach and Johnson 1995) found that those in the peer-collaboration group experienced reduced referral rates to special services, increased confidence in

handling classroom problems, increased positive attitudes toward the classroom and more tolerance toward children with cognitive deficits (Villa, Thousand and Nevin 2004).

Teachers involved in co-teaching report positive outcomes and view co-teaching as a way to become more empowered. There is evidence to suggest that teachers feel empowered when they can make decisions collaboratively (Duke, Showers and Imber 1980). They report increased skill and high-level thinking that generated more solutions (Thousand et al 1995). Other valued outcomes include increased attendance and participation at team meetings, persistence in working on difficult tasks, and attainment of overall team goals (Johnson and Johnson 1997)

Co-teaching is when two or more people share responsibility for the teaching of some or all of the students assigned to a classroom. It involves the distribution of responsibility for planning, instruction and evaluation of the students. A co-teaching team may be defined as two or more teachers who agree to

- coordinate their work to achieve at least one common, publicly agreed-on goal;
- share a belief system that each of the co-teaching team members has unique and needed expertise;
- demonstrate parity by alternately engaging in the dual role of teacher and learner, expert and novice, giver and recipient of knowledge or skills;
- use distributed functions of leadership in which the task and relationships functions of the traditional lone teacher are distributed among all co-teaching group members; and
- use a cooperative process that includes face-to-face interaction, positive interdependence, performance, monitoring and processing of interpersonal skills, and individual accountability. (Villa, Thousand and Nevin 2004)

Co-teaching is not

- team teaching, in which two general education teachers combine their classes and teach some or many classes;
- one teacher teaching one subject while the other prepares instructional materials, photocopies or marks papers in their office;
- one teacher teaching the lesson while the other stands or sits by and watches; or
- the addition of a paraprofessional to a general education teacher's classroom. (Villa, Thousand and Nevin 2004)

Co-teaching provides a greater opportunity to capitalize on the unique, diverse and specialized knowledge, skills and instructional approaches of the co-teachers (Bauwens, Hourcade and Friend 1989; Hourcade and Bauwens 2002). Below are some of the benefits of co-teaching:

- Every student in the class has different educational options and more individualized attention to materials and instruction.

- Classroom participation of students with disabilities is increased through the reduction of student-to-teacher ratio and the use of groupings.
- Intensity of instruction is achieved through the understanding of student needs and the use of a variety of effective teaching and learning strategies and adoption of material.
- Stigma attached to students attending segregated special education is reduced.
- Students learn tolerance and respect for diversity.
- Professionals support each other's efforts.
- Expectations for students with disabilities are increased. (Wilson and Blednick 2011)

The following are examples of classroom configurations for co-teaching:
- One teacher teaching while the other supports
- Parallel teaching, in which the class is divided into two, each with a teacher
- Station teaching (three stations, teachers at two of them and the other[s] operating independently)
- Alternative teaching, in which one teacher teaches a large group and the other has a small group
- Team teaching for the whole class (Wilson and Blednick 2011)

Choosing the Model

Coaching to support inclusion may include any or all of the models and strategies. The choice will depend on such factors as
- the identified purpose for the coaching,
- the skills and expertise of the coach,
- staff commitment to the program,
- the available resources (financial, time and physical arrangements of the school),
- available training for coaches and teachers, and
- most important, the needs of the students with special and diverse needs in the school.

Implementation does not start until the program has been discussed and teachers have knowledge of the coaching model being used (Showers 1984). Strategies for staff involvement in the selection of the coaching model are included in the workshop activities that follow.

Selection of Coaches

In selecting the coach(es), consider the purpose of the program, the coaching model chosen, the qualities of a successful learning coach and the resources committed to the program.

There are a number of questions to consider:

- What resources are available for the coaching initiative?
- How much flexibility does the principal have in hiring or selecting the coach?
- Are special education teachers the major source for the positions?
- Are there resources available from the district?
- Will the coaches be assigned by the district?

Learning coaches require the knowledge and skills to engage and work with teachers who may or may not be comfortable teaching students with diverse learning needs. A wide range of knowledge, skills and attributes are required in order to be an effective inclusive learning coach, as evidenced by the following list, which reflects findings from the literature and conversations with Alberta teachers.

Professional Expertise

- Expertise in assessment for, of and as learning
- Curriculum and content areas
- Individualized program planning
- Experience relating to and facilitating work with other teachers
- Experience teaching students with diverse or special learning needs
- Graduate education level and/or expertise in inclusive education
- Knowledge of provincial and local policies and regulations
- Observation and data collection procedures
- Positive behaviour supports and data analysis
- Provision of specific, accurate and timely feedback in a positive manner
- Educational technology, including assistive technologies
- Universal design for learning and differentiated instruction
- Working with parents, wraparound services and community agencies

Personal Abilities/Attributes

- Adhering to high professional and ethical standards
- Building trust
- Collaborating with others
- Commitment to participating in and supporting ongoing professional development
- Communicating effectively orally and in writing
- Teamwork
- Nurturing positive working relationships
- Practical problem solving

In summary, there appear to be at least four categories of attributes for a learning coach. The first category requires experience and expertise in inclusive education. A

second category reflects expertise in pedagogies and effective teaching strategies. Third, expertise in coaching processes is important. The fourth category is that of professional qualities, such as the ability to engage, communicate and positively interact with one's colleagues (Alberta Teachers' Association 2011).

Workshop outlines for Choosing the Model begin on page 111.

F. Implementing the Program

Prior to implementation the following steps should have been completed:
- Study the research on inclusive education, collaboration and coaching.
- Assess the school context, the collaborative culture and the staff readiness.
- Ensure staff commitment to the program.
- Define the purpose of the program.
- Clarify the roles of the inclusive coaching program.
- Choose the coaching model(s).
- Commit the resources for the program.
- Organize a team to design the program.

The Alberta Education website contains a number of resources to support implementation of inclusive education. The "Supporting Every Student" section of the website (www.education.alberta.ca/admin/supportingstudent/schoolleaders) provides links to current publications and information for school leaders on inclusive education; legislation, policy and standards; special education; health and safety; high school; funding; private schools, private ECS operators and charter schools; early childhood services; francophone and French immersion; promising practices; and research. School leaders are encouraged to review the material on this website as they develop an implementation plan to support inclusion.

Pam Robbins (1991) suggests that a coaching program be considered by a team, not an individual; the steps should be discussed in detail, their ramifications examined, and then approved in principle by the school staff.

1. Examine all the facts about coaching and then compare them with the site characteristics before determining if a coaching for inclusion program is right for the school at this time. It is important to recognize that planning, implementing and maintaining a program will require a great deal of effort and time.
2. Identify what coaching is and isn't. Because most teachers have experienced having another adult in their classroom only in a supervision and evaluative capacity, clarify the roles and responsibilities of the peer coach.
3. Develop a clear understanding of the different forms of coaching. Coaching activities can happen both within and outside the classroom.
4. Identify the resources available for a coaching for inclusion program. This includes budget allocations for professional development, program resource

material and release time for coaching. Leadership support is also required to protect the program from outside interference and competing demands such as non-related administrative tasks.
5. Establish a planning team to design the program tailored to the school needs and develop the implementation plan.

This section presents several models of implementation from the research; many of them have steps that are similar to those used in the workshop outlines in this guide. One model for implementation can be found in Berman and McLaughlin (1978). In this model, planning a coaching program and maintaining momentum should be based on the three phases of leading change: mobilization, implementation and institutionalization.

Three-Phase Implementation

Mobilization—the mobilization phase consists of readiness activities, creating awareness, building commitment and planning the program:
- Form a planning committee.
- Provide information about peer coaching.
- Emphasize the flexibility of coaching.
- Develop a vision and purpose.
- Examine the issue of time.
- Identify sources of support and resources.
- Go slowly to build support and understanding.
- Identify the on-site peer coach.
- Identify individual staff concerns and address them accordingly.
- Plan how the program will be institutionalized.

Implementation—the implementation phase will likely require a number of months, or even years, to complete.
- Provide training in peer coaching.
- Provide a variety of follow-up support services.
- Provide supportive professional development in inclusive education.
- Provide time for staff to experiment.
- Hold review and refinement sessions.
- Allocate time for support groups and study groups to meet.
- Monitor implementation activities, including classroom supervision, and make adjustments as necessary.
- Provide "public" opportunities for celebration of peer coaching success.

Institutionalization—in the institutionalization phase, coaching becomes part of the school culture and the way we do things around here:
- Continue the celebrations.
- Support teachers as researchers.
- Continue administrative support.

- Provide brush-up sessions (or orientation sessions for new staff).
- Continue to monitor and evaluate the program.
- Allocate rewards.
- Invite staff to reflect on coaching activities.

Ten-Point Implementation Plan

Morel and Cushman (2012) present another implementation plan, which closely mirrors the implementation steps in this guide:
- Research coaching and coaching models.
- Select a team to develop the coaching initiative.
- Develop a shared vision of coaching for inclusive learning that aligns with the school vision.
- Develop an administrative model for coaching.
- Develop the assessment plan for the coaching initiative.
- Know the characteristics of "great" coaches prior to hiring and assigning.
- Determine the ongoing professional development plan for the administrator.
- Determine the ongoing plan for the coaches.
- Plan for opportunities for regular ongoing collaboration between coaches and teachers.
- Evaluate the coaching program and make adjustments.

Implementation: Considering the Essential Conditions

Alberta's education partners collaborated on the publication of *A Guide to Support Implementation: Essential Conditions* (Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia et al 2010), which contains practical tools for designing an implementation plan specific to the school context. The education partners that collaborated on that publication have a shared belief that successful implementation requires the coordinated, collaborative and comprehensive efforts of all those involved working together towards a shared vision of learning success for all students. Recognizing that there is a wide range of diversity in school communities and student populations, the guide offers questions to support the implementation planning process. There are suggestions for the evidence and data that should be collected to monitor and evaluate the implementation and access to additional supports such as illustrative examples and assessment tools. The guide contains planning templates for shared vision, leadership, research and evidence, resources, teacher professional growth, time and community engagement.

Implementation Based on the Principal Quality Practice Guideline

The Principal Quality Practice Guideline describes the principal's work in the school. The "Principal's Role" section of this guide outlines a planning process that principals can use to develop a plan for learning coach implementation and to identify leadership strategies that reflect their school context.

G. Assessing, Modifying, Evaluating and Celebrating

The primary purpose of the evaluation should be to ascertain if coaching for inclusion is working and meeting its goals; the assessment should lead to changes and modifications if it is not working as planned. Evaluation might also be needed to provide feedback for district programs and reporting and even to make a case for increased funding.

The process of evaluating the coaching for inclusion program should be developed in conjunction with the implementation plan. A committee should be formed to monitor implementation and evaluation of the coaching for inclusion program and the committee must include representation from the key stakeholder in the program, including the coach and school administration. The committee should meet regularly to monitor implementation and proposed changes or advocate for additional support as required. At the end of the school year, a summative evaluation should be undertaken for the purpose of reporting to the school staff the results of the program. The *Guide to Support Implementation: Essential Conditions* (Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia et al 2010) outlines the process for developing an evaluation plan that is specific to the program purpose and school context.

A plan to evaluate the effectiveness of a coaching for inclusive learning program should start with the purposes and goals of the program. Some key questions that can guide the evaluation process covered in this section are listed below:
- What is the purpose of the evaluation and how will the data be used?
- What should be evaluated?
- How will the program be evaluated; what data will be collected?
- How will the coaches be evaluated?
- How will the support of the principal be evaluated?
- How will the coach–teacher relationship be monitored?
- What data will be collected and what kind of instruments will be used to collect it?
- How will the evaluation be communicated?

Program Assessment

Formative data should be collected and reviewed on a regular basis. A perception survey to collect baseline data could be administered to teachers and coaches before the coaching program begins and then later at regular intervals during the year. A sample survey is included on page 94. Surveys can also gauge teacher perceptions about their learning—how much was learned and, more important, how much of the learning did they use?

As part of the implementation, participants should be encouraged to reflect on the experience. Honigsfeld and Dove (2010) suggest three strategies for reflection:
- Daily deliberations—team members individually keep a log of date/activity.

- Weekly wonders—in a collaborative team meeting, reflect on the past week and identify one area for improvement. Try to finish the question stem, "I wonder if we …" or "I wonder what would happen if …" to identify weekly successes/challenges. This information can be reviewed at team meetings.
- Monthly milestones—once a month set aside time to recognize and celebrate milestones and accomplishments. Identify at least one new step you took together to improve collaboration or student learning. Document these milestones to share in the program evaluation.

Impact on Student Learning

It is very difficult to relate coaching directly to student achievement because there are so many variables to consider and many cannot be controlled. However, it may be useful to use formative assessments to measure the growth of individual students on specific skills after a coach has worked with the teacher on implementing and practising a new strategy. Other factors such as attendance, behaviour and attitude may be assessed.

Guskey (2000) advises that student test scores, student questionnaires and structured interviews can also provide insight into the effect of coaching on student achievement (Morel and Cushman 2012).

Monitoring the Teacher–Coach Relationship

One of the critical components of a successful coaching for inclusive learning program is the voluntary nature of teacher participation. Part of this relationship is the opportunity for a "divorce" if the relationship is not working. Therefore, it is important that both the teacher and the coach be very aware of their communications, confidentiality and trust. Simple process questions can be used, such as How am I doing (as a coach)? What could I do to improve the experience? As a teacher being coached, what could I do to facilitate the process and the relationship?

Reflection activities will help to monitor the relationship, and the principal should be made aware of any problems and issues that arise in the coaching relationship.

Evaluation of the Coaching for Inclusive Learning Program

Part of the formative and summative evaluation of the program can include an examination of logs, schedules and meeting agendas; this will give a picture of the activities and time spent in coaching for inclusive learning. Are the activities consistent with the vision for the program and role description that was established for the position? How many teachers did the coach meet with and what was the purpose of the interactions? Was it providing resources, modelling, co-planning, reflecting on learning or instructional strategies focused on a specific student need? The learning coach should maintain a plan book similar to a teacher's plan book that documents his or her activities for coaching for inclusion and should not include the names of other teachers. The plan book is intended to document the activities of the coach and

respect the Code of Professional Conduct by not commenting on the competence of individual teachers. The principal and inclusive learning coach are encouraged to contact the Alberta Teachers' Association Member Services staff for additional clarification, if required.

Formal supervision and evaluation of the school-based coach will be done by the principal in keeping with the requirements and processes outlined in the provincial Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation policy 2.1.5. If the learning coach is a district position, supervision and evaluation will be performed by a school district administrator. Alberta Teachers' Association Member Services staff can provide clarification about supervision and evaluation of the coach as a member of the teaching profession.

Self-Evaluation of the Principal's Support

As well as evaluating the implementation and success of the plan, principals may wish to do a self-evaluation of their leadership for coaching for inclusion:

- Did I introduce the concept of coaching for inclusion in ways that fostered trust (feelings of security) and interest?
- Did I assign responsibilities to teachers and manage accountability for collaborative practices in ways that achieved a balance of leadership control and teacher accountability?
- Did I provide the necessary resources to the program so that teachers developed the skills to collaborate and had time to engage in collaboration?
- Did I plan, initiate, and monitor implementation of the coaching for inclusive learning program in ways that inspired ambitious goals and commitment?
- Did I support ongoing implementation of the coaching for inclusion program in ways that motivated sincere, continued commitment and hard work, despite setbacks and inevitable challenges?
- Did I recognize, celebrate, and reward accomplishments in ways that sustained and strengthened positive growth?
- Did I support teachers to gather evidence of student learning to reflect on their practice and the impact of the inclusive learning coach program?
(Adapted from Honigsfeld and Dove 2010)

The statements could also be used as a survey with staff to give the principal feedback on the teachers' perceptions of the roles that support coaching for inclusive learning.

Collection of Data

The five levels of evaluation for professional learning identified by Guskey (2000) are
1. participants' reactions,
2. participants' learning,
3. organizational support and change,

4. participants' use of new knowledge and skills, and

5. student learning outcomes.

Morel and Cushman (2012) suggest collecting the following data:

1. Quantitative data might include
   - pre-coaching perceptional data from teachers before coaching;
   - post-coaching teacher reaction to coaching, their learning, and the perceived use of new knowledge and skills;
   - coaching logs and records; and
   - formative assessments of student growth.

2. Qualitative data might include
   - personal reflections of coaches, teachers and principals—these can be written, videoed, focus groups or open-ended questions on surveys;
   - portfolios of coaches; and
   - reflective journals that teachers use to document their experience with coaching.

Communicating the Evaluation

If the implementation of the coaching for inclusion program was done collaboratively, it makes sense that the evaluation process, including communicating about it, be done in a collaborative way with all of the concerned stakeholders. The first and primary audience for the evaluation report is the participating staff members.

The planning team should consider how the evaluation data is analyzed, how it is communicated and to whom it is communicated. Keep in mind that the primary process of the evaluation is to check to see if the identified goals or purposes are being met and to recommend actions to modify and improve the process. Coaches and teachers take data about their work very personally, so a degree of sensitivity is important.

Celebrating the Success

Celebrating should be an ongoing process throughout the year and built into small milestones or events. Morel and Cushman (2012) designed Friday Focus into their plan and developed a form to collect these items of celebration and incorporate them into regular coaching meetings. If the whole staff is involved, this could become a regular feature of staff meetings.

It is important also at the end of the year, perhaps tied to the evaluation reporting, that there be a major event to celebrate everyone's hard work and commitment to the program.

Workshop outlines for Assessing, Modifying, Evaluating and Celebrating begin on page 116.

Workshop Outlines

Workshop Outlines ─────────

This section contains workshop outlines and activities that principals can use to engage the school staff in the design and implementation of the coaching for inclusion program. The workshops correspond to the steps for developing the coaching program outlined earlier in this guide. Principals should consider their school context (including staff readiness), to choose the workshops and most applicable activities for the development, implementation and evaluation of coaching for inclusion.

A. Understanding the Big Picture

In preparation for initiating discussion about coaching for inclusion, introduce "big picture" topics related to inclusive education at staff meetings and other professional development opportunities. It is important for teachers to understand the broader social, legal and political contexts that have influenced the current movement toward a more inclusive education system.

The following opening activities can be adapted as openers for other workshops in the series and also can be used as activities in the body of other workshops.

Opening Activities

1. Rate the Big Picture Issues

Present the staff with a list of educational issues/trends that have recently influenced public education.

Have the staff individually rate the importance of the trends on a scale of 1 to 5. In groups of three, select the most critical issue and offer reasons for the choice and evidence that the trend is presently influencing public education. Follow this with a general discussion of how societal issues/trends influence teaching.

Suggested issues and trends include the following:
- Increase in choice and expectations for personalization
- Technological advances in education
- Web-based communication and social networking
- Emphasis on accountability and provincial testing
- Impact of globalization
- Brain-based learning
- Inclusive education—meeting the needs of all students
- Curriculum resource dependence (textbooks and publisher's resource books)
- Environmental crisis
- Parent involvement
- Individualized program planning

- Provincial, district and school three-year education plans
- Student diversity (language, culture, learning needs)
- Others?

2. Think-Pair-Share

Have participants individually think about the societal forces and influences that have contributed to the move toward inclusive education.

Pair with another participant and share their thinking.

Two pairs get together to further share their ideas. Make notes to summarize the results of the discussion in preparation for reporting to the whole group.

Report the summaries to the whole group and continue with a general discussion.

Workshop Activities

1. Presentations

If the school or district has staff who have been to conferences on the big-picture aspect of inclusive education or people doing university programs in this field, they could be invited to give a brief presentation to focus discussion on questions such as, How does inclusive education reflect the broader societal values and trends in Alberta and Canada? How have special education approaches and practices evolved? What are the major approaches to inclusive education worldwide?

2. Video Including Samuel (58 minutes)

The video Including Samuel (Habib 2007) is a very powerful production and provides an excellent introduction to a discussion about inclusion. The video and the discussion guide can be borrowed from the ATA library and the video is also available on YouTube. The website www.includingsamuel.com has additional resources for teachers and parent audiences.

Before watching the video, participants should think about a set of questions:
- What do the terms disability and inclusion mean to you?
- Do you or a family member have a disability? How has it affected your life?
- Do you think that children with physical, emotional and neurological disabilities should go to regular schools and be full-time members of regular education classrooms?
- How are people with disabilities typically portrayed in the media? Give examples.
- Do you think society has an obligation to provide people with disabilities different or more protection and services than it does for people without disabilities?
- Have you ever felt discriminated against because of your ethnicity, ability, age, gender, sexual orientation, etc?

After the video the following questions can guide discussion:
- How did the film make you feel?
- Which person's story made the greatest impact? Why?

- How does the portrayal of people featured in the film coincide with the way you thought before watching the film? Do you think inclusion is working well in your school?
- Do you think that all schools and organizations should be required to include children with disabilities?
- What qualities in the classrooms allowed inclusion to succeed?

3. Video Autism Is a World *(40 minutes)*

This video (Rubin 2004) is a documentary that takes the viewer on a journey into the mind, daily world and life with autism of Sue Rubin. The video can be borrowed from the ATA library and is also available in four parts on YouTube.

Use the questions provided for #2 Video *Including Samuel* above to prepare staff before viewing the video and to guide discussion afterwards.

4. Collection of Alberta Newspaper and Magazine Articles

The principal could bring articles from magazines, books and newspapers that reflect the move to inclusive education as the dominant philosophy for the placement of students with special education needs. This might include the "Inclusive Education" issue of the *ATA Magazine* (volume 92, number 3, 2012) or Alberta Education documents on inclusive education that are readily available on its website.[3]

Staff may be invited to bring articles and excerpts from their reading that relate to the changing nature of inclusive education.

Distribute the readings and ask each person or small group to provide a short overview of the article stressing the societal trends that have influenced the move to inclusive education—for example, equity, excellence, social justice, economics and legal issues.

This would be followed by a general discussion.

5. Jigsaw Process

The material suggested for the above activity can also be discussed by staff using the jigsaw process that follows:
- Participants are divided into groups of four called "home groups."
- Each member of the home group is assigned a different article or a different section of one large article. Members number off accordingly—1, 2, 3, 4.

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[3] http://education.alberta.ca/admin/supportingstudent/diverselearning.aspx.

- The home groups split into new groups called "expert groups." Expert groups consist of all those who were assigned a common article.
- In the expert groups, members read and discuss their article noting key points and planning how they will teach this material to the home groups.
- After a suitable period of time, home groups reconvene and each member teaches the others what they have learned.
- General discussion with the whole group to summarize the learning (content and process). Are there any unanswered questions?

6. Inclusive Education Video Series and Conversation Guides

Alberta Education has created a series of nine videos and conversation guides, in both English and French, to support the implementation of inclusive education:

1. *Valuing All Students*
2. *Changing How We Talk About Disabilities*
3. *Using Differentiated Instruction to Support All Learning*
4. *Making Sense of Universal Design for Learning*
5. *Using Assistive Technology to Support Learning*
6. *Scaffolding for Student Success*
7. *Using a Positive Behaviour Approach to Support Learning*
8. *Rethinking the Role of Educational Assistants*
9. *Making Sense of Response to Intervention*

These videos and conversation guides can be used in a workshop with the staff to engage in a whole-group discussion, or multiple videos can be reviewed by smaller groups using the jigsaw process described on page 75. The English version of these resources is available at http://education.alberta.ca/admin/supportingstudent/inclusiveedvideoseries.aspx and the French at http://education.alberta.ca/francais/admin/appuyereleves/inclusiveedvidseriesfr.aspx.

B. Exploring Theory and Research

Opening Activities

These opening activities can be used for this workshop and can be modified for use with many of the other workshops in the process of designing and implementing inclusive learning coaching for a school staff.

1. Yes/No Question Survey

This opener will allow the staff to explore the range of opinion and general knowledge about inclusive education or coaching to support inclusion as a strategy to improve practice. Each participant is to develop a question about the topic that intrigues him or her and that can be answered by a yes or no. Some examples are

- Can all students learn in an inclusive school?
- Would you be willing to participate in a coaching approach?
- Do we have a collaborative culture in our school?
- Should the teacher direct the coaching process?

Each should write the question on a sheet of paper and below it draw a T chart with *Yes* on one side and *No* on the other. Ask participants to survey as many people in the room as possible in an allocated time. Instruct them not to engage in debate or discussion, but just to record the answer and move on to the next person.

Debrief by having each person report the survey question and data either orally or written on chart paper around the room. How hard was it to stick to a definite *Yes* or *No* answer? Relate this informal research to research and literature on the topic; does this "informal" research data match the "official" research? What can we learn from this quick survey?

2. T Chart

This activity will explore what the staff already knows about coaching to support inclusive learning and what they want to know. The topic for the questions can vary depending on the focus for the workshop.

Form groups of 3 or 4 and give each group a piece of chart paper. Draw a large T on the paper and label each side with "What do you know about coaching?" and "What would you like to know about coaching?" Ask participants to reflect on what they already know about coaching to support inclusion and briefly jot down this information; next have them think about what they would like to know and make notes about these questions.

Debrief by asking each group to provide a summary of both sides of the T chart on flip charts. The What Do I Know? section can provide information about staff expertise that can be used to develop the inclusive learning coach program, and the What Do I Want to Know? section identifies what information and/or professional development is needed as the learning process continues.

3. Feelings, Beliefs, Hopes and Fears

This activity can serve to assess how ready the staff is to accept and embrace the introduction and implementation of coaching.

Form small groups of 3 to 5 and give each group two sheets of chart paper. The group discussion is recorded on chart paper. Ask participants to consider how they *feel* at this point about coaching to support inclusive learning in their classroom, what they *believe* about coaching of any kind, what they *hope* will happen during the implementation of the strategy and what are their *fears* or concerns about implementation. It is important to be very specific about the prompts for the activity and to work through the prompts one at a time. If all the prompts are given at once, the responses tend to be general and not specific enough for discussion.

Alternately, this activity can be done as a "Think-Pair-Share" or a "Placemat." The placemat is a piece of paper divided into four quadrants labelled Feelings, Beliefs, Hopes and Fears. Participants can do the placemat individually or in small groups.

Debrief this activity with sharing of topics in each category, which reveals trends and individual concerns, and follow with a general discussion on what we can learn from this information and what we should do next.

Workshop Activities

1. Quotes from the Research

Copy the research quotes on inclusive education and coaching onto single sheets of paper using large font. Sort the quotes into themes with four or five in each set. Post the first set of quotes in different locations around the room making sure there is enough space for a group discussion at each quote. The number of quotes used should be appropriate to the number of participants allowing for 3 or 4 people at each quote.

Instruct participants to go to the quote that most interests them or is very important and discuss the quote with the other participants who gather there. After three to five minutes ask for reports from the small-group discussions focusing on what they have learned about the topic and how the quote relates to the design and implementation of coaching for inclusive learning in the school.

After two rounds, post a new set of quotes and repeat the process. Continue until all the quotes have been posted. The process can continue in this manner, or to mix it up participants can be directed to go to a quote that they disagree with or that they do not believe.

Sample quotes:

Inclusion is not about disability nor is it only about schools. Inclusion is about social justice.

—Mara Sapon-Shevin

The work of coaches is squandered if school principals are not instructional leaders.

—Michael Fullan

All students are capable of excellence and should be given an education befitting such tremendous potential.

—George Theoharis

The primary role of school-based coaches is one that raises the quality of teaching and learning in every classroom in the school by building a culture in which teaching is public, planning is thorough and collaborative, and conversation is about improving student learning.

—Saphier and West

The first requirement of effective coaching is that the person receiving the coaching agrees that a change in performance is necessary.

—Douglas Reeves

Coaches who act on the principle of equality have faith that the teachers they work with bring a lot to any interactions and they listen with great attentiveness.

—Jim Knight

Coaching must move beyond a "universal best practice" approach to instruction in order to effectively deal with complex issues such as language diversity and special needs.

—Annenberg Institute

Nothing can be farther from the atmosphere of coaching than the practice of traditional evaluation. Coaching is not supervision nor evaluation.

—Beverley Showers

As principals and teachers, we must attend not only to our students' learning but also to our own and to that of the adults around us. When we do this, we are on the road to achieving collective responsibility for the school and becoming a community of learners.

—Linda Lambert

The nature of the relationships among the adults within a school has a greater influence on the character and quality of that school and on student accomplishment than anything else.

—Roland Barth

Teaching like a pro is about undertaking difficult, inspiring work; constantly trying to improve practice; and working with all the collective might and ingenuity of professional colleagues to do so.

—Hargreaves and Fullan

A well-designed and supported coaching program weds core elements of professional development with the essential goals of professional learning communities in ways that advance both school and district improvement.

—Annenberg Institute

2. Coaching Jigsaw

This activity is useful in presenting a great deal of material in a relatively short amount of time. Use either one of the longer articles or several of the smaller articles from the list below for the activity, but limit the size of each home group to four or five.

- Participants are divided into groups of four called "home groups."
- Each member of the home group is assigned a different article or a different section of one large article. Members number off accordingly—1, 2, 3, 4.
- The home groups split into new groups called "expert groups." Expert groups consist of all those who were assigned a common article.
- In the expert groups, members read and discuss their article noting key points and planning how they will teach this material to the home groups.
- After a suitable period of time, home groups reconvene and each member teaches the others what they have learned.
- General discussion with the whole group to summarize the learning (content and process). Are there any unanswered questions?

Participants may follow it up with individual reading of some of the articles; if the jigsaw is not used the articles can be used as follow-up to the other exercises.

Suggested articles:
- "Principals Boost Coaching's Impact," *JSD, The Learning Forward Journal* 36, no 1, 48-51, 61, by Les Foltos, 2015
  http://learningforward.org/docs/default-source/jsd-february-2015/principals-boost-coaching's-impact.pdf
- "Teachers Coaching Teachers," *Educational Leadership* 42, no 7, 43–48, by Beverly Showers, 1985
  www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/journals/ed_lead/el_198504_showers.pdf (This article is seminal on the topic of coaching.)
- "A Primer on Instructional Coaches," *Principal Leadership* 5, no 9, 16–21, by Jim Knight, 2005
  www.instructionalcoach.org/images/downloads/articles/Knight_PL2005-05.pdf
- "Coaches as System Leaders," *Educational Leadership* 69, no 2, 50–53, by Michael Fullan and Jim Knight, 2011
  www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct11/vol69/num02/Coaches-as-System-Leaders.aspx
- "Coaching Myths and Realities," *Educational Leadership* 65, no 2, 89–90, by Douglas Reeves, 2007
  www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct07/vol65/num02/Coaching-Myths-and-Realities.aspx
- "Coaching," *Journal of Staff Development* 30, no 1, 18–22, by Jim Knight, 2009
- "How Coaches Can Maximize Student Learning," *Phi Delta Kappan* 91, no 4, 46–50, by Jon Saphier and Lucy West, 2010
  http://sim.ttac.vt.edu/Documents/Resources%20for%20Teacher%20Leaders/Coaches%20Maximize%20Learning.pdf or http://tinyurl.com/7wal24z.

- "What Good Coaches Do," *Educational Leadership* 69, no 2, 18–22, by Jim Knight, 2011
  http://education.ky.gov/teachers/HiEffTeach/Documents/What%20Good%20Coaches%20Do3.pdf or http://tinyurl.com/ca7ksxq.
- "Peer Coaching to Facilitate Inclusion: A Job-Embedded Staff Development Model," *Journal of Staff Development* 17, 28–31, by Susan Kovic, 1996
- "Teachers Supporting Teachers Through Peer Coaching," *Support for Learning* 13, no 2, 54–58, by Jeanne Swafford, 1998
- "Instructional Coaching," *School Administrator* 63, no 4, 36–40, by Jim Knight, 2006
  www.instructionalcoach.org/images/downloads/research-pubs/Chapter2.pdf

2. Presentations

As an alternative to the jigsaw process, interested staff may wish to make a presentation to staff on one of the articles suggested for the jigsaw, or if there are resource "experts" in the school or district they could present some of the research from their studies.

3. Video and Discussion Questions

If you have not shown the video *Including Samuel* (page 74, "Workshop Activities") in a previous session, this is a very powerful way to discuss inclusion.

4. Agree/Disagree

Provide participants a copy of the Agree/Disagree Activity handout (page 82) that lists statements from the literature about inclusive education and coaching. Individually each person should mark the statements with an A for *Agree* or a D for *Disagree* in column 1. Next, working in groups of two or three, participants should come to a consensus whether to mark an A or D in column 2.

Debrief by asking the small groups to report on the items that caused the most heated discussion or on which they were unable to reach consensus. Hold a general discussion about what has been learned about coaching for inclusive learning, inclusive education or collaborative approaches to teaching. How can this information be used to develop the coaching for inclusive learning program in your school?

Agree/Disagree Activity

Instructions: Individually mark A or D beside each statement in column 1; as a group come to a consensus about A or D for each statement and record it in column 2.

	1	2
1. Inclusion is the best way to meet the needs of all students.		
2. Inclusion causes more problems than it solves.		
3. A collaborative culture is a necessary condition for inclusion.		
4. Diversity in the classroom enriches the learning environment.		
5. Teachers and coaches are equal partners in the coaching process.		
6. Coaching should be voluntary and based on needs identified by the teacher.		
7. Watching a coach demonstrate a technique is the most important part of the coaching process.		
8. Coaches may perform supervisory activities.		
9. Coaches must have skill and expertise in teaching children with diverse learning needs.		
10. The principal and the coach should work together to identify teachers for the coaching initiative.		
11. Parents are supportive of addressing their child's learning in an inclusive learning environment.		
12. Teachers in our school are prepared for inclusion of all students in the regular classroom.		
13. Leadership of the principal is necessary for inclusion to work well.		

	1	2
14. Teachers are adequately prepared for inclusion.		
15. Teachers need to have adequate training to serve in a coaching role.		
16. Teachers are concerned about instructing students with a wide range of needs in one class.		
17. Collaborative planning time is required to facilitate a coaching process.		
18. Teachers in our school engage in collaborative instructional activities (co-planning, co-teaching, problem solving, curriculum development).		
19. Most teachers are comfortable having colleagues in their classroom.		
20. Participation in coaching may form part of a teacher's professional growth plan.		
21. Special education specialists will most likely be the inclusive learning coach.		
22. The coach will work with all teachers on staff.		
23. A successful collaborative coaching program can be mandated by the district or the principal.		

5. Card Sort

In preparation for this activity, photocopy the cards on pages 85–91 and cut into individual cards. You will need one set of cards for each group of four. It is helpful to photocopy each set of cards on a different colour of paper so the sets can be easily sorted.

Divide participants into working groups of four (random groups formed by numbering off, or by astrological signs, or by using a deck of cards—the aces, the kings, etc.). Using a random strategy to arrange people in new groups usually provides for a range of opinions.

Each group is given a "deck of cards" containing statements from the research about inclusive education and coaching. The cards are dealt out face-down to the members of the small group.

The task is to sort the cards into categories and to name the categories. A suggested way of working is for each person in turn to read one of the cards and put it into the "right" category. Obviously at the beginning stages the categories are being formed; later, cards are placed into existing categories. When all the cards are sorted, have one person in the group name a category and read the cards within it. Continue until all categories have been read, stopping to discuss differences of opinion.

Debrief with a general discussion about what has been learned from the research on inclusive education and coaching. Are there unanswered questions or concerns?

Card Sort Activity

Research and Theory: Inclusive Education and Coaching for Inclusive Learning

Inclusion is the best way to meet the needs of all students.	**All students can be successful in an inclusive school.**
Support from leadership is essential.	**At the core of inclusion is the concept of making differences ordinary, so that all students have a place, are valued and welcomed and are equipped for success.**
Equity for all students requires us to rethink our accountability practice of using standardized tests.	**Inclusion is not about disability nor is it only about schools. Inclusion is about social justice.**

Integration implies that students with special needs are included in so-called regular classrooms for part of the day.	**Inclusive education is defined as a way of thinking and acting that demonstrates universal acceptance and belonging for all students.**
Inclusion is about ensuring that each student belongs and receives a quality education no matter his or her ability, disability, language, cultural background, gender or age.	**In an inclusive environment some learners will require additional support to be successful.**
Coaching to support inclusion is a professional development process in which coaches apply their special education knowledge and expertise in helping teachers meet the diverse learning needs of students.	**In a successful coaching model, teacher participation is voluntary.**

Trust is the key component in an effective teacher–coach relationship.	**A school-based learning coach focuses on instruction, student interaction and the environment provided in the classroom.**
Clearly defined roles that suit the purpose for coaching for inclusion in the specific school are important but difficult to define.	**In a coaching process, teacher reflection and communication are important elements.**
Teachers make the final decision about the focus for coaching.	**Collaborative schools are more likely to have higher student achievement rates than noncollaborative or isolationistic schools.**

A program of ongoing, job-embedded professional development is a necessary component of a successful coaching program.	Staff must comprehend the social and political nature of inclusion.
Differences are valued as assets.	The coaching for inclusion program should be introduced in a collaborative way.
Collaborative schools require deliberate arrangements of team meeting, structure and protocols combined with a commitment to build better relationships.	The limited resources for coaching for inclusion suggests that it focus on students with diverse needs who need additional support to succeed.

The most important component of a successful coaching for inclusion program is the leadership of the principal.

The learning coach should have expertise in teaching students with diverse and special needs.

Using the coach as a quasi-administrator or clerical assistant is a waste of valuable coaching time.

Supervision and evaluation are not part of the role of a learning coach.

Principals may be coaches but there must be a clear distinction of the role.

Coaches are partners who work with teachers to solve classroom problems and who engage in professional conversations rather than dictate practices.

Providing resources and modelling effective strategies are important coaching roles.	**Adequate funding remains one of the challenges for meeting the needs of all students with special needs in the inclusive classroom.**
Collaboration has been shown to be highly effective in including students with significant disabilities.	**Provision of time for the coaching process is critical.**
Few scholars doubt the usefulness of peer coaching.	**The use of learning coaches breaks down isolation and shares the knowledge of others.**

The purpose of coaching for inclusive learning in a school is determined in part by the learning needs of students in the school.	**The role of the special education facilitator may complement the role of the learning coach.**
Teachers must see the relevance of coaching for inclusion for their teaching of the students with special and diverse needs in their classroom.	**Participation in coaching for inclusion may be included in a teacher's professional growth plan.**

C. Assessing the School Context and Enhancing Collaborative Culture

Opening Activity

1. How Collaborative Are We?

Individually, using a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the highest), participants will be asked to rate the level of collaboration of the school for each topic listed. This will provide a quick visual picture of the staff's perception.

Draw a continuum for each topic on an interactive whiteboard or on a separate piece of chart paper. Provide instructions to the whole group that each person should place a Post-it note with the corresponding number on each continuum to indicate their rating. It is important that everyone post their ratings at the same time, not to single out individuals.

Engage staff in a discussion of the evidence, including the specific events and processes that led to the rating.

Characteristics of a collaborative school may include the following:

- Teachers in this school often work in teams.
- The school has a sense of community.
- Teachers are encouraged to take risks and try new strategies.
- Shared decision making is the norm.
- The mission and vision of the school reflect collaborative norms.
- Teachers team teach and spend time in each other's classrooms.
- Professional learning is embedded in the school's daily activities.
- High standards for all students are encouraged.
- School physical arrangements encourage collaborative working.
- Faculty meetings focus on professional issues.
- Collegial, collaborative conversations are the norm throughout the school.
- Problems are solved in teams.
- People are valued individually and collectively.
- Professional collaboration is a valued activity in this school.

Workshop Activities

1. What does a collaborative school look like? Sound like? Feel like?

In groups of four or five, participants are asked to design the ideal collaborative school. Distribute chart paper and markers and possibly magazines. Draw an ideal school layout. Name the school to reflect the description. Draw or create a collage that fits the description.

Use the following discussion starters: What would it look like? What would it sound like? What would classroom teachers be doing? What would students be doing? What would be valued? What would be forbidden? What language would be the vision and

mission? What would the school administrators be doing? What would the physical layout look like? What would parent involvement look like?

Each group then presents its descriptions, including the school layout, and a list of characteristics is generated from the presentations.

2. How close is our school to the ideal?

Using the characteristics of the ideal collaborative school listed in the opening activity #1, create a table. Items from Characteristics of Model Inclusive Schools on pages 34 and 35 can also be used for this activity, as well as the Strategies for Institutionalizing Collaboration in Schools that appears on pages 45 and 46. The strategies to enhance that are identified in the last column can form the basis of an action plan to support the continued development of a collaborative school culture.

Characteristics	1–10	Evidence	Strategies to enhance

3. Teacher Perception Survey

Use the Coaching for Inclusive Learning Teacher Perception Survey as a voluntary self-assessment tool for teachers to reflect on their beliefs and experience related to coaching for inclusion. The results of this anonymous survey can then be compiled and the aggregate results will help to determine the readiness of the teaching staff to implement a coaching program.

Coaching for Inclusive Learning

Teacher Perception Survey

This anonymous survey can be used as a self-reflection tool. The teaching staff may also choose to have the anonymous survey data compiled to get a big-picture view of the staff readiness to develop a coaching for inclusive learning program.

Instructions: For each statement indicate your opinion or perception, with 1 being the lowest rating and 5 the highest.

1. I believe that my school is committed to inclusion.

   ☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

2. The staff supports inclusion.

   ☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

3. I feel comfortable with another adult in the classroom.

   ☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

4. Inclusion creates additional work for the teacher.

   ☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

5. I am adequately prepared to teach students with diverse learning needs in my classroom.

   ☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

6. My professional growth plan includes improving strategies to teach students with diverse needs.

   ☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

7. I participate in team problem solving.

   ☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

8. I participate in co-planning.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

9. I participate in co-teaching.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

10. The timetable and scheduling facilitate collaborative work, such as team planning and problem solving.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

11. The administration promotes and supports collaborative teaching.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

12. I am adequately prepared to manage a classroom with diverse learning needs.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

13. There is enough time to meet the educational needs of all students.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

14. I am able to individualize instruction.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

15. I am able to work cooperatively with other staff.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

16. I believe all students can be successful in an inclusive school.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

17. Students feel positive about inclusive schools.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

18. All students in an inclusive school are able to be successful academically and socially.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

19. I believe coaching for inclusion will support learning for students with special and diverse needs.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

20. The culture of the school is supportive of coaching for inclusion.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

21. I feel positive about participating in coaching for inclusion.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

22. Coaching for inclusion will reduce the isolation in the classroom.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

23. I feel prepared to participate in coaching for inclusion.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

After coaching for inclusion has been implemented, answer the following questions:

24. I have learned strategies for assisting students with special and diverse learning needs.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

25. I have implemented new strategies for students with special and diverse learning needs.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

26. Coaching for inclusion has been a positive experience.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

27. Students that were the focus of the coaching interactions have shown improvement academically and socially.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

28. Coaching for inclusion has enhanced my collaborative skills.

☐ 1   ☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4   ☐ 5

29. How many teacher–coach interactions did you have in the last _____ months? This level of interaction has been sufficient.

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Open-Ended Response

Please take time to comment on any factor of the coaching for inclusive learning program.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Environmental Scan

Another strategy to use in assessing the collaborative culture of the school is to conduct a SWOT analysis. In this process participants describe strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as they relate to building and maintaining a collaborative culture in the school. The discussion should include organization and structures, and the readiness of the staff, not only for collaboration but for participation in the coaching for inclusive learning process.

The descriptions in each section of this analysis can be used to develop goals and strategies that become the basis for an action plan. The action plan should build on the strengths and opportunities identified and plan to overcome the weakness and threats.

5. The Question of Time

Use the STP process to analyze how time is used in the school. Participants may use an open brainstorming process to describe how time is being used for collaboration and coaching for inclusive learning or may use the categories provided on the chart on page 98.

The S, or Situation, describes how time is used now.

In the next step, T or Target, participants describe what would be the ideal use of time to promote collaboration and coaching for inclusive learning.

In the P or Planning step, participants compare the two previous steps and make plans to move closer to the target descriptions.

Finding Time for Collaborative Work and Coaching to Support Inclusion

Situation	Target	Plan
• Curriculum or grade team meetings		
• Common planning time		
• Use of substitute teachers		
• Whole-school activities (eg, assembly)		
• Combining classes for instruction, activities or project		
• Staff meetings		
• Using community members/experts		
• Staff development/ professional development		

6. How Will Teachers Decide About Participation?

At this stage in the process, teachers are invited to express interest in participating in the coaching to support inclusion initiative. The principal could hand out forms to indicate interest to all the teachers or may simply invite teachers to a conversation to explore the possibilities.

The invitation to participate may occur at this point, after the coaching models have been explored or, perhaps, be an ongoing invitation as teachers become more knowledgeable about the benefits of coaching for inclusion.

7. What About the Students?

The team that was established to examine the diverse learning needs of the students in the school may make a preliminary report at this time. Alternately, the entire staff could be involved in mapping how students with diverse needs are included in the school and specific classrooms.

- What are the diverse learning needs present in our student population?
- How are these student needs being met now?
- What are the range of supports and services provided to students?
- How is inclusion being supported?
- How many different approaches are being used to address specific student needs?
- How are student program plans developed now?

8. Consensus Decision Making

Depending on the staff and the collaborative relationships in the school, there are a variety of techniques to arrive at a consensus. Working in small discussion groups helps people to understand each other's points of view and perhaps modify the proposal to gain further agreement.

The most simple and unstructured way to test for consensus is "The Five-Finger Vote." The facilitator states the question to be decided: We the staff at (name of school) will move forward to design and implement coaching for inclusive learning. After answering questions and allowing for discussion, participants vote through a show of fingers to show the level of support.

One finger	Yes, I am all for it; let's go for it; I will even help lead.
Two fingers	I am generally supportive and agree.
Three fingers	I like the direction, but I need more information.
Four fingers	I am troubled by the direction and think that it needs major revisions.
Five fingers	I am not sure, but I trust the rest of you so I am in.
The Fist	I cannot support the initiative and I can provide an explanation.

Ten-Point Rubric

A more formal process to determine consensus is to use the 10-point rubric (below). The rubric can be used individually or with small discussion groups (no more than four people). A group that gives the proposal being discussed a rating less than 7 must provide the modifications that they would need to take the proposal to a rating of at least 9. If everyone scores the proposal with a 7 or better, there is sufficient agreement to move forward; however, the suggestions for improvement need to be considered or incorporated.

Achieving Consensus

	10–9	I'm in total agreement and very enthusiastic.
	8–7	I'm generally very supportive and agree with this direction, but I would like some modifications.
	6–5	I like the direction, but more work needs to be done for me to be satisfied.
	4–3	I'm troubled with this direction and I can't give support without major revisions being done.
	2–1	I have serious concerns and cannot support this direction.

D. Clarifying Purpose and Defining Roles

Opening Activity

1. Inside-Outside Circles

Participants form two concentric circles with participants facing each other being discussion partners. The discussion starter is "In your opinion, what is the most significant role for the inclusive learning coach?" Participants discuss this with their first partner. After a minute, the outside circle moves one person to the left and participants continue the conversation, including the ideas from the previous partner. Continue the process for a few more conversations using different prompts such as "In your opinion, what is the most significant piece of information you have learned about coaching for inclusive learning?"

Workshop Activities

1. Defining Mission or Purpose—Consensus Activity

Note: This activity may take more than one meeting to complete.

The purpose of a typical coaching program is usually twofold: increased student performance and improved professional collaboration (Killion and Harrison 2006). In general terms, the purpose of coaching for inclusion is to support teachers of students with diverse learning needs, in particular students who require differentiated programming. This generic purpose should be modified to fit the specific needs of the school as identified by the analysis of the school context.

To the prompt "What is the purpose of a coaching program?" individuals are asked to quickly jot down words and phrases that come to mind. In small groups (three or four) compare words and phrases; then, using this data, create a purpose statement for coaching to support inclusion. Share and compare the statements from the small groups.

If the staff is large, consider using a smaller committee to draft the mission statement using the small-group statement produced in step one that will be reviewed at a later meeting. Identify the key concepts from the different statements and use these to create a draft mission statement that will be reviewed by the entire staff.

Use the consensus decision-making process described on page 99 to create a shared mission statement. This mission statement will form the basis for the next steps in implementation.

2. Role of the Learning Coach—T Chart Activity

In small groups have participants complete a T chart on chart paper that has "The inclusive learning coach is …" on one side of the T and "The coach is not …" on the other side. Keep in mind the purpose of coaching to support inclusion as the activity progresses.

Post the charts and compare the data, developing a role description from the combined information.

As a follow-up, participants can describe typical activities for each of the role descriptors; this will help to further define the role by making it realistic for the school setting.

3. Good Coaches That I Remember

Have participants think of the coaches that they remember as being "good coaches." Jot down what made these coaches memorable; what was the field of expertise of these coaches? Which of these characteristics would be equally important in a learning coach? Keeping the purpose and the role description of learning coaches in mind, what other specific qualities would be important?

4. Video: Learning Coaches in Alberta

This video, available on the Alberta Education website,[4] was developed by four school districts that implemented a learning coach program in 2011. Learning coaches are teachers who are knowledgeable about inclusion and the Alberta programs of study, and are skilled in teacher collaboration and sharing promising practices. The learning coach works as part of the learning support team to build the capacity of the school, and works side by side with teachers to improve instruction and design learning experiences that are accessible, effective and engaging for all students.

5. Different Roles Card Sort

In preparation for this activity, photocopy the cards on pages 103–110 and cut into individual cards. You will need one set of cards for each group of four. It is helpful to photocopy each set of cards on a different colour of paper so the sets can be easily sorted.

Each small group (four or five) is given a "deck of cards" which are distributed among the members of the group. On a piece of chart paper make a grid with the following headings: *Principal*, *Coach*, *Teacher*, *Educational Assistant* and *Other*. As each card is read the group decides where to place it on the grid. Some of the cards may fit into several categories; however, placement should be determined by who has primary responsibility.

Have one group read their whole list for the principal role and discuss any differences. Continue with coach, teacher, assistant and other. Draw out the similarities and differences between roles developed by the groups. Report to the whole group the descriptors that gave problems for the teacher, assistant and other. This discussion builds awareness and understanding that even though there are areas that are permeable depending on the school context, there are some hard-and-fast areas as well, such as teacher evaluation, principal as instructional leader, and student evaluation and reporting.

Close with a general discussion about how this information will be used in the development and implementation processes.

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[4] http://education.alberta.ca/department/ipr/inclusion/capacity/learning.aspx.

Different Roles Card Sort

instructional leader in the school	demonstrates and models inclusive education practices
data analyst	supervises teachers
works with individual students or small groups in the classroom	assigned to assist specific students in the classroom/school

evaluates teachers	**co-plans, co-teaches and co-evaluates student learning**
facilitates learning team meetings	**a thinking partner for teachers**
helps teachers identify instructional goals	**promotes a safe, inclusive environment for students**

collaborates on developing and promoting an inclusive vision and mission for the school	promotes team building and shared leadership
cultivates a climate of mutual respect	voluntary participant in the process
shares expertise in special education	mentoring of new teachers

final decision-maker about strategies to use in the classroom	**responsibility for communicating about students**
promotes collegial planning	**responsible for professional conversations**
supports reflective practice	**fostering and sustaining an inclusive school environment in which diversity is celebrated**

ensuring that students have access to appropriate programs based on learning needs	**promoting collaborative norms**
allocating resources to support inclusive education	**coordinator of the inclusive learning coaching program**
promoting professional development in support of coaching	**providing resources to assist teachers meeting the needs of students with diverse and special needs**

assisting with diagnostic assessment and analysis	**working with teachers to reflect upon and improve teaching practice**
are committed to improving their practice through professional growth	**selects the focus for the coaching process**
adjusting the school schedule and timetable to facilitate coaching	**supporting teachers in meeting the diverse learning needs of students**

facilitates or administers individual student assessments	tutors students who need extra instruction
has expert knowledge about special education and how to apply strategies to meet the diverse learning needs of students	skilled at facilitating teacher collaboration and problem solving
are committed to improving their practice through professional growth	selects the focus for the coaching process

adjusting the school schedule and timetable to facilitate coaching	supporting teachers in meeting the special and diverse learning needs of students in inclusive classrooms
facilitates or administers individual student assessments	tutors students who need extra instruction
has expert knowledge about special education and how to apply strategies to meet the diverse learning needs of students	skilled at facilitating teacher collaboration and problem solving

E. Choosing the Coaching Model

Opening Activities

1. Line-Up

Participants are asked to form a line based on their experience with a coaching process such as peer coaching, collaborative coaching, cognitive coaching, coaching for inclusion or other models. Start at one end with no experience and end with "experts." Discuss the reasons for the placement on the line and assess the knowledge in the room.

2. Levels of Expertise

Have participants individually colour in the expertise "thermometer" based on the prompt, "What is your level of expertise or comfort in coaching for inclusive learning?" Compare the levels and discuss the reasons for the placement. What would the staff level look like?

This simple tool can be used to check on any skill or strategy. In the latter part of these workshops, it could be used to check the staff experience with the coaching model being implemented.

Levels of Expertise Thermometer

Expert

Growing some mastery

Beginning to understand it

Some initial experience

Complete novice
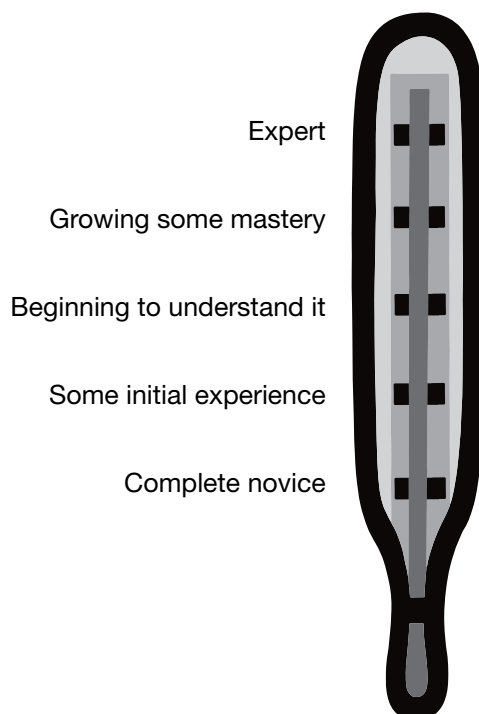
Workshop Activities

1. Planning Team Report

In the last session, the staff worked on a statement of purpose for coaching for inclusion. The planning team should present the finalized statement for review and discussion. Keep the statement clearly in sight for this session, as this is the initial factor for determining the choice of coaching models.

A team has been working to identify the students that require additional support to succeed; they could make a preliminary report at this time. Keep this data in mind as the models are discussed.

2. Models of Coaching to Support Inclusion Jigsaw Activity

Jigsaw using the articles "How Administrators Support Peer Coaching" (Garmston 1987) and "Teachers Coaching Teachers" (Showers 1985). Use the jigsaw articles to complete the chart. The description of the jigsaw process is on page 75.

In small groups, staff match the purpose statement and student learning needs in the school with the different models. Which model would best accomplish the identified purpose? Which model would effectively meet the student needs that have been identified? The allocation of time and the physical arrangements of the school can also be discussed in relation to the models. Close with a whole-group discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the different models.

3. Presentations

Some members of the school or district staff may have attended workshops or programs and have expertise in coaching models; they could make short presentations to give the staff background information about the various models.

4. Consensus-Seeking About Coaching Models

In small groups complete the statement "Given that the purpose for inclusive learning coaching has been identified as _____ and that the initial focus will be for students who _____, the coaching model(s) that would be most appropriate is _____."

Compare the statements; how much agreement exists? If necessary, use the Five-Finger Vote or consensus rubric to reach agreement.

5. Next Steps

The principal and the planning committee report on the process for selecting a coach and orientation of the coach.

Summary of Coaching Models

Coaching Model	Skills	Purposes/Goals	Resources

F. Implementing the Program

Opening Activity

1. A Basket of Questions

Each participant is invited to write a question on a 3" x 5" card that he or she still has about coaching for inclusion. The questions are placed in a "basket" and the workshop leader reads the questions, grouping similar questions; each small group is assigned a set of similar questions.

The groups develop their answers to the questions and report to the whole group.

These questions indicate areas that require additional work before the implementation process begins.

Workshop Activities

1. Develop or Review a Timeline

The implementation timeline may be developed by the planning team and brought to the staff for ratification and modification, or it can be developed by the group.

Events to include on a timeline include
- planning team formed,
- purpose statement developed,
- roles clarified,
- commitment of staff obtained,
- volunteer teachers for coaching identified,
- coaching model chosen,
- coach(es) hired or selected,
- coach(es) trained,
- coaching time created,
- funding secured,
- professional development for teachers being coached,
- ongoing professional development for coaches,
- regular coaching meetings scheduled,
- baseline survey for teachers and coaches,
- evaluation conducted,
- coaching program starts and
- report on coaching program.

2. Plan for the Evaluation Process

Review the purpose and goals of the coaching to support inclusion program; post on a chart or projection screen. In small groups, identify the types of information needed to assess whether the goals have been met. It is important to stress that the

supervision and evaluation of teachers, including the coach, is the responsibility of the principal. The purpose of this discussion is to get consensus on the data that will measure a successful program. What does success look like?

Sort the information into categories such as data to evaluate the coaching program, data to evaluate the coaching process, data to measure the teacher/coach relationship and data to measure student learning.

Discuss the process for data collection and the frequency of feedback. The planning team should then use this information to fine-tune the evaluation plan.

3. Reflection Activity

Stress the importance of continued reflection during the coaching process; individuals involved might make a plan for daily, weekly and monthly reflections which can help to identify issues or measure progress. These reflections may be captured in a personal journal or through group discussion during curriculum, grade team or staff meetings.

Participants are asked, "As we begin to implement the program, what do you hope to achieve? What are your greatest concerns? What was the most significant information that you have learned to this point?"

G. Assessing, Modifying, Evaluating and Celebrating

Opening Activity

1. K.W.L.

Participants did a variation of this activity at the beginning of the collaborative journey to implement the coaching program.

In small groups, design a grid on chart paper that has three columns: *What I Know About Coaching*; *What I Still Need to Learn About Coaching*; and, most important at this stage, *What I Have Learned About Coaching*.

Each person should first take a few minutes to think about the column headings and jot down a few ideas for each of them. In the small group compile a joint list on chart paper. This activity can also be done using a silent brainstorming process with the three questions written on three separate chart papers posted in different locations in the room.

Convene the whole group for presentation and discussion of the charts; spend considerable time with the third column, as it can form the beginning of the evaluation process.

Workshop Activities

1. Stop, Start, Continue

This activity is useful as an annual or term reflection. Instruct the participants to think about the coaching for inclusive learning program as it has unfolded throughout the year. As individuals, make a four-quadrant grid with *Stop*, *Start*, *Continue* and *Other* as headings for the grid. Participants fill in the grid from their personal experience with the program. Provide an opportunity for those who wish to share their reflections.

Repeat the activity in small groups, but focus on the school as the unit of reflection.

In the large group, compare and discuss the charts; are the findings similar or are there significant differences among and between groups? How might this activity inform the evaluation process?

Another option is to do this activity after the presentation of the year-end program evaluation data to start the discussion about how to improve the program for the next school year.

2. Presentation of Draft Evaluation Data

The planning team (or a separate evaluation team if one has been formed) should present the evaluation data to the staff or to those who participated in the program.

The data should be studied by small groups. What can be learned from the data? What changes to the program are suggested by the data? Is the analysis complete,

appropriate, and accurate? What is missing? How should the data be presented and to whom?

The evaluation team then uses the feedback from the staff to develop the final evaluation report.

3. Reflecting on Purpose

On a chart or LCD screen, write the purpose for the coaching program as it was developed by the staff at the beginning of the implementation process.

After the experiences of working in the program for a year and based on the evaluation data, is this still an accurate statement? Should it be modified as year two begins? Use a consensus process to decide this question.

4. Celebration

It is important to celebrate the achievements and contributions of the participants in the coaching for inclusion program.

Give each participant a large envelope; participants are asked to print their names on the outside and decorate it if they wish; post the envelopes around the room. Everyone is given enough 3" x 5" cards for the number of people in the whole group. Invite participants to reflect on and write a note to each member on topics such as what they have learned, their contributions to the group, and what they value and appreciate about each member as the coaching program developed.

Place the notes in the appropriate staff envelopes.

Debrief with a whole group discussion. What do we feel good about? How do we measure our success? What do we want to keep doing as we move into the next year?

This discussion should, of course, be followed by FOOD and FESTIVITIES!

Appendices

History and Evolution of Inclusive Education in Alberta ———

Andrews and Lupart (2000) describe a series of changes in societal thinking and educational systems over two centuries that have evolved to the development of the philosophy of inclusion promoted in Alberta schools. The 19th century, characterized by the term *institutionalization* and accompanied by the medical model of diagnosis and referral, was followed by a period between 1900 and 1950, during which segregated schooling became the norm. The 1960s gave rise to an increase in categorization in which some students with special needs were still educated in separate schools, while others were educated in separate classrooms of "regular" schools. The notion of integration in the 1970s stressed education in the least restrictive environment, and mainstreaming of the 1980s encouraged the placement of high-incidence students in regular classrooms. It was not until the 1990s that inclusion became common and all students were included in the full range of academic and social aspects of neighbourhood schools. At the same time educators and public policy began to emphasize the importance of equity and opportunity for all students.

This emphasis on equity at times came into conflict with the school reforms of the 1980s and 1990s, which were dominated by the search for excellence in schools. The dominance of belief in the value of competition in which efficiency and measurable outcomes became priorities coincided with the pressure for success measured by such thing as standardized tests and high school graduation rates. These measures are often not appropriate for determining the success of students with diverse learning needs.

In a paper presented to the Canadian Teachers' Federation conference "Building Inclusive Schools: A Search for Solutions," Charlie Naylor (2005) stressed that the exploration of "excellence" and "equity" was important because inclusion stresses equity and the academic and social development for all students in schools, while the argument for "excellence" focused on a system where some students failed and others succeeded. Accountability systems that promote "excellence" may limit support for inclusion because many students with exceptionalities will not reach the academic standards required.

Sapon-Shevin (2003) has challenged educational leaders to see inclusion in the broader context of social justice and not just as a program of placement for students with disabilities. Numerous scholars have reported the damage done by tracking and pull-out programs, which characterized early attempts for mainstreaming and other forms of integration. Theoharis (2009) advocates for social justice leadership that keeps issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation and other historically marginalized factors at the centre of practice and vision. Social justice leaders work to eliminate structures that marginalize and segregate students and impede their learning.

The 1996 Canadian Commission on Emotional and Learning Disorders in Children, a turning point in the understanding of inclusive education in Canada, said that every child should have the right to an education that will realize his or her full potential and that financing the education of all children was the responsibility of educational authorities.

The legal context for inclusion is set out in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; it includes the right to be included or belong and the right to benefit from an education without discrimination. MacKay (2006) advises that education systems be diligent in monitoring goals, practices and policies, removing barriers and adapting existing structures to accommodate all students. Special education has evolved over time along with a better understanding of educational research, advancements in technology and development of human rights legislation and case law (Green 2008). On November 12, 2012, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in a unanimous decision that a school district in British Columbia failed to provide the necessary access to special education supports that a student with learning disabilities needed to get meaningful access to general education. This landmark decision confirms that students in Canada who have learning disabilities have the right to supports needed for meaningful access to education. This recent decision is being carefully considered by the provincial government and school jurisdictions to ensure that inclusive education policy and practices meet the standard set by the Court.[5]

In Alberta, the decision to integrate students with special needs into regular classrooms and neighbourhood schools was announced more than two decades ago in the Alberta Education document *Vision for the Nineties ... A Plan for Action* (1991). There is still debate about the processes used to identify students with special needs, the amount of support available, the suitability of inclusion for all students, the knowledge and skills needed by teachers to meet the needs of students with special needs, the documentation needed to access funding, and the adequacy of the funding.

Alberta's current educational environment and approach to supporting students with special needs contains elements of both the traditional special education approach, which might be categorized as integration, and a more recent move toward inclusive education. At the present time, Alberta appears to be caught between the two models, and it will require time, professional development and focus to move towards the more inclusive approach (Alberta Teachers' Association 2009).

In the fall of 2007 Alberta Education undertook a profile review of severe disabilities funding. This review uncovered province-wide discrepancies in how students with disabilities were coded, assessed and provided with the necessary supports and services, how that policy was interpreted and how student files were managed. This

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[5] Supreme Court of Canada 2012; available at http://scc.lexum.
org/decisia-scc-csc/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/12680/index.
do?r=AAAAAQAlTW9vcmUgdi4gQnJpdGlzaCBDb2x1bWJpYSAoRWR1Y2F0aW9uKQAAAAAB or http://
tinyurl.com/awubecg.

review led, in 2008, to the establishment of a province-wide consultation process designed to set the direction for special education in Alberta. The primary aims of the consultation were to develop a special education framework that includes vision, principles, policy direction, accountability measures and a funding distribution formula; enable an effective dialogue through a broad-based process; and begin implementing parts of the framework in the 2011/12 school year.[6]

In *Setting the Direction Framework for Special Education in Alberta* (Alberta Education 2009e, 5) inclusive education is defined as a way of thinking and acting that demonstrates universal acceptance of all students. Inclusive education in Alberta is a values-based approach to accepting responsibility for all students. It also means that all students will have equitable opportunity to be included in the typical learning environment or program of choice.

There is a growing body of research that supports this broader view of inclusive education. MacKay and Burt-Garrons (2004) advise that inclusive education means that the school system in both its design and effect should continually strive to ensure that all students have access to and are enabled to participate in the school community, are part of the community in positive and supporting ways and see their identity reflected in the operation of the school community.

Kunc (1992) states that, in principle, inclusive education means valuing the diversity of the human community. When inclusive education is fully embraced, we abandon the idea that children have to be "normal" in order to contribute to the world. We begin to look beyond typical ways of becoming valued members of the community, and in doing so, begin to realize the achievable goal of providing all children with an authentic sense of belonging.

In the fall of 2010, inclusion was identified as part of the government's *Inspiring Action on Education*, and *Setting the Direction* was renamed *Action on Inclusion* to signal implementation of an inclusive education system. "In Alberta inclusion in the education system is about ensuring that each student belongs and receives a quality education no matter their ability, disability, language, cultural background, gender, or age."[7]

What started by considering some students' specialized learning needs has moved toward the notion of an inclusive education system that takes responsibility for all students. Some learners will require some additional, specialized supports to fully access these opportunities. In an inclusive education system it is the responsibility of all members of the system to ensure that every learner has fair and reasonable access to educational opportunities in a manner that respects and values their way of life.

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[6] The Setting the Direction Framework, which was the result of the consultation process, is available online at http://education.alberta.ca/media/1296998/09545aeugovresponseenglish.pdf or http://tinyurl.com/bv9jt5j.

[7] Alberta Education, http://education.alberta.ca/department/ipr/inclusion/about.aspx.

Research on Coaching
to Support Inclusion

In 2007, the Association surveyed teachers attending the fall conferences of the Special Education and the Gifted and Talented Education specialist councils to gather information about their experiences in providing instruction to students with special needs. To augment the survey results, the Association organized, throughout the province, a series of focus groups in 2008. Participants in the study described the supports they require to address the needs of students in an inclusive classroom. Many participants emphasized the importance of school-based special education expertise. Site-based special education/resource teachers are important for two reasons: (1) to build the capacity of classroom teachers to help them write IPPs and develop differentiated teaching strategies and (2) to work with individual students or groups of students both in and out of the classroom. Respondents emphasized that administrators must allow site-based special education/resource teachers to focus on special education rather than assign them other responsibilities that consume their time. Some respondents suggested that special education/resource teachers should be called *learning support teachers* or *learning strategy teachers*, titles that would better describe their function in an inclusive environment (Alberta Teachers' Association 2009).

A literature review on school-based learning coaches conducted for Alberta Education (Alberta Education 2010c) concluded that the link between inclusive education and school-based coaching is not always clearly defined in the literature. However, there is research on coaching as a professional development strategy in which coaches apply their expertise in subject areas or instructional practices with the goal of helping teachers work more effectively with students to maximize their potential. A school-based learning coach focuses on instruction, student interactions, and the culture and environment of schools and classrooms. There is also a growing body of literature that recommends a team or collaborative model that emphasizes co-teaching as a predominant form of school-based coaching (Austin 2001).

Sweeney (2009) identifies key elements in student-centred coaching: the focus is on a goal for student learning; conversations are driven by student work; and student-centred coaching depends upon leadership from the principal. Teachers' roles as learning coaches can be conceptualized in the context of teacher leadership. Teacher leaders in inclusive education may take on and influence problem solving related to teaching strategies, curriculum and assessment.

A case study conducted by the IRIS Center for Training Enhancements (2009) outlines key roles for special educators in inclusive education such as co-teacher, team teacher, consulting teacher, facilitator, mediator, liaison, case manager, new teacher mentor and the "go-to" person. Much of the research stresses an emphasis on a collaborative model connected to school-based learning communities.

The Alberta Education literature review (Alberta Education 2009b) identifies the following common activities of successful coaching teams:

- having individual teachers voluntarily determine common or discipline-specific characteristics, knowledge and skills that they wish to work on;
- building professional relationships on parity, communication and trust as well as commitment to building and maintaining relationships;
- providing clearly defined classroom roles and responsibilities;
- ensuring support from administration; and
- planning ongoing professional learning activities.

With respect to the effectiveness of coaching in inclusive schools, the literature provides some qualitative indicators of success and impact on practice, particularly when the right conditions are in place. Knight (2004) indicates that when the right conditions are in place, including administrative support and highly qualified coaches, implementation of coaching is effective.

In "What Good Coaches Do," Knight (2011) identifies seven partnership principles:

1. Equality—coaches have faith that the teachers they work with bring a lot to the interaction.
2. Choice—teachers are the final decision makers about strategies and data interpretation.
3. Voice—teachers feel free to express their enthusiasm and concerns.
4. Reflection—teachers engage with the coach in thinking about their learning.
5. Dialogue—the goal is to discover the best idea or the best solution for the child.
6. Praxis—teachers apply new knowledge and skills.
7. Reciprocity—everyone learns from the interaction.

Some of the literature and professional discourse about the necessary characteristics of successful coaching models discussed the benefits of teacher coaching to students. In *Cognitive Coaching SM* (2001), Jenny Edwards identified nine anticipated outcomes:

1. Increase in student test scores and other benefits to students
2. Growth in teacher efficacy
3. Increase in reflection and complex thinking among teachers
4. Increase in teacher satisfaction with career and position
5. Increase in professional climate at schools
6. Increase in teacher collaboration
7. Increase in professional assistance to teachers
8. Increase in personal benefits to teachers and
9. Benefits to people in fields other than teaching

The Annenberg Institute for School Reform (n.d., 2) states that "a well-designed and supported coaching program weds core elements of professional development with the

essential goals of professional learning communities in ways that advance both school and systemic improvement" (p. 2) Professional learning support for teachers, coaches and administration is an important element in the effectiveness of school-based coaching.

Coaching has been used in many countries as a strategy for inclusive education. As an example, Kugelmass and Ainscow (2004) studied schools in New York, England and Portugal that were providing integrated or inclusion services to special education students. The purpose of their study was to identify the delivery of educational services to students with disabilities in a general education setting. Despite the differences between the schools, certain elements held true for all:

- Cultural symbols and language transmitted beliefs and values.
- Staff and children engaged in collaborative practices.
- Educators adamantly believed in the inclusion initiative.
- Educators understood the social and political nature of inclusion.
- Staff and students viewed their differences as a resource.
- External forces supported the original impetus for the initiative.
- Leaders engaged in collaborative practices with school staff on a regular basis.
- Leaders encouraged and supported their staff in a collaborative process of school development.
- Leaders regarded students and staff as "full members of the school community."
- Organized special education services were an integral part of the school structure. (Green 2008)

In a paper presented at the Canadian Teachers' Federation conference in 2005, Charlie Naylor noted that there is considerable evidence of general teacher support for the philosophy of inclusion (King and Edmonds 2001; Naylor 2002, 2004; Pudlas 2003; Martinez 2004). However, such support is matched with a view among teachers surveyed by Naylor that current preparation and training are not adequate for teaching in inclusive schools.

Although there is limited research directly related to coaching to support inclusion, the research on other successful coaching models can be adapted. A great deal of literature and research exists on specific coaching models, including technical coaching, peer coaching, cognitive coaching, collaborative coaching and co-teaching; specific research relative to each is included in the section "Choosing the Coaching Model."

For a more in depth examination of the research consult the materials listed in the reference section of this guide and the literature review developed by Alberta Education.[8]

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[8] Available at http://education.alberta.ca/admin/supportingstudent/diverselearning.aspx or http://tinyurl.com/d8mpxym.

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