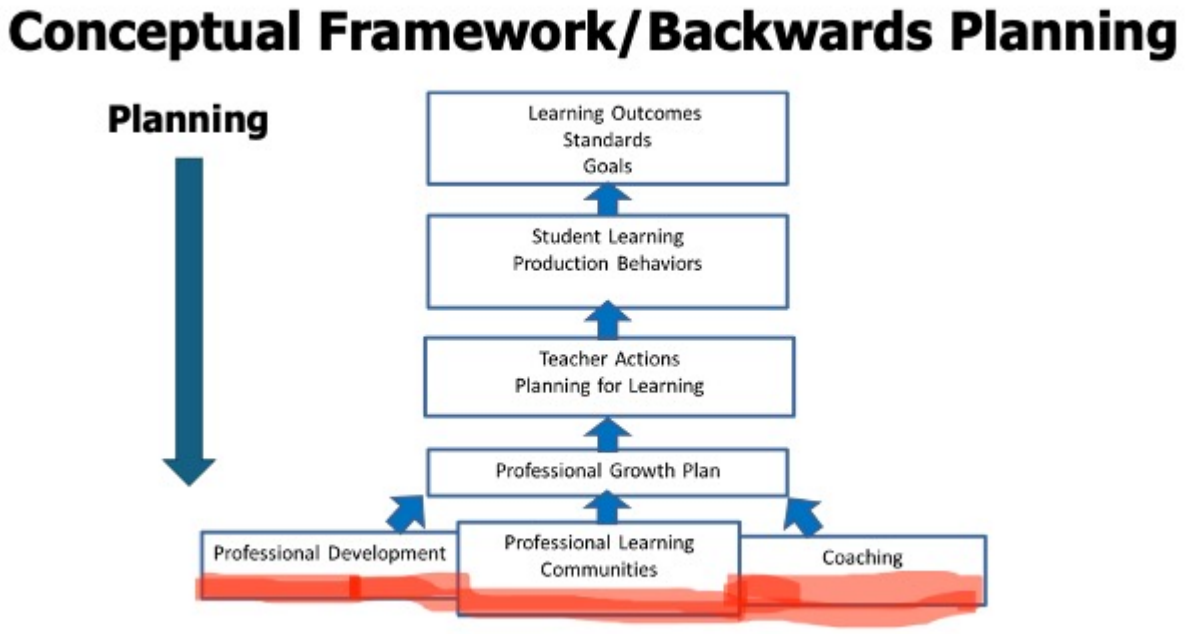
How Coaching Can Transform

I have been asked to be part of a panel discussion at a coaching symposium at ASC Abu Dhabi. The conference is designed for current and aspiring coaches as well as those looking to establish a coaching program. The panel discussion that I'm joining is titled, **The Ripple Effect: How Coaching Transforms Teachers, Students, and Educational Communities**. As I am pulling my thoughts together in preparation, I thought I'd post them in this blog.

First, I love the title, starting with the "ripple effect". That's a great description of the impact of coaching. Instructional coaches at times need to adjust from their classroom experiences where short instructional cycles can show up in students mastering an assessment rather quickly providing positive feedback to the teacher. In coaching engagements with individual teachers or teaching teams it can take a longer time to see the impact of the coach's actions. It's like the teacher who hears years later from a past student who shared the impact of their experience with the

teacher. An impact that wasn't observable during the time the student was in the teacher's class.

A backwards planning process illustrates the ripple effect. The coach's actions transform teachers, students, and educational communities over time.



The work of coaches across the bottom of this diagram should ripple up, impacting teachers' individual and collective actions that influence students' engagement in learning activities leading to students' learning outcomes. Therefore, coaches' actions should be taken with an understanding of the process and the desired outcomes.

In the second edition of **Coaching Matters**, Killion, Bryan, and Clifton identify this list of coaching roles, all of which have can have a ripple up effect.

- Resource provider
- Data coach
- Instructional specialist
- Curriculum specialist
- Classroom supporter
- Learning facilitator
- Mentor

- School leader
- Catalyst for change
- Learner

> ***"One of the most important roles a coach assumes is that of learner. Learners model continual improvement: they reflect on their work by engaging in the feedback process, experimenting with new ideas, taking risks, and using what they learn to contribute to the success of all teachers and students."*** (Coaching Matters)

Here are some keys that I have identified as supportive to coaching having the desired impact on students' learning, achievement, and success.

Embedded in Daily Practices:

In a culture of coaching, coaching is not seen as a separate activity but is integrated into the daily routines and interactions of teachers and administrators. This means that coaching conversations and feedback are regular and expected parts of the school day, not special occurrences that happen during formal meetings or scheduled sessions.

Everyone is a Learner and a Coach:

Everyone in the educational environment, from teachers to administrators, to students, can both learn from others and contribute to others' learning. This contrasts with traditional models where coaching might only involve a designated coach and a coachee.

Focus on Student Learning:

A 'culture of coaching' is ultimately focused on improving student outcomes. Coaching interactions and strategies are directly linked to enhancing classroom practice that leads to deeper student engagement and learning. This focus ensures that coaching is not just about professional development in

isolation but is connected to the core mission of the school.

Openness and Trust:

Building a ‘culture of coaching’ requires a high level of trust and openness within the school, where teachers feel safe sharing challenges and successes, and seeking and receiving feedback. This is a shift from environments where coaching might be seen as remedial or supervisory rather than supportive and developmental.

Continuous Improvement:

In a ‘culture of coaching’ there is a continuous loop of feedback, reflection, and action, which promotes ongoing improvement. This differs from isolated coaching programs that may be episodic, with start and end points, and focused on short-term goals.

These elements are likely part of reaching transformational results. What roles do you envision coaching playing?

- **Significant Improvement**: What are indicators that your educators and community would label as significant improvement in student outcomes?
- **Fundamental Changes**: I frequently encourage educators to explore if they can achieve desired outcomes by doing what they are doing better or whether a fundamental change in practice is needed to gain new results.
- **Long-term Impact**: Have the changes in teaching and learning become rooted? Do expectations of students, parents, and educators prohibit going back to “what we used to do?”
- **Wide-reaching Effects**: Transformational results often extend beyond the immediate scope of a program. Are there places where educators’ learning extends beyond the walls of this school?
- **Innovation and Creativity**: Novel ideas disrupt traditional or established ways of doing things,

producing changes that last. Changes that are transformational.

“Comfort and complacency with the existing approach to coaching will likely lead to missed opportunities for reimagining the role of a coach and coaching as a vehicle for increasing results for students and educators. In a rapidly changing world, effective coaching responds to new and unknown needs.” (Coaching Matters)