

EDC Proposal, Oct. 30, 2020

GRANT TITLE

A Review of Teaching from a Coaching Lens: How Being “Coach-like” Impacts Teachers’ Instruction and Classroom Climate

PRINCIPAL APPLICANT

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Dana has more than 10 years experience designing and delivering workshops through her past work as Manager of Learning and Development at PwC, external consulting, and in her current role as Educational Developer with Niagara College. She has been involved in numerous research projects including an approved research initiative through Niagara College Research Ethics Board examining resiliency in teaching. Dana will have her Certified Professional Coach (CPC) Certification through the Institute for Professional Excellence in Coaching (IPEC) in March 2021. She holds a Business Degree, Adult Learning Certificate, and a Masters Certificate in Organizational Development and Change.

CO-APPLICANTS

Jenn Wicks
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Jenn is a Certified Executive Coach and Mentor Coach and holds a Professional Coaching Certification (PCC) with the International Coaching Federation (ICF). Before taking on her current role as Director of the Centre for Teaching & Learning Innovation at College of the North Atlantic in Newfoundland and Labrador, Jenn started her own practice as an Executive and Leadership Coach, serving leaders around the world through 1:1 and team coaching, facilitation and training, gaining over 800 hours of coaching experience since 2015. Jenn also holds a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction from Memorial University and has recently joined the faculty at Royal Roads University in the Executive Coaching certificate programme.

1. Agreement Statements

I/We agree to provide the EDC community, who funds this grant, with access to resulting information and resources for which the copyright remains with the author(s).

I/We acknowledge that I/we will submit an interim report and a final deliverable (as described below).

2. Project Mini-Description

The project will explore teaching through a coaching lens so that teachers can build upon and demonstrate a “coach-like” presence in the classroom to positively impact instruction and create a more supportive classroom climate.

3. Project Full Description

Background

There are many definitions of coaching, but according to the book *Coaching in Education*, one that resonates most within educational institutions is “unlocking a person’s potential to maximize their own performance.” (Nieuwerburgh, 2018) Behind this intent is the “desire to make a difference to student learning.” (Creasy and Paterson, 2005)

In their paper, *Essential Coaching Skills for Affective Development*, Barnes et al say that: “Coaching has the potential to be most effective when the specific skills of committed listening, paraphrasing, presuming positive intent, asking powerful questions, and providing reflective feedback are paired with genuine relationship between the coach and the person being coached.” Some or all of these skills are inherent in many teaching and learning experiences, perhaps more so than in other professions.

In addition to a set of key skills coaching is “a holistic multifaceted approach to learning and change”. (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003) A key philosophy is that the coachee has the answers they need within them and the coach helps the coachee to overcome personal barriers and uncover answers through an effective coaching approach that includes:

- Establishing rapport and trust
- Listening for meaning
- Questioning or understanding
- Prompting action, reflection and learning
- Developing confidence and celebrating success

(Creasy and Paterson, 2005)

At its core, coaching is focused on building a relationship, where the coachee feels cared for and can explore their behaviours, practices, beliefs, values and feelings within an environment that nurtures and supports them.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to explore teaching through a coaching lens so that teachers can build upon and demonstrate a “coach-like” presence in the classroom to positively impact instruction and create a more supportive classroom climate. In particular, this project will:

- Enhance awareness of coaching philosophy and models among faculty and educational developers.
- Increase teachers’ awareness about the degree to which they currently apply coach-like practices in their interactions with students (behaviors, beliefs and thoughts).
- Review teaching skills within a coaching lens and provide faculty with tools and strategies to expand and deepen their coach-like practices.

Rationale

Research shows that an effective strategy for teacher development is coaching (Cornett & Knight, 2009; Joyce & Showers, 1987; Knight, 2009). Coaching supports teachers to improve their capacity to reflect, clarify their own values and apply their learning to their work with students. (Aguilar, 2013)

How teachers practice in the classroom is a significant predictor of student achievement. (Knight, 2009; Bush, 2009) According to a study done by the Annenberg Foundation for Education Reform, there is a link between the conditions, behaviours and practices in coaching that can affect school culture. (Aguilar, 2013) When teachers model coaching practices they can engage students in greater reflection and awareness, which in turn has positive impact on student learning.

Coaching can have a large impact on the lives of college students. (Lefdahl-Davis, Erin, 2018) According to Franklin and Doran (2009), who conducted a study in which college students received life coaching, there was an increase in “academic self-efficacy, hope, resiliency, growth mindset, self-compassion, and academic performance.”

While this project does not examine coaching specifically for students, the belief is that supporting teachers’ professional development through an opportunity to learn about and practice key skills in coaching will have a positive impact on student outcomes.

Approach

This project will be proposed as a formal research initiative through the Research Ethics Board of both Niagara College and College of the North Atlantic. The project will be a pilot coaching series comprised of three parts, engaging 15-20 participants.

- First, one, 2-hour workshop that focuses on introducing/bringing awareness to coaching, including but not limited to coaching philosophy/models, what coaching is and isn't, and how it is being used in education.
- Second, one 3-hour workshop that is focused on increasing teachers' awareness about the degree to which they currently apply coach-like practices in their interactions with students, reviewing teaching skills within a coaching lens, and providing faculty with tools and strategies to expand and deepen their coach-like practice.
- Third, to provide additional coaching support including at least three, 30-minute coaching sessions for each participant, occasional check-ins and access to resources.

There will be three quantitative assessments and one qualitative assessment:

1. Pre-assessment survey to assess participants' understanding of coach-like practices, and how they rate themselves against them.
2. Feedback survey, to gain an understanding of participant learnings.
3. Post-assessment survey, approximately 6 months later to measure changes/progress.
4. Interviews (or focus groups) to gain detailed information into the impact of the series.

The workshops will be designed and facilitated by Dana Wetherell of Niagara College and Jenn Wicks of College of the North Atlantic. They will also provide 1:1 coaching (and engage other coaches) and collaborate on the research submission.

Summary of Deliverables and Outcomes

- Workshop content and approach to be shared and leveraged by others.
- Feedback from faculty who participate in the workshops and other supports.
- Clarity on whether being "coach-like" positively influences teachers' instruction and classroom climate.

This project provides value to Educational Developers and supports the *EDC Living Plan* through:

- **Celebrating, Reflecting & Scholarship**, specifically in highlighting the importance of a coaching lens in educational development and as it relates to faculty development, in addition to access to any research results from this project to inform future scholarly research.

- **Educational Developer Learning & Growth**, in terms of a process/materials to introduce coaching in their own educational institutions. We will share the workshop resources including slides, communications, and a facilitator’s guide, which will be Creative Commons licensed (but may include copyrighted third-party content used with permission). We will connect with the EDC PD Coordinator to offer a webinar to EDC members. Through this we will demonstrate that one does not have to be a certified coach to use and gain benefits from coaching skills.
- **Engaging Members in Co-Creation**, by way of two educational institutions working together to design and deliver this pilot coaching series and conducting formal research to share with the Educational Development community.

4. Impact of Physical Distancing

All components of this project will be completed virtually, including:

- Interaction with colleagues to design and deliver the workshops
- Delivery of workshops to faculty
- Delivery of additional supports such as individual coaching sessions
- Collection of feedback

5. Budget and Timeline

| Deliverable | Timing | Budget |
|---|-------------------------|---|
| Submit Ethics Research proposal | February | |
| Pre-Assessment | March | |
| Deliver Workshops 1&2 | March | Gift cards as incentive to participate in the research \$50/person x 20 = \$1000 |
| Feedback Survey | March | |
| Individual Coaching Sessions + Check-ins and Resources 1:1 - #1 & #2 1:1 - #3 | March-August October | 2 additional coaches (honorarium - \$250 each) = \$500 |
| Interim Report to EDC | June | |
| Post-Assessment | October | |
| Interviews (or Focus Groups) | Oct.-Nov. | |
| Analysis of outcomes | Nov.-Dec. | Analysis Assistance – 20 hours (\$25/hr) = \$500 |
| Delivery of Final Report to EDC | Dec. | |
| | TOTAL | \$2,000 |

References

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Cornett, J. and J. Knight. 2009. *Coaching: Approaches and perspectives*. Thousand Oaks, CA, Corwin Press: 192-216.

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