

Coaching Strategies¹

Observation Coaching Strategies

1. Side-by-Side Verbal or Gestural Support:

Coach delivers verbal prompts or cues to remind practitioner to use specific strategies or uses non-verbal visual or gestural support to prompt/remind practitioner to use a strategy.

Examples:

- The teacher is beginning to use a “5-minute countdown glove” for transitions. Coach says to teacher, “Let Caleb pull off one of the minutes” or “Remember to let Joey pull off the numbers.”
- The coach nods her head to confirm the successful use of the visual schedule with the group

2. Problem Solving Discussion:

Verbal interaction between the coach and practitioner designed to lead the practitioner through a systematic process involving identifying the problem, generating options, deciding on a possible solution, implementing the best solution and evaluating the solution.

Example:

- The teacher and coach may have a brief discussion on the way to the play ground
- The coach asks the teacher “Do you think a white board would work for his schedule?”

3. Observing:

The coach watches and takes notes about the practitioner’s implementation of Pyramid strategies.

4. Videotaping

The coach videotapes an activity or teacher interaction for later review and discussion with the practitioner.

5. Modeling:

Verbal, gestural, physical or signed actions that demonstrate how to implement Pyramid strategies. In a modeling situation, the coach works with a child or the class and demonstrates how to do a certain type of action regarding the Pyramid practices.

¹ Sources:

- Snyder, P. (2009) *Coaching Manual for Embedded Instruction for Early Learning: Tools for Teachers* (TfT). Gainesville, Florida: University of South Florida.
- Hemmeter, M.L., Kinder, K., Artman, K., Snyder, P., & Fox, L., (2009). *Coaching Manual for Classroom-Wide Implementation of the Pyramid Model*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University.

Example:

- Coach demonstrates how to use an individualized direction or visual schedule by working with a child during a classroom activity, routine or transition.
- Coach notices a group of children who are having a difficult time at the computer and prompts the children to go get the solution kit.

6. Helping with Environmental Arrangements:

Coach assists practitioner with creating and/or adapting the environment to support the use of Pyramid strategies. This could include preparing or developing materials, making on-the-spot changes in the classroom, or rearranging the physical space.

De-briefing Coaching Strategies

1. Problem Solving Discussion:

Verbal interaction between the coach and practitioner designed to lead the practitioner through a systematic process involving identifying the problem, generating options, deciding on a possible solution, implementing the best solution and evaluating the solution.

Example:

- During the observation, the coach notices a target child who has trouble transitioning to music. At the debriefing, the coach and teacher talk a bit about the situation and the coach says, “Let’s think about some ways to make this transition easier for Eric.” Together they brainstorm a few different ideas, the teacher selects one to try, and the coach says she’ll make a point to observe this during her next visit.

2. Reflective Conversation:

Verbal interaction that includes active participation and discussion between the coach and practitioner. The goal is to encourage the practitioner to think about his/her actions, the situation, the strategies she used, the responses of the children, and/or her comfort level regarding implementation of Pyramid strategies. No corrective or directive statements are used. Instead the coach offers a question to encourage reflection. Reflective conversation can focus on perceptions, feelings, interpretations, or use of strategies.

Examples:

- “Let’s talk about what happened with Bobby this morning. Why do you think this might have happened today? Let’s think about your schedule. Was there anything different happening today?”
- “So I saw you use the new schedule. How was it? Was it comfortable to you?”
- “Why do you think Stacy didn’t stick with Circle today? What do you think is going on?”

3. Video Review:

The practitioner and coach review a video vignette from the practitioner's classroom and then engage in one of the coaching strategies such as: problem solving discussion; reflective conversation; verbal performance feedback; or graphing.

4. Role Play:

A simulated situation that happens between the coach and practitioner that aims to help the practitioner to learn or practice Pyramid strategies during debriefing. In a role-playing situation, both individuals take on a defined role and practice the use of a strategy or a response to a situation. The practitioner may take on the role of the child while the coach demonstrates a strategy, or the coach may take on the role of the child while the practitioner practices a strategy.

Example:

- The teacher and coach may practice a hypothetical conversation with a parent during a role play before the teacher meets with the parent.
- The coach could use role play to practice the use of Tucker the Turtle or problem solving strategies with the teacher.

5. Demonstration:

The coach demonstrates how to implement Pyramid strategies or shares a short video clip that shows implementation of the Pyramid practices.

Example:

- The coach stands near the visual schedule and tells the teacher, "During Circle you might say, 'Ok, Circle is finished. Let's look at our schedule. Johnny, will you come flip over the piece for me?'"
- The coach and teacher may view a video from the modules (e.g., solution kit) or video that showcases a strategy the practitioner is learning to use.

6. Helping with Environmental Arrangements:

Coach assists practitioner with creating and/or adapting the environment to support the use of Pyramid strategies. This may include preparing or developing materials, making changes in the classroom, or rearranging the physical space.

Examples:

- The coach might take pictures of the housekeeping area to help create center labels.
- The coach helps arrange a visual schedule.

7. Performance Feedback Verbal:

Coach provides an oral account of the observation. The coach may review details of the observation, summarize strengths and weaknesses (supportive and/or corrective feedback), or provide suggestions and support.

Example:

- Coach presents an oral overview of data collected during her TPOT observation
- Coach comments on Pyramid strategies the teacher has implemented well, corrects any incorrect implementation, and provides suggestions on making progress towards Action Plan goals.

8. Performance Feedback Graphical:

Visual display and specific spoken information about the practitioner's implementation of Pyramid practices. This may include interpreting and analyzing what the graph says for the practitioner.

Example:

- The coach might share a graphic analysis of the TPOT and highlight areas that are strong and next steps for implementation.

9. Goal Setting-Planning:

The coach helps the practitioner identify and write goals related to Action Planning for implementation. Goal setting takes place any time a new goal is developed or new strategies/action steps are added to an existing goal.

Example:

- During the meeting the coach and teacher identify an area the teacher would like to work on to improve implementation in her classroom (teaching friendship skills). The coach and teacher identify the steps that should be taken to meet the goal (i.e., develop lesson plans, incorporate books about friendship, add resources), develop a timeline for implementation, and write an Action Plan.
- The coach and teacher may expand upon an existing Action Plan by adding a new Action Step ("I noticed there's not much descriptive praise for friendship skills. How about we add that to the Action Plan for teaching friendship skills?")
- The coach and teacher notice that cartoon feelings faces are not working as part of an Emotions Action Plan. They identify the need for photographic faces and add that to the Action Plan resource column.

10. Graphing:

Assisting the practitioner to display, analyze, or interpret data. Assistance may include creating a graph with the data, interpreting the results of the graph, or teaching the practitioner how to interpret the graph.

Example:

- During debriefing, the coach and teacher create a graph based on behavior incidence data that the teacher collected. The coach may explain to the teacher how to interpret the graph.

11. Providing Materials:

Coach offers additional items that may help the practitioner learn more about Pyramid strategies and other recommended practices, or the coach may provide materials that may improve implementation of Pyramid strategies.

Example:

- The coach may suggest the teacher read journal articles or book chapters that have information about the Pyramid Model.
- The coach may provide the teacher with materials such as a visual schedule, center signs, or scripted stories.

