



Leveraging Explicit Instruction to Elevate Coaching Practices

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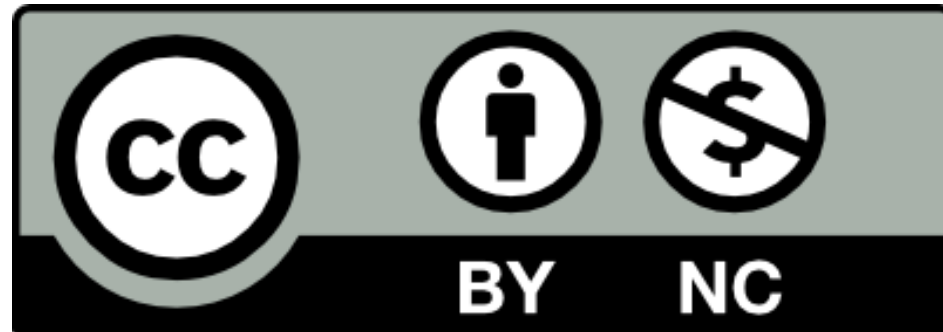


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(<https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/academic-standards/literacy/k-12-literacy-and-dyslexia-law>)

Group Agreements

We are **Responsible**

- Return on time from breaks
- Take care of our needs

We are **Engaged**

- Share “air time”
- Plan to participate in multiple ways
 - Chat, breakout rooms, polls, reactions, unmute
 - Ask questions

Problem of Practice

- In an effort to differentiate and meet diverse teacher needs, coaching can unintentionally become unfocused – making it difficult for coaches to provide clear, consistent, and high-leverage support

Purpose

- Connect **explicit instruction principles** to **high-impact coaching moves**, empowering coaches to support teachers with **clarity and purpose**

Beliefs

Good instruction is good instruction



How well I teach = How well they learn



Intended Outcomes

1. Expand understanding of explicit instruction
2. Apply explicit instruction principles to coaching

Active Participation

- Short choral response
- Choral reading
- Cloze reading
- Partner sharing
- Hold-ups
- Written responses



Activity: Concept Map

- Use this to “map” your learning, capture big ideas, and keep track of action steps

Explicit Instruction	Coaching
Connections to Current Practice	Action Steps

Agenda

- 1.0 Explicit Instruction
- 2.0 Identify Critical Content
- 3.0 Develop a Coaching Plan
- 4.0 Provide Feedback
- 5.0 Closing and Next Steps

1.0 Explicit Instruction

Legislative Connection

- **Explicit Instruction:** Direct and deliberate instruction through continuous teacher-pupil interaction that includes explanation, teacher modeling or example, and multiple opportunities to practice with feedback for students to develop mastery.

MCL 380.1280f, Public Act 146 of 2024

Might it also be...

- **Explicit instruction coaching:** Direct and deliberate coaching through continuous coach-teacher interaction that includes explanation, coach modeling or example, and multiple opportunities to practice with feedback for teachers to develop mastery.

Adapted from: MCL 380.1280f, Public Act 146 of 2024

Novice- Expert Continuum

- Novices
 - Little or **no background knowledge**
 - History of **difficulty** or failure
 - Benefit from **clear explanations**, step-by-step instructions, and worked **samples**
 - Struggle with **problem solving** in that domain
- Experts
 - Background **knowledge**
 - History of **success**
 - Can work **without explicit guidance**, relying on **stored knowledge** for problem solving
 - Knowledge of the domain **sets them apart**

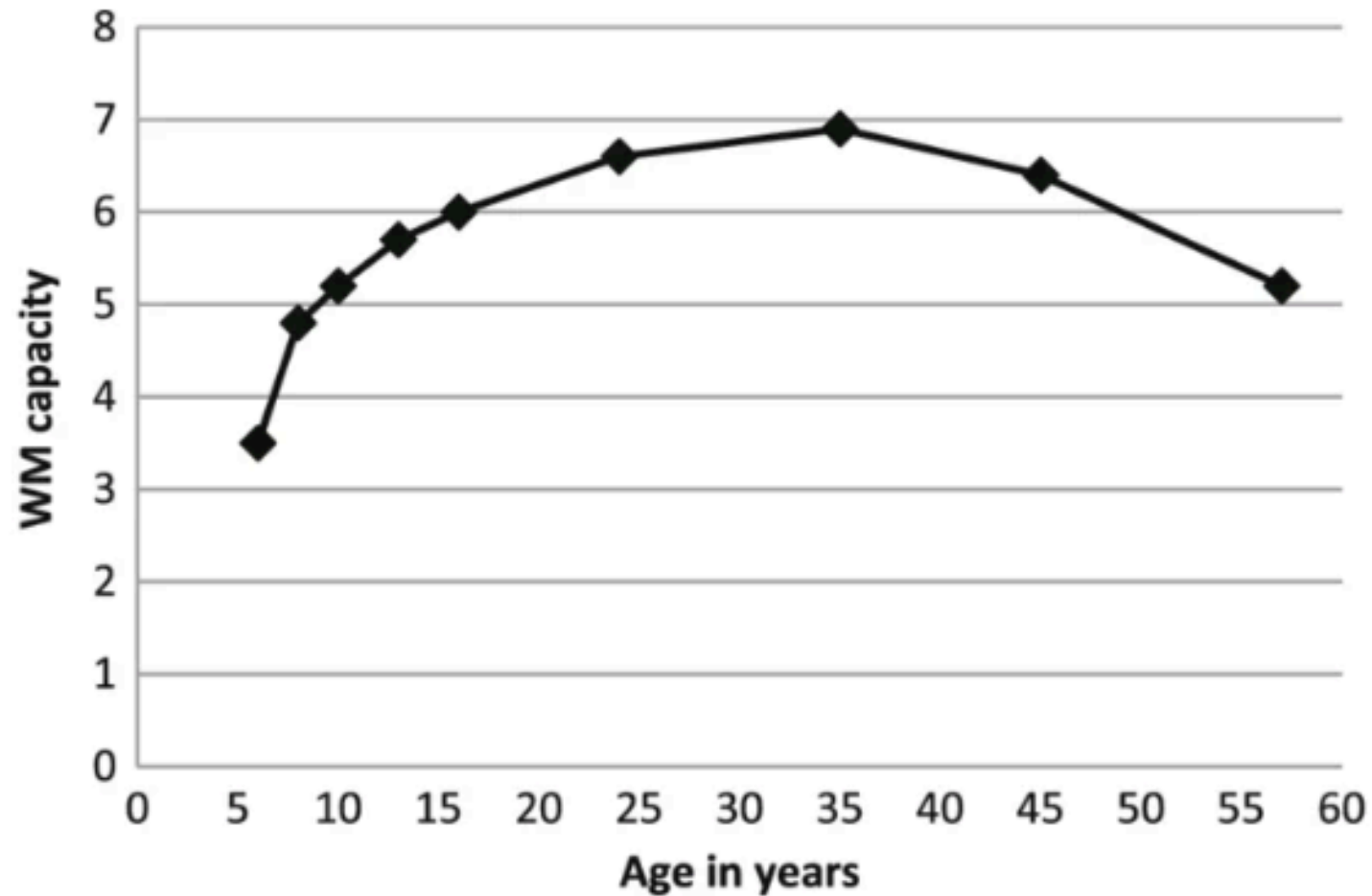
Swain, 2025; Archer, 2024

Cognitive Load Theory

- Premise:
 - The brain has limited working memory
 - The working memory can only hold a small amount of information at one time
- Goal:
 - Optimize learning by designing instruction that manages the mental effort (load) caused by instructional materials

Sweller, 1988; Groshell, 2024

Working Memory Changes Over the Course of a Lifetime



Oliver, 2011

Challenges

- When we approach the limits of our cognitive capacity, our brains automatically act to reduce working memory demands by:
 - Narrowing the focus
 - Focusing attention on a narrow set of stimuli and ignoring everything else
 - Cognitive defaulting
 - Relying on automatic responses that draw on long-term memory instead of conscious decision making

Boguslav, Goodrich, & Lovell, 2024

Identify High Cognitive Load

- Ask coachee how they're feeling
 - Ask teachers to identify how they were feeling during specific moments in their lesson
- Novice teacher awareness
 - Is the teacher unaware of things happening in their classroom? Are they missing things that seem obvious to an observer?
- Patterns in when a teacher's challenges occur
- Rule out other issues

Boguslav, Goodrich, & Lovell, 2024

Consider Experience vs. Expertise

- Experience is necessary for expertise but not sufficient
- When might a teacher be a novice?
 - Jot as many variables as you can think of in one minute
 - When prompted, send into the chat

Variables that Impact Teacher Expertise

- Change in grade level or content area
- Experience and understanding of instructional model
- New curricular materials
- Legislative updates
- Class size adjustments
- Student population or needs
- What else?

Instructional Hierarchy

- Acquisition
 - New understanding
 - Student cannot accurately respond without help
 - Goal: accuracy and discrimination
- Fluency
 - Student performance is accurate but labored
 - Goal: rapid and accurate responding
- Generalization
 - Skill is fluent
 - Goal: increase the conditions under which the student responds correctly, transfer
- Adaptation
 - Skill is fluent
 - Goal: alter the skill to solve new problems, modification

Haring, Lovitt, Eaton, & Hansen, 1978

Instructional Hierarchy & Coaching Opportunities

1. Acquisition

- Explicit Coaching – direct modeling
- Skill Practice
- Immediate Feedback

2. Fluency/ Proficiency

- Coaching on building proficiency and competency
- Repeated retrieval practice
- Feedback on meeting fluency criteria

Instructional Hierarchy & Practice Opportunities, cont.

3. Generalization

- Coaching in new/novel settings
- Spaced and Retrieval Practice
- Feedback on using skill proficiently in novel setting

4. Adaptation

- Identify core features of the skill and modifying to fit in new settings
- Provide feedback on trying different variations or adaptations to the skill

Components of Explicit Instruction

- Critical content
- Broken down into chunks
- Sequenced logically
- Goal
- Review
- I do
- We do
- You do
- Frequent responses
- Monitor
- Feedback
- Brisk pace
- Judicious practice

Cognitive Load

- Highly effective teachers manage students' cognitive load
 - Breaking learning tasks into **bite-sized chunks**
 - Build students' knowledge solidly and in a **sequential manner**
 - Maximize the time spent **explicitly teaching** students
 - Frequent **checks for understanding**

Swain, 2025; Willingham, 2021

Coaching Suggestions

- Coaches can work with their coachee to:
 - Identify a single actionable step to avoid overload
 - Prioritize classroom routines or explanations that free up teacher capacity
 - Avoid giving lists of disconnected strategies; connect advice to a shared mental model
 - Break complex strategies into steps
 - Use worked examples, through modeling
 - Introduce progressive complexity: expertise develops by gradually increasing challenge – keep the hierarchy in mind

2.0 Identify Critical Content

What is Critical Content?

- Teach skills, strategies, vocabulary terms, concepts, and rules that will empower students in the future and match the students' instructional needs
- Coach skills, strategies, vocabulary terms, concepts, and rules that will empower coaches in the future and match the coachee and their students' instructional needs
 - Consider reading learning progression in connection with your achievement data
 - Consider high-leverage, evidence-based practices

Archer & Hughes, 2011

Overarching Goal

- District or school-wide
 - Overall student achievement data
 - School improvement plan
- Achievable but will require effort, time, resources, etc.
- No hard rule for the amount of progress you can expect
- _____ of _____ will do _____ by _____ as measured by _____.

Critical Content in Practice

- Big Goal: By June 2027, 80% of students in grades K-3 will meet or exceed grade level benchmark targets on the DIBELS assessment for oral reading fluency and accuracy, as measured at the end-of-year assessment period.

Broken Down Into Chunks

- Break down complex material into smaller steps (obtainable chunks) and sequence them systematically – sub goals
 - Strategies – into steps
 - Knowledge – into short amounts followed by participation
 - Vocabulary – limited number of terms in depth in one session

Archer & Hughes, 2011

Critical Content Influencers for Coaching

- Instruction
 - High-leverage practices
 - Evidence-based practices
- Curriculum
 - Evidence-based materials
- Environment
 - High-leverage practices
 - Evidence-based practices
- Student data
 - Learning progressions

Critical Content in Practice, cont.

- Big Goal: By June 2026, 80% of students in grades K-3 will meet or exceed grade-level benchmark targets on the DIBELS assessment for oral reading fluency and accuracy, as measured at the end-of-year assessment period.
- Sub-Goals:
 - What do students need to know/be able to do in order to reach this target?
 - What do teachers need to know/be able to do in order to support students in reaching this target?

Critical Content Sub-Goals

- Students need to know/be able to:
 - Decode words accurately
 - Maintain fluent pace
 - Self-monitor
 - Others?
- Teachers need to know/be able to:
 - Key reading components for decoding and fluency
 - Deliver explicit and differentiated lessons for phonics and fluency
 - Provide frequent practice with feedback
 - Others?

Coaching Menu

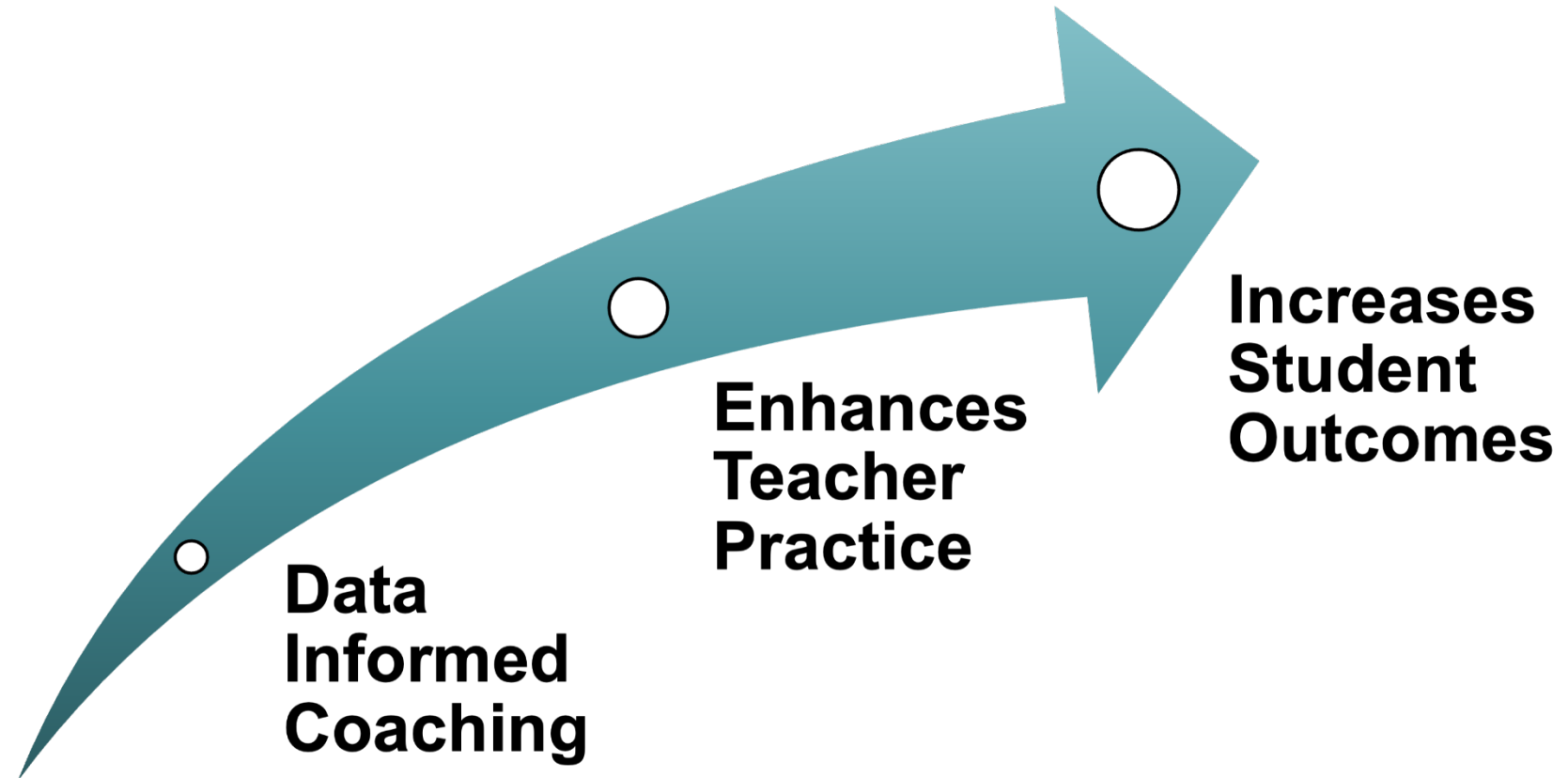
- Tailor coaching offerings to support **BIG goal**
- Consider how you will **scaffold support** toward that goal depending on **teacher level of expertise**
- Consider what **resources** might be needed
- Anticipate **flexibility** to meet the needs of the coachee

Coaching Menu Example: Decode Words Accurately

- Instruction
 - Blending routine
 - Gradual release- guided practice opportunities
- Curriculum
 - Co-planning for curriculum implementation
 - Annotating curriculum
- Environment
 - Opportunities to respond/active participation
 - Organization of materials-instructional routines and procedures

3.0 Develop a Coaching Plan

Using Data to Transform Impact



Determine a Starting Point

- Background Knowledge + Background Practice = Level of coaching support required
- Observe and collect baseline data
- Meet to develop a coaching plan in collaboration with the coachee

Goodrich, 2021

Background Knowledge

- To achieve lasting change, what does the teacher need to know about:
 - Their class
 - The curriculum / the lesson content
 - Specific teaching strategies
 - The science of reading/ learning/ instruction

Goodrich, 2021

Background Knowledge Coaching Questions

- What can you tell me about your students reading achievement?
- How do you use assessment data to inform instruction?
- Which parts of the curriculum are most comfortable/challenging to teach?
- What strategies have you used to support students with (decoding)?
- How do you scaffold the lesson so all students can access tier 1?

Background Practice

- Teacher Action
 - How many things must the teacher be able to do before they can make this change?
 - Can they already do (some of/ all of) them?
 - What order makes sense for any new actions the teacher needs to take?
- Student knowledge
 - Is there a helpful student culture in place?
 - Is a student relaunch/reteach required?
 - How can the change be communicated to students?
 - Are appropriate systems for accountability in place?

Goodrich, 2021

Background Practice Coaching Questions

- Grounded in evidence
 - Student/ Teacher artifacts
 - Observation
 - Data collection
- What have you already implemented/tried in relation to...?
- What patterns have you noticed so far?
- What does this look like in your plans/instruction?
- What evidence have you collected around this goal? Are students aware?

Sequence Logically

- Keep the needs of the coachee in mind
- Consider novice-expert continuum
- What is the next best move?
 - Instruction
 - Curriculum
 - Environment
- Drives your goals and success criteria

Automate and Create Routines

- Complex tasks
- Broken into manageable chunks
- Work to automaticity
- Then combine into process
- Through
 - Rehearsal outside the classroom
 - Repeated practice in the classroom

Boguslav, Goodrich, & Lovell, 2024

Heart of Coaching: Gradual Release

- I Do
 - Demonstration
 - Modeling
 - Coach performs, teacher watches
- We Do
 - Guided practice
 - Co-teaching
 - Coach and teacher perform
- You do
 - Checking for understanding
 - Independence
 - Teacher performs, coach watches

Archer & Hughes, 2011

I Do: Model

- Show
 - Proceed step-by-step
 - Exaggerate the steps
- Tell
 - Tell the teacher what you are doing/thinking
 - “Teacher time-out”
- Gain responses
 - What they already know
 - What you have already discussed

Archer & Hughes, 2011

Importance of Clarity

- The model should be:
 - Clear
 - Concise
 - Consistent
 - Free from:
 - Vagueness
 - Distractions

Archer & Hughes, 2011; Groshell, 2024

We Do: Co-Planning, Co-Teaching

- Promotes high levels of **success**
- Builds **confidence**
- Built in **scaffolds**
 - Tell them what to do
 - Ask them what to do
 - Remind them what to do
 - Fade over time

Archer & Hughes, 2011

You Do: Independence

- Check for understanding
- Based in data
 - Observational data
 - Student data
- Carefully monitor until implementation is solid
 - Checklist – success criteria
 - Co-developed when possible

Archer & Hughes, 2011

Dependent on Needs

- Goal: Increase the opportunities to respond during whole and small group phonics lessons as measured by the opportunities to respond observation tool.
 - Teacher A: I do, I do, We do, We do, we do, You do, You do
 - Teacher B: I do, We do, we do, You do
 - Teacher C: I do, I do, We do, we do, We do, We do, we do, You do...I do
- Not a static procedure, dependent on the coachee, the goal, and the students

Archer & Hughes, 2011

4.0 Providing Feedback

Why Consistent Feedback

- "The most satisfied teachers are those who know at the end of the day how well they performed, so there are never any surprises"
-Aubrey Daniels

Gavoni & Weatherly, 2024

Feedback Back Before

- If you expect it, pre-correct it
 - Are there any common pitfalls aligned to their goal that you might anticipate and pre-correct?
 - It was effective last time when...
 - This time try...
- Coaching Moves
 - Collaborative lesson plan review
 - Mini practice session
 - Plan for student error

Lemov, 2015

Feedback Considerations

- Can the coaching plan continue as planned or do adjustments need to be made?
 - Determined through questioning and/or data reflection
 - Additional modeling or co-teaching?
- What is going well?
- What can be done to improve performance?
 - Based on success criteria
- Timing of feedback – immediate or delayed?
- Consider your tone of voice and facial expressions

Delivery of Feedback

- Praise, Error, Correct format
 - Specific praise
 - Informative or corrective feedback
 - End with quick rehearsal

Archer & Hughes, 2011

Feedback Scenario

- Goal: Increase the opportunities to respond during whole and small group phonics lessons as measured by the opportunities to respond observation tool.
- Data: During initial observation Mrs. Alvarez's whole group phonics lesson had 90% individual responses and 10% whole class responses. After the coaching cycle, Mrs. Alvarez showed 30% individual responses and 70% whole class responses. Her wait time was recorded as less than 1 second.

5.0 Closing

Closing Review

- Coaching approach should match the **expertise level** of the coachee and align with the **critical content**
 - **Responsive to their needs**
- Connect explicit instruction principles to coaching moves for **clarity and consistency**

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