

Q&A: Looking to school-based instructional coaches working with teachers to improve student success

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It turns out teachers need coaches, too. A recent study from the University of Missouri underscores the importance of school-based

coaches, who provide ongoing professional development to teachers.

The paper is [published](#) in the journal *School Psychology Review*.

School-based coaches specialize in areas such as [classroom management](#), behavior, literacy, math, technology integration or special education. By working collaboratively with teachers, they can foster a positive and productive learning environment, leading to good student outcomes.

In this [interview](#), Shannon Holmes, an assistant professor in Mizzou's College of Education and Human Development, explains the study's findings, which highlight the importance of developing a strong working relationship between coaches and teachers when implementing effective evidence-based classroom strategies and techniques for healthy student learning.

The study's results continue to help bridge the gap between educational research findings and the real-world implementation of these methods in schools.

What do school-based coaches do?

School-based coaches perform a variety of roles to support teachers and improve student learning outcomes, including modeling [best practices](#), observing and giving feedback, collaborating on lesson planning, analyzing student data and mentoring teachers.

What are some examples of effective classroom strategies and techniques, and why are they important?

Examples include creating structured and predictable routines,

consistently reinforcing appropriate behavior and immediately correcting inappropriate behavior. These strategies are important because they create a learning environment that facilitates students' achievement, cooperation and social-emotional skills.

Why is it important for teachers to spend time developing a strong working relationship with a school-based coach?

A strong working relationship between coaches and teachers enhances a teacher's professional development, which can lead to positive student outcomes. Building this relationship doesn't have to be incredibly time-consuming—it can be as simple as taking a few minutes before a meeting to discuss what's going on in everyone's day.

How can school administrators use this study to help improve student outcomes?

School administrators may want to check that coaches working in their schools are trained in how to build effective relationships with [teachers](#). Coaches usually receive a significant amount of training in a particular content area, which makes sense. However, it also appears important that they receive training in communication strategies that may build trusting working relationships, such as active listening and rapport building, with the individuals they are coaching.

Study co-authors are Mizzou's Tyler Smith, Wendy Reinke and Keith Herman; and University of Texas at Austin's Monica Romero.

More information: Shannon R. Holmes et al, Coaching as an Implementation Strategy: The Perceived Alliance Between a Coach and Teachers Predicts Proactive Classroom Management Strategy Use ,

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