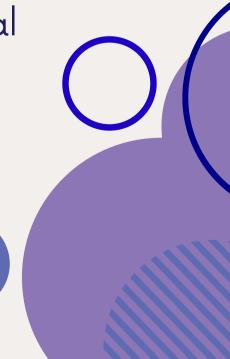# EMPOWERING EDUCATORS:

The Case for Ribbit Instructional Coaching

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PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

> **TOO FEW EDUCATORS HAVE ACCESS TO INSTRUCTIONAL COACHING TO HELP THEM IMPLEMENT KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND DISPOSITIONS GAINED THROUGH TRAININGS & COURSES.**

Dollar for dollar, instructional coaching is the most powerful strategy schools can utilize to support educators and improve student outcomes. "Coaching supports teachers' day-to-day practice by starting with existing practice, then working outward from it to integrate new instructional techniques. Coaching can also be personalized to teachers' needs, celebrating areas of excellence and working on areas for improvement (Hill & Papay, 2022)."

My own experience as a consultant and coach, along with the empirical research, confirms that coaching significantly improves teaching quality, student achievement and school outcomes (Kurtz, A., Reddy, L. & Glover, T., 2017; van Nieuwerburgh, C., and Barr, M., 2016; Kraft, M.A., Blazar, D. & Hogan, D., 2018; Wong, K., & Nicotera, A., 2006).

Unfortunately, too few educators have access to this career-changing support.

K-12 school-based instructional coaching programs are difficult to scale given financial and human capital resource limitations. Schools in turn limit instructional coaches to new or struggling educators (Kraft, Blazar and Hogan, 2018) or often assign coaching functions to existing administrators. This results in educators viewing instructional coaching as either a scarce commodity, only for educators who need to be "fixed", or evaluative in nature.

Even in schools with site-based coaches, coaching is often aligned to and directed by school or district initiatives. Because of this, educators enrolled in outside coursework or who attend trainings aligned to their professional needs are unlikely to receive any coaching on those topics.

In order to see classroom impact, it's critical that educators receive personalized coaching to implement their learning.

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RESEARCH SUPPORTS COACHING

Scaling instructional coaching to support educators continues to be an obstacle, despite the fact that, compared to other training methods, educators' learning outcomes are substantially improved by coaching (Joyce and Showers, 2002).

In fact, classroom application of new learning only occurs with practice, and it's significantly improved with coaching (see Table 1 below).

Unfortunately, much of the professional learning educators engage in utilizes ineffective methods that primarily provide information, hoping it will change their attitudes or improve their knowledge; which, in turn, will change their behaviors.

BJ Fogg calls this the Information-Action Fallacy, and the Joyce and Showers' study shows that information alone (theory and observation) does not reliably change behavior. In other words, coaching support is critical, and should be prioritized by leaders, in order to translate educators' professional learning into changes in their classroom behaviors and practice.

Sadly, due to a lack of support, little of what educators learn is effectively implemented into their classrooms. To increase this likelihood, it's imperative that we enhance new and existing professional learning programs with instructional coaching. The most cost-effective and efficient strategy to accomplish this is to use virtual coaching.

TABLE 1: EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAINING METHODS ON TRAINING OUTCOMES

TRAINING METHODS	TRAINING OUTCOMES		
	Content Knowledge	Skills Implementation	Classroom Application
Study Theory	10%	5%	0%
Observing Demonstration	30%	20%	0%
Practice	60%	60%	5%
Coaching	95%	95%	95%

VIRTUAL COACHING AS A MODEL TO SCALE COACHING PROGRAMS

In their meta-analysis of coaching research, Kraft, Blazar and Hogan (2018) suggest the use of virtual coaching as an effective method to scale instructional coaching programs. They describe coaching as a process that is facilitated by an instructional expert. Coaches provide individualized, intensive and sustained support over time, and coaching is context-specific and focused on practicing specific skills.

Virtual coaching simply enables a coach to facilitate this process remotely using video conferencing tools.

To be clear, virtual coaching is not the same as video-based coaching where an onsite or virtual coach, or artificial intelligence (AI) software, analyzes video-recordings or video-observations and provides comments or uses them to guide teachers. Though helpful, video analysis by itself, without further implementation support from a coach, will likely fail to positively change educator behaviors given our understanding of the Information-Action Fallacy and the training methods research.

Kraft, Blazar and Hogan (2018) also synthesized the benefits of virtual coaching. They report that virtual coaching can 1) increase the number of educators with whom an individual coach can work, 2) provide access to high-quality coaches for schools or districts without local expertise, 3) create pathways to coaching that keep highly-effective educators in the classroom, 4) lower or eliminate costs associated with site-based coaches, e.g., non-coaching responsibilities and commute time, and 5) virtual coaching is as equally effective as onsite coaching models leading to comparable outcomes for educators, and therefore their students.

These benefits, coupled with the research that coaching is essential for professional learning to transfer into practice, should provide educational institutions and training organizations compelling evidence to expand access to instructional coaching to each educator. A commitment to coaching is a commitment to increasing knowledge transfer into practice.

Ribbit utilizes our virtual coaching platform and our nationwide cadre of coaches to help PK-12 schools and organizations create or expand coaching support to educators, especially to those who wouldn't otherwise have access to this evidence-based support. Ribbit supports district, charter and private schools, prioritizing those that are small, rural and/or serve students in under resourced communities (receiving Title I funds). We also partner with professional learning and other affiliated organizations to enhance their programs by offering their educators instructional coaching.

Ribbit is transforming how educators receive coaching support in several critical ways. ·We empower educators with voice, choice and agency in their professional learning. Educators select their coach from our cadre of coaches, identify the focus area(s) for their coaching and make choices about implementation and sustainability.

We provide coaching support to every educator, including paraprofessionals, teachers, coaches and administrators. ·Ribbit coaching is personalized to meet educators' needs whether they teach core content, electives, or work with students with disabilities or multilingual learners.

We believe, coaching shouldn't be limited to new or struggling educators, so we support educators from pre-service to retirement.

Ribbit's virtual coaching model is aligned to best-practices in professional learning, adult learning theory and the research on effective coaching models. Ribbit's virtual coaching model is:

INDIVIDUALIZED
INTENSIVE
SUSTAINED
CONTEXT SPECIFIC
FOCUSED

Ribbit coaches work with individual educators to 1) personalize their learning and 2) help them apply new knowledge directly to the context of their work.

This job-embedded coaching from an experienced educator increases educators' efficacy to implement new learning.

By expanding access to evidence-based coaching to more educators we can 1) significantly improve their instructional quality, 2) educator effectiveness, and 3) student and school outcomes.

Ribbit is committed to providing educators support that feels like support. Our virtual coaching model delivers and scales coaching educators need, and want, to grow professionally and stay in the profession.
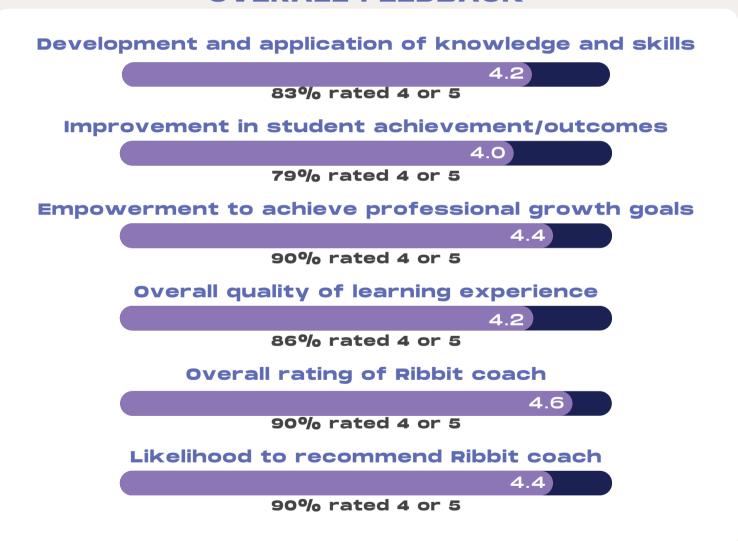
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RIBBIT COACHING EVALUATION RESULTS

Ribbit administered year-end coaching evaluations in an online format in June 2024. Evaluation forms were submitted by thirty (30) educators who received Ribbit virtual instructional coaching in participating Local Education Agencies (LEAs).
The overall response rate was **34%**.

The overall feedback from coachees (N=29) on various aspects of coaching, using a five-star rating scale, was highly positive:

OVERALL FEEDBACK

Development and application of knowledge and skills
4.2
83% rated 4 or 5

Improvement in student achievement/outcomes
4.0
79% rated 4 or 5

Empowerment to achieve professional growth goals
4.4
90% rated 4 or 5

Overall quality of learning experience
4.2
86% rated 4 or 5

Overall rating of Ribbit coach
4.6
90% rated 4 or 5

Likelihood to recommend Ribbit coach
4.4
90% rated 4 or 5

These high scores reflect strong positive perceptions of coaching effectiveness and impact on professional growth and student outcomes.

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Respondents (N=30) rated their coaches' planning, preparation, efficacy and impact, using a 5-point Likert Scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree with not applicable as an option. Each indicator aligns with Ribbit's Instructional Coaching Practice Standards. Respondents' evaluation of coaches' planning and preparation are as follows:

PLANNING & PREPARATION

Knowledge of current trends
86.7%

Knowledge of resources
86.7%

Guided by SMART goals
60%

Draw on research-based resources
86.7%

Effective use of coaching time
83.3%

Helped develop and apply knowledge
76.6%

Focus on instructional improvement
90%

Percentages include responses of both Agree & Strongly Agree

Results indicate that Ribbit coaches were well-prepared and effective in their planning and preparation, particularly in focusing on instructional improvement and leveraging research-based resources.

EFFICACY & IMPACT

Consistency with words & actions
76.7%

Follow-through on commitments
83.3%

Decision-making autonomy
96.7%

Incorporating decisions into practice
83.3%

Clear procedures & norms
80.0%

Opportunities for reflection
76.7%

Guidance through questioning
86.7%

Responsiveness to support requests
83.3%

Professional environment of trust & respect
90%

Percentages include responses of both Agree & Strongly Agree

Results indicate that coaches are seen as highly effective, particularly in creating a professional environment, allowing decision-making autonomy, and following through on commitments.

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CORRELATIONS

Empowerment & development of knowledge & skills
0.92

Empowerment & overall learning experience
0.86

Empowerment & improved learning outcomes
0.85

Learning experience & coach rating
0.72

Coach rating & recommendation to a friend
0.68

Development of knowledge & skills & coach rating
0.63

Empowerment & coach rating
0.59

These correlations indicate a strong relationship between feelings of empowerment and various positive coaching outcomes, suggesting that empowerment is a critical factor in the perceived success of coaching.

The 2023-2024 evaluation data highlights the positive impact of coaching on professional growth, student outcomes, and overall educational experience. The strong correlations between empowerment and various positive outcomes underscore the importance of empowering educators in coaching relationships.

The analysis suggests that Ribbit coaches are well-prepared, effective, and valued for their experience and responsiveness, contributing to the overall success of the coaching program.

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