Instructional Expertise Agenda

**OUTCOME**

Your leadership team will be able to identify and use instructional expertise to improve teaching and learning.

**LEARNING GOALS**

Your leadership team will:
1. Develop a common understanding of instructional expertise
2. Examine how to use instructional expertise to address teachers’ needs
3. Identify how staff with instructional expertise can share their knowledge with peers

**AGENDA ITEMS**

Launching the Module
- Launch: *IE Handout 1* (5 minutes)

Learning Goal 1: What is instructional expertise?
- Explore: Defining instructional expertise, *IE Handout 2* (10 minutes)
- View: *Using Expertise to Regroup Students* (15 minutes)

Learning Goal 2: How can instructional expertise help meet the needs of teachers?
- View: *Learning Among Teachers* (15 minutes)
- Explore: Matching expertise to instructional needs, *IE Handout 3* (15 minutes)

Learning Goal 3: How can we use instructional expertise at our school?
- View: *Effective Coaching Systems* (15 minutes)
- Apply: Using our instructional expertise, *IE Handout 4* (25 minutes)

Now What?
- Apply: Next steps, *IE Handout 5* (20 minutes)
Instructional Expertise Q &A

What is instructional expertise?

Simply put, *instructional expertise* is the specialized knowledge, rich experience, and valuable capacity that educators bring to and gain from teaching. Your leadership team can identify instructional expertise within your school and determine how it can help address the current needs of the instructional program. You might find it helpful to consider how expertise in your school can help promote the following research-based elements of quality instruction:

- Rigorous, relevant, and real *curricular content*
- Active and exploratory *instructional strategies*
- Authentic and student-centered *assessment practices*
- *Support structures* to help all students succeed

Who has instructional expertise within a school building?

If you are like many school leaders, you may think about instructional expertise as something that exists outside of your school—with external coaches or professional development providers, universities, or regional education service centers. A wealth of instructional expertise likely also exists among your own staff.

Don’t assume that instructional expertise rests only with teachers who fill formal leadership roles. Look beyond these usual suspects. Those with instructional expertise can include:

- *Individual classroom teachers* who develop their expertise through their daily practice and from participating in professional development programs outside the school
- *Teams of teachers* in departments or at grade levels who have collectively developed expertise
- *Coaches or specialists* who have gained expertise over time and support adult learning and skill building

What are the benefits of tapping into in-house instructional expertise?

Your school’s principal and other administrators cannot improve teaching and learning alone. They simply don’t have enough time, and their own instructional expertise has its limits. Your leadership team—working closely with your school’s other leadership teams—is uniquely positioned to manage instructional expertise within your school, bringing teachers together to share their expertise with one another. When a school taps into its in-house expertise, it means that teachers across the school have access to the knowledge they need, when they need it, to teach the curriculum effectively.

How can our team facilitate the sharing of instructional expertise at our school?

It is not enough just to have instructional expertise. Instead, its true value is in how teams like your own target its use in a school. You can help your school find ways for staff with expertise to share it with peers who can benefit from it. For example, in-house expertise can be shared through:

- Professional learning communities, which foster dialogue amongst teachers
- Teacher-led workshops or other professional development, in which teachers’ demonstrate their expertise to others
- Walkthroughs and classroom observations, which expose teachers to new instructional approaches

REFLECT

How does this overview of instructional expertise compare with our prior understanding?
Matching Expertise to Instructional Needs

**DIRECTIONS**

Lincoln Middle School knows how to make good use of instructional expertise. Lincoln’s leaders carefully target their staff’s strengths to advance a vital science goal. As you read their story, think about: *What does Lincoln’s schoolwide leadership team focus on in each step, to ensure the effective use of instructional expertise?*

**The Story of Lincoln Middle School**

Lincoln Middle School’s leaders have an important goal in their sights. They want all of the school’s science teachers to successfully use an inquiry-based science curriculum. To help the school meet this goal, the schoolwide leadership team takes the following actions:

- figures out the type of instructional support that the science teachers need to implement the curriculum
- identifies teachers, and teams of teachers, with the expertise to provide instructional support
- plans collaborative opportunities to match science teachers to those with instructional expertise

**Figuring Out Instructional Needs**

The school leaders discuss, and gather information about, what the science teachers will need to successfully use the curriculum:

1. Knowledge of the new curriculum’s content (including scope and sequence and conceptual priorities)
2. Inquiry-based questioning techniques
3. Assessment practices to gauge students’ understanding
4. Strategies for helping students with the open-ended nature of the inquiry approach

**Identifying Instructional Expertise**

The whole leadership team pitches in to find teachers, coaches, and teams who can meet the science teachers’ needs. During brainstorming sessions, the team pools its knowledge of the entire school faculty. As a result, the team identifies not just the obvious experts—the science coach and science department chair—but several individuals it might not have thought of in the past:

- Jane is a newly-hired, sixth grade science teacher. Some of the team is surprised to hear that she led the adoption of a similar curriculum at her former school and helped guide her peers in using the curriculum. She has also facilitated professional development on the conceptual development of science content.
- Frank, a seventh grade science teacher, seeks out ways to improve his practice. He has taken part in many professional development experiences on inquiry-based science. In his classroom, he consistently uses effective questioning techniques with his students. And, he designed a protocol that he uses to regularly analyze student work samples.
- Ben is the school’s math coach. He has expertise in using strategies to support students who struggle with open-ended problems. He has also developed a website that explains how to use these strategies in many subject areas.
Planning Collaborative Opportunities

The team knows that it has found the right instructional expertise. Now, it tackles how Jane, Frank, and Ben can share their expertise with the science teachers. What are the best ways to meet the science teachers' instructional needs? The team creates the following plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Need</th>
<th>Individual with Instructional Expertise</th>
<th>Collaborative Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Content knowledge (including scope and sequence and conceptual priorities)</td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>• Jane will lead a workshop at the beginning of the school year to help the science teachers understand the conceptual flow of the curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Inquiry-based questioning techniques</td>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>• During weekly science department meetings, Frank will share his questioning techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Frank will facilitate monthly grade-level meetings that engage teachers in reflecting on their use of questioning approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Assessment practices to gauge students’ understanding</td>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>• At monthly grade-level meetings, Frank will guide teachers in analyzing student work to assess the impact of the new curriculum on student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Strategies to help students with the open-ended nature of the inquiry approach</td>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>• Ben will conduct one demonstration lesson in the fall and another in the spring to illustrate the strategies he uses to help students who struggle with inquiry-based lessons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• After each lesson, Ben will lead post-observation discussions focused on applying these strategies in a science classroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instructional Expertise at Our School

DIRECTIONS

1. As a leadership team, select one of your school’s instructional goals. Next, pinpoint three to four instructional needs of teachers that you must meet in order to achieve the goal. Write these in the “Goal and Needs” square below.

2. With your small group:
   - Select one need from the team’s list and write it in the oval labeled, “Instructional Need.”
   - Think of one, two, or three individuals or teams of people who have expertise related to our instructional need. Write the name of one individual or team and a brief description of their instructional expertise in each circle.
   - Identify a collaborative opportunity for each individual or team to share expertise with others in the school community. Write the opportunities in the boxes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal and Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Goal:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Needs of Teachers to Achieve the Goal:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual or Team:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Expertise:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaborative Opportunity:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Need:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaborative Opportunity:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual or Team:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Expertise:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaborative Opportunity:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual or Team:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Expertise:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Next Steps

DIRECTIONS

As a team, work through the Reflect, Commit, and Plan steps below.

Reflect

Circle the learning goal below that your team will pursue further.

1. Your team will develop a common understanding of instructional expertise.

2. Your team will examine how to use instructional expertise to address teachers’ needs.

3. Your team will identify how staff with instructional expertise can share their knowledge with peers.

Commit

Review and discuss the suggested next steps (pp. 2–3) for the learning goal your team selected to pursue. As a team, choose one next step that your team will take (from those listed or from ideas generated by the team). Record it below.

Next Step:

Plan

Identify 2–3 actions related to the next step your team identified. For each action, identify responsible team member(s) and related dates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsible Team Member(s)</th>
<th>Date(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suggested next steps

1. Your team will develop a common understanding of instructional expertise. (Learning Goal 1)

   1. Help!
   2. We’ve made progress but real work remains
   3. We’ve mastered it!

   Next Steps:
   ✓ If your team assesses its status as a 3 or below, consider the following:
     - Explore this module’s resources (accessed from the module’s landing page) to learn more about instructional expertise
     - Spend time with Learning Goal 1 in the Leadership Teams and Quality Instruction Module to reinforce the team’s understanding of quality instruction
   ✓ If your team assesses its status as a 4 or 5, consider the following:
     - Convene teachers in your school to build agreement around how you define instructional expertise, using IE Handout 2 as a resource
     - Share this module’s resources (accessed from the module’s landing page) with your colleagues
     - Recommend Success at the Core’s Teacher Development materials to teachers to build a schoolwide understanding of how instructional expertise can promote quality instruction

2. Your team will examine how to use instructional expertise to address teachers’ needs. (Learning Goal 2)

   1. Help!
   2. We’ve made progress but real work remains
   3. We’ve mastered it!

   Next Steps:
   ✓ If your team assesses its status as a 3 or below, consider the following:
     - Explore this module’s resources (accessed from the module’s landing page) to gain a deeper understanding of how instructional expertise might be used to address the instructional needs of teachers
     - Visit Success at the Core’s Teacher Development materials and examine the strategies featured for ideas about the kind of expertise teachers at your school might hold
   ✓ If your team assesses its status as a 4 or 5, consider the following:
     - Share IE Handout 3 with others at your school to build a shared understanding of how instructional expertise can promote quality instruction
     - Work with another Success at the Core module, Professional Development, to consider strategies for teachers to collaborate and share expertise
3. Your team will identify how staff with instructional expertise can share their knowledge with peers. (Learning Goal 3)

1. Help!
2. We’ve made progress but real work remains
3. We’ve mastered it!

Next Steps:

✔️ If your team assesses its status as a 3 or below, consider the following:
   - Spend more time discussing and deciding on the actions that the team identified as important in the APPLY activity in Learning Goal 3
   - View again the videos from this module, looking for additional examples of how leadership teams identify instructional expertise and support the use of that expertise to improve teaching and learning

✔️ If your team assesses its status as a 4 or 5, consider the following:
   - Take one action that your team identified in the APPLY activity in Learning Goal 3
   - Select another instructional goal that is a priority at your school and complete IE Handout 4 to identify instructional expertise to address specific instructional needs
   - Move on to another Success at the Core Leadership Development module