

Coaching Chronicles

News and Events for EMC Project Participants

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The PI's Corner: Coaching Research Setting the Stage

BY DAVID YOPP

With many of the recent literacy improvement grants coming to an end, journal articles examining the effects of literacy coaches are beginning to appear. *The Elementary School Journal* dedicated its entire September 2010 issue to the topic of coaching.

Among the three *ESJ* articles that examined student achievement, all three reported a positive effect for coaching. However, the general consensus was that the effect of coaching is heavily influenced by the number of high-quality interactions between coaches and teachers. Examples of high-quality interactions include frequent visits, co-planning, and time for reflection.

Another finding is that coaches' roles can vary greatly across schools and that, over time, coaches' roles can begin to drift away from direct interaction with teachers to roles that involve more managerial duties, which has the potential to diminish the coaches' effectiveness. The take-away is that evidence supporting the effectiveness of coaching on student achievement continues to grow, and the more intense the coaching is, the more powerful the effect.

EMC also has begun to look at student achievement among teachers involved in our pro-

ject. A recent EMC report, *Preliminary Report: Impact of Participation in Examining Mathematics Coaching (EMC) in (K-8) Classrooms on Student Mathematics Achievement in Idaho* (Sutton, Burroughs, Yopp, Jesse, and Freeman, 2011), examines whether or not teacher participation in EMC translated into greater student achievement gains on the Idaho Student Achievement Test (ISAT). Generally speaking, the answer to the question is yes. ([Click here](#) to view the report on the EMC Web site.)

In this preliminary analysis, EMC researchers found that students of teachers who worked with EMC coaches increased their mathematics achievement scores in 2010, while students of statewide comparison teachers did not [$F(1, 16) = 9.833, p = .002$]. When students of EMC teachers were compared to students of other teachers in the same school districts, we also found evidence that students of EMC teachers outperformed other



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students during the same time period. In both cases, the effect was small but statistically significant.

The results of this preliminary study are promising. While they do not "prove" that coaching is effective, they do *set the stage* for proving this, since we will be able to follow these teachers over the years and examine whether they become even more effective. Most importantly, the results demonstrate that EMC teachers are doing great work in the classroom. Way to go, EMC coaches and teachers! ▲

Have You Moved?

We send you several important e-mails throughout the year. Please be sure that our e-mails make it to your in-box! If you ever have any changes to your e-mail address, your name, your school, or your home address (where we will mail your *next stipend* this spring), please let us know. *The Post Office will NOT forward stipend payments from an old address.* ▲

“Coaching Knowledge” PD Workshops Scheduled for July

Half of all EMC coaches will attend professional development in coaching knowledge during one of two separate but identical workshops held July 18-22 and July 25-29 in Bozeman, Mont.

According to the project’s research design, coaches were sorted randomly into two professional development groups at the beginning of the project. Last summer, coaches in “Group 1” received professional development in mathematics content. Now coaches in “Group 2” will receive their first professional development, covering “coaching

knowledge.” (Group 1 coaches will receive their next PD, in coaching knowledge, during Summer 2012.)

“Our professional development team has created an outstanding week of engaging and challenging content,” says EMC co-PI Beth Burroughs. “We think our coaches will return to school next fall with a deeper understanding of research and resources that support coaching.”

Topics covered during the five-day workshop will include: how teachers learn; teacher practices and student learning; professional and

interpersonal communication for coaches; and instructional coaching knowledge.

All Group 2 coaches have confirmed their assigned week and their plans to attend this summer. In May, Project

Director James Burroughs will contact each coach to make travel arrangements. Until

then, coaches should contact James with any questions at emc@math.montana.edu. ▲

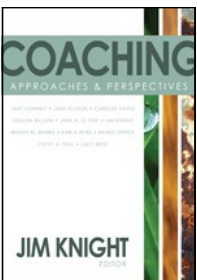


EMC workshops, like this session for Group 1 coaches in Bozeman last summer, bring great minds together.

Resource Roundup

In each issue we’ll share some great resources that may assist you in your daily coaching and teaching. If you have other favorites, we’d love to hear from you!

- *Coaching: Approaches and Perspectives*, edited by Jim Knight, with contributions from coaching researchers



including Joellen Killian and Lucy West. Corwin Press, 2009.

EMC staff are always wary

about recommending any one source about coaching, since there is considerable variation across texts. But this collection, instead of advocating one

approach, lays out the similarities and differences across many coaching models. This variety of perspectives can help the reader implement an effective coaching program consistent with each teacher’s and school’s goals.

We give this text a thumbs up!

- “How to be a wise consumer of coaching: Strategies teachers can use to maximize coaching’s benefits,” by EMC researchers David Yopp, Elizabeth Burroughs, Jennifer Luebeck, Clare Heidema, Arlene Mitchell, and John Sutton. Published in the *Journal of Staff Development*, 32(1), February 2011, pp 50-53.

This recent paper by EMC researchers is a great primer on how teachers can make the most of instructional coaching. A PDF copy is free to EMC participants on request. Just e-mail James Burroughs at emc@math.montana.edu for your copy. ▲

Next Assessments Coming Soon for Teachers, Coaches

All EMC Project teachers and coaches will receive their next annual assessments/surveys in April or May, approximately four weeks before the last day of school. Teachers will receive a group of four: the EMC Teacher Survey, the Mathematics Knowledge for Teaching assessment, the EMC Teacher Reflection and Impact Survey, and the Teacher Needs Inventory (TNI). (Teachers will take the TNI in the spring, instead of the fall, from now on, and answers will apply to the *next* school year’s coaching sessions.)

As usual, the project will mail out a \$100 stipend to each teacher upon completion of all four surveys.

“We’re so grateful for teachers’ time and effort at this busy time of year,” says Project Director James Burroughs. “We have to ad-

minister these surveys toward the end of the school year so that coaches and teachers will have completed most of their coaching sessions for the year.”

At the same time, coaches will complete just one more survey this year, the EMC Coach Reflection and Impact Survey, on which they report the year’s coaching activity. Coaches will receive a \$50 stipend (the second half of the year’s \$100 stipend) upon completion.

The project depends on teachers’ and coaches’ prompt attention to these assessments. “We’re hoping for an average completion time of about two weeks after teachers and coaches get the surveys,” Burroughs says. “We want our participants to enjoy the start of their summer vacation—without any e-mails or letters from us.” ▲

EMC COACH PROFILE: ROBIN WACHA

Name: Robin Wachha

District: Fargo Public

Schools, Fargo, ND

EMC Teachers:

Tonya Dent, Janelle Hanson, and Erica Johnson, all at Bennett Elementary.

Family: "I've been married to my high school sweetheart,

Brent, for almost 18 years. We have two beautiful daughters, Ryleigh (8) and Ashley (6). We also have a huge yellow Lab named Ranger."

Years as a teacher: 13

Years as an instructional coach: "This is my first 'official' stint as a mathematics coach."

What do you find most rewarding about being a coach?

"As we're all classroom teachers, it's nice to be able to take a few minutes and focus only on mathematics without other distractions. I've enjoyed watching these teachers teach mathematics to their students—watching different approaches, methods, and management used at different grade levels. Coaching has given me a new perspective on teaching."

Favorite pastimes away from school: "When not in the classroom, you'll find me enjoying the outdoors with my family. I love being at the lake—fishing, swimming, and skiing (not me but my husband and girls). On the weekends, if I'm not reading a book and can't be outdoors, you'll find me watching football (Vikings) and NASCAR (Dale Jr.)."

Any big summer vacation plans? "We'll be spending our summer at the lake. We just bought a small cabin on our favorite lake, so that will be our vacation destination for several years to come. My family also will be traveling with me to Bozeman, Mont. [for EMC professional development], to visit with our family that currently lives there. The girls can't wait to spend time with their cousins!"

One personal or professional goal for next school year: "My goal for next year is to incorporate new strategies in my classroom so that all students' needs are being met." ▲



Did You Know?

EMC coaches and teachers boast a **100 percent completion rate** for all assessments taken to date.



"In my experience, that kind of research participation is almost unheard of," says EMC co-PI John Sutton of RMC Research Corp. "It's proof of how dedicated our coaches and teachers are to our project's important goals."

Food for (Mathematical) Thought



In each issue of the newsletter, we share a different problem with you to challenge your own thinking about mathematics (and to have some fun). Here's one for this issue:

Think of a number.

Double it.

Add 10 to the result.

Now halve the result.

Now subtract your original number from the result.

Your answer is 5. *Why?*

(From *It's a Kind of Magic: Mathematical Magic Tricks Explained* by David Crawford. Published by The Mathematical Association, Leicester, UK, 2009.)

Go to the "Participants" page on our Web site to read the solution, or [CLICK HERE](#). ▲

Visit us on the Web!

www.math.montana.edu/~emc

Lots Coming Up: Your EMC Calendar for Spring and Summer

Along with your many other mathematics teaching goals at the end of the school year, you'll also be completing your final EMC activities for 2010-11. Here's a quick look at

what's coming up. If you ever have questions related to the project, just send us an e-mail or check the "Participants" page on our Web site.

Coaching sessions wrap up.

Project coaches should continue toward the goal of completing a total of *eight* three-part coaching sessions with each project teacher during the 2010-11 school year. Half of these sessions should cover mathematics content focused on number sense and operations. Coaches also should start rounding up notes on the year's sessions, which will help as they fill out the EMC Coach

Reflection and Impact Survey later this spring. Questions? Contact James Burroughs at emc@math.montana.edu.

Online coaches' forum activities continue. Coaches in both professional development groups will be continuing activities on their EMC "Moodle" site in the coming months.

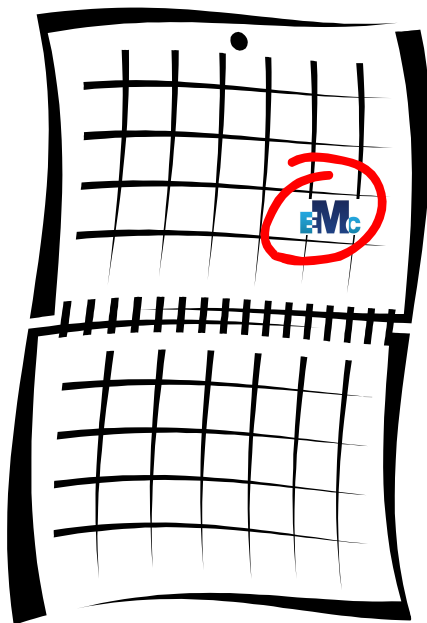
Teacher observations underway. EMC Project observers are now contacting all teachers to arrange their annual classroom observation at each teacher's convenience. These observations are separate from coaches' classroom observations and occur only once each year in the spring. (For more info, see "Teacher Observations: What Are They For?" in the Fall 2010 newsletter, available on the EMC Web site.)

Assessments coming soon.

Like last spring, project teachers will take all of their online assessments near the end of the school year. (Thank you for completing them promptly, before school finishes!) The usual \$100 stipend will apply.

In addition, coaches will complete the "Coach Reflection and Impact Survey," which reviews the year's coaching sessions. (See article on page 2.)

Professional development for Group 2 coaches on the horizon. In July in Bozeman, Mont., coaches in "Group 2" will receive their EMC professional development in coaching knowledge. All coaches have confirmed their dates, but contact James Burroughs with any questions. James will be in touch later this spring to coordinate travel for all participating coaches. (See article on page 2.) ▲



EMC TEACHER PROFILE: ADAM SMITH

Name: Adam Smith

School: Lincoln Middle School, Grade 7; School District of La Crosse (WI)

EMC Coach: Ruth Baardseth

Principal: Larry Myhra

Family: Wife, Amber; son, Austin (7); and daughter, Adyson (2).

Years as a teacher: 3

What's one way that your coach has helped you in your mathematics classroom? "Ruth has helped me to stay aware of using a variety of teaching techniques to be sure I'm reaching all learners."

Favorite pastimes away from school: "Spending time outdoors with my family, hunting, fishing, hiking, running, and spending time on the water."

Any big summer vacation plans? "Nothing really, yet ..."

One personal or professional goal for the next school year:

"Personal goal: Plan a family vacation to Hawaii. Professional goal: Continue working on receiving my Master of Educational Technology degree from Boise State University." ▲



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