

From May 5-7, 2014, PIIC hosted the final Professional Learning Opportunity (PLO) of the school year at The Penn Stater Conference Center in State College, PA. Over 140 instructional coaches, administrators, mentors, and Regional Mentor Coordinators (RMC) from 20 PIIC-participating IUs attended the PLO.

On May 5, Ellen Eisenberg, PIIC's Executive Director, welcomed the group. Participants worked in randomly-assigned groups to discuss various themes related to their work and professional roles.

After the short table conversations, participants rotated into breakout sessions. Participants chose one of the following breakout session prior to the PLO via an online registration form:

- *Engaged and Learning: Coaching the School Community* – IU 18 PIIC Mentor, Loriann Ruddy, and IU 18 Director of Literacy, Jessica Jacobs;
- *Planning for Success: The Administrator/Coach Relationship* – IU PIIC Mentors, Lori Ceremuga and Amy Walker, and PIIC RMC, Charley Territo;
- *Coaching with Evidence-Based Literacy Practices* – IU 13 PIIC Mentor, Terri Lewis, and Penn Manor SD instructional coach, Amy Wall;
- *Planning Purposefully for the Before Conversation* – IU PIIC Mentors, Dorie Martin and Carol Adams, SD of Lancaster Instructional Coach Laura Trimble, and Woodland Hills SD Instructional Coach, Justin Rodrigues;
- *Digital Storytelling: Enhancing Literacy Across the Curriculum* - IU 9 PIIC Mentor, Tanya Dynda, and Sun Valley SD Instructional Coach, Tara Young;
- *Learning to Learn: The Heart of Penn Literacy* – Joe Ginotti. Director of PLN

Chris Caton, Moon Area SD Director of Curriculum, led a whole-group general session entitled *Coaching Around the Voluntary Instructional Frameworks: Leveraging the Tools on the SAS Portal*

. The day concluded with strategic planning and reflection time for coaches to identify and plan ways to use what they learned from the general session in their schools.

May 6 began with a short welcome and agenda review. Participants moved directly into their pre-selected breakout sessions:

- *Literacy and STEM: Putting it All Together* – IU PIIC Mentors, Missy Petrilak and Evelyn Wassel, and PIIC RMC, Gen Battisto
- *Planning for Success: The Administrator/Coach Relationship* – IU PIIC Mentors, Lori Ceremuga and Amy Walker, and PIIC RMC, Charley Territo
- *Understanding the Coach's Role in the Educator Effectiveness SLO Process, Part II* – IU 14 PIIC Mentor, Melissa Devlin, and IU 14 Program Administrator, Jeff Rothenberger;
- *Planning Purposefully for the Before Conversation* – IU PIIC Mentors, Dorie Martin and Carol Adams, SD of Lancaster Instructional Coach Laura Trimble, and Woodland Hills SD Instructional Coach, Justin Rodrigues;
- *Building Language-Based Activities Using Primary Sources and Informational Text* – IU PIIC Mentors, Mike Derman and Stevie Kline;
- *Danielson and PIIC: Creating the Connection* – IU 17 PIIC Mentor, Todd Moyer, and Loyalsock SD Instructional Coach, Linda LaCoe

After the breakout sessions, Elliott Medrich, PIIC Senior Advisor, interviewed Karen Macartney, an instructional coach from Bradford Area SD. Karen shared her experiences as an instructional coach and talked about how she garnered trust from her peers as a non-administrative layer of support. The interview fed into the next whole-group general session, *Building Focus and Feedback Through Formative Assessment: A Coach's Role*, facilitated by Joe Ginotti.

Coaches then gathered for a short strategic reflection and lunch break. The group reconvened and gathered in small groups to discuss challenges they experienced as coaches. Groups were given reflective questions and engaged in conversations with their colleagues. Responses were later shared with the whole group.

On the morning of May 7, Elliott Medrich facilitated another interview. This time, Joanne Custer, Dauphin County Technical School Instructional Coach, shared the process by which she developed from a novice coach in her school to an experienced coach among her colleagues. Participants then moved into one of the following pre-selected breakout sessions:

- *Literacy and STEM: Putting it All Together* – IU PIIC Mentors, Missy Petrilak and Evelyn Wassel, and PIIC RMC Gen Battisto;
- *Coaching with Evidence-Based Literacy Practices* – IU 13 PIIC Mentor, Terri Lewis, and Penn Manor SD instructional coach, Amy Wall;
- *Digital Storytelling: Enhancing Literacy Across the Curriculum* - IU 9 PIIC Mentor, Tanya Dynda, and Sun Valley SD Instructional Coach, Tara Young;
- *Learning to Learn: The Heart of Penn Literacy* – Joe Ginotti, Director of PLN
- *Building Language-Based Activities Using Primary Sources and Informational Text* – IU PIIC Mentors, Mike Derman and Stevie Kline;
- *Coaching Strategies: Getting Started* - Exeter SD Instructional Coach, Karen DeNunzio, and IU 14 PIIC Mentor, Melissa Devlin;

Breakout sessions were followed with a Birds of a Feather session, an activity where participants develop topics of interest throughout the PLO in order to continue their conversations with colleagues.

Feedback from the PLO was positive:

I came away with my head just bursting with next step ideas in my work within my district. I just found it invaluable to have the time in both large and small group sessions, to learn and chat with one another.

-District Administrator

For me, the PIIC PLOs help me to re-direct myself. I am involved in so many initiatives in our district that often "instructional coaching" is not at the forefront where it should be. It is invaluable to be with instructional coaches from around the state to share ideas, strategies, successes, and even failures and to know that I am a part of the big picture of helping teachers to be the best they can be.

-Full-Time Coach

The set up was amazing. The fact that there was whole group and small group mixed throughout the day gave the participants a way to break up the day!

-IU PIIC Mentor

You can read more feedback from this event by accessing the [Testimonials](#) page. The agenda from this event is available on our

[Past Professional Learning Opportunities](#)

page. You can also find photos from this event in our

[PIIC Photo Gallery](#)

. Our next PIIC Professional Learning Opportunity will be September 29-October 1, 2014 at The Penn Stater Conference Center in State College, PA. Details can be found on our

[Events](#)

page.

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