

The Effect of Teacher Coaching on Instruction and Achievement:
A Meta-Analysis of the Causal Evidence

By Matthew A. Kraft (Brown University), David Blazar (Harvard University),
Dylan Hogan (Brown University)

In a recent meta-analysis (Kraft, et al, 2017) the authors find that teacher coaching has a statistically significant effect on both teachers' instructional practice (0.49 SD) and students' achievement outcomes (0.18 SD). To provide context, the reported effect of coaching on teachers' instructional practice are larger than differences in measures of instructional quality between novice and veteran teachers'. The reported effect of teacher coaching on student achievement are on par with the effect of the degree to which teachers improve their ability to raise student achievement during the first five to ten years of their careers. Effects on student achievement are also larger than effects from causal studies of almost all other school-based interventions reviewed by Fryer (2017) including student incentives, teacher pre-service training, merit-based pay, general PD, data-driven instruction, and extended learning time. Interventions of comparable effect sizes on achievement include comprehensive school reform, oversubscribed charter schools, large reductions in class size, high dosage tutoring, and changes in curriculum.

When the teacher coaching examined is paired with group training, the effects of teacher coaching are even greater on both instruction (0.31 SD) and student achievement (0.12 SD). Consistent with the theory of action outlined in Figure 1 (pasted below), this suggests that teachers may benefit from building baseline skills (e.g., content knowledge) prior to engaging directly with a coach. For instructional outcomes, pairing coaching with instructional resources and materials (e.g., curriculum) also is associated with greater gains (0.21 SD larger), while providing teachers with a video library is associated with more limited benefits (-0.27 SD smaller). The authors do not find any significant difference in effect sizes for coaching programs that were delivered in person or virtually.

When considering dosage of teacher coaching – both total hours of coaching, and total hours of PD when coaching is paired with other program features – the authors did not find any evidence in support of the hypothesis that coaching must be high-dosage to be effective. The lack of evidence supporting dosage effects suggests that the quality and focus of coaching may be more important than the actual number of contact hours.

Figures

Figure 1. Theory of Action for Teaching Coaching

