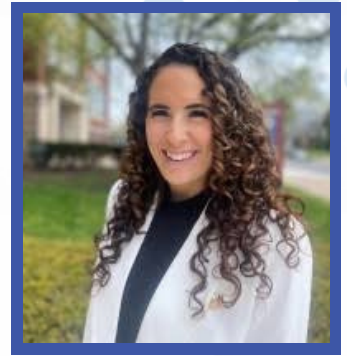


STRENGTHS-BASED TRAINING

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Q: “How can I develop my teachers’ individual strengths without adding more to our packed schedule?”

A: By integrating Strengths based instructional coaching into your existing coaching schedule. Transform your relationship with teachers and their outcomes in the classroom.

Principal Polnitz at Whittier Primary faced a similar overwhelm trying to coach 60 teachers effectively. By implementing targeted Strengths Coaching, she shifted from assuming what her team needed, to understanding how they feel supported through communication style, dramatically improving teacher engagement and communication within just 30 days.

Here’s how to transform reactive management into proactive strengths development:

- **Map Your Team’s Natural Talents.** Utilize Strengths assessments like DISC during already-scheduled one-on-ones to understand your team's working style. Principal Polnitz discovered that her “Influencer” teachers needed different support than analytical staff members, allowing for more effective coaching without additional meetings.
- **Customize Your Communication.** Adapt your leadership approach based on individual styles. When Principal Polnitz recognized that detailed questions weren’t resistance but rather a processing style, she adjusted her approach accordingly.
- **Create Strength-Based Partnerships.** Match complementary teaching styles for organic mentorship opportunities. Principal Polnitz paired quick-paced innovators with detail-oriented planners, fostering natural collaboration during existing team meetings.
- **Embed Growth Conversations.** Transform routine observations into strengths-spotting opportunities. Principal Polnitz used regular classroom visits to identify and amplify teachers’ natural talents, building confidence through immediate feedback.
- **Measure Progress Through Stories.** Document specific examples of teachers leveraging their strengths. This created evidence of growth without adding formal assessments.

The result? “Now I understand how my leadership requires the same differentiation we expect from teachers in the classroom,” shared Principal Polnitz. Teacher engagement improved, communication barriers dissolved, and the school culture shifted from survival to growth.

I deeply understand this challenge because I witnessed the transformation firsthand while observing K-6 classrooms as a new business owner. Seeing the disconnect between well-meaning teachers and their impact showed me that leveraging natural strengths creates sustainable change without adding stress.

Today’s Action: During your next classroom walkthrough, identify and document one unique strength for each teacher you observe. Use these insights to personalize your next interaction with them