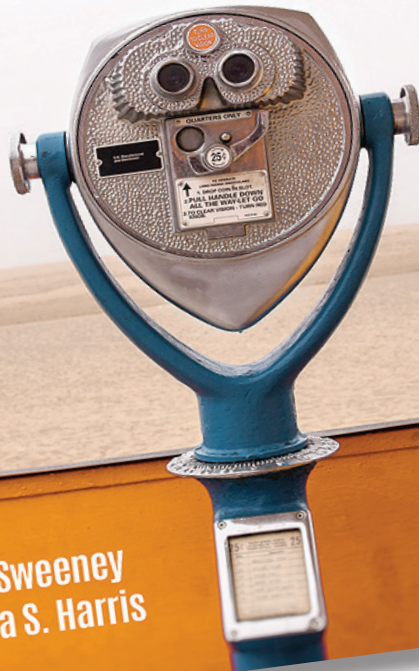# STUDENT-CENTERED COACHING FROM A DISTANCE

Coaching Moves for Virtual, Hybrid, and In-Person Classrooms

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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *Student-Centered Coaching From a Distance* by Diane Sweeney and Leanna S. Harris.

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The second is that while we need to think in new ways, we also mustn't forget what we know about best instructional practice. The third is that coaches can play an important role in helping all of us rise to the occasion.

MOVE 1: THINK IN NEW WAYS ABOUT STUDENT EVIDENCE

Let's start with a reminder of what we're talking about when we refer to "student evidence" within the context of Student-Centered Coaching. As we discussed in *Student-Centered Coaching: The Moves* (Sweeney & Harris, 2017), schools today are awash in data—from district- and state-level tests, to interim assessments, to everything we use in data teams and share on data walls. In fact, in the absence of being able to collect some of this information while teaching remotely, many schools are relying on test scores from last year to plan instruction and interventions for their students. In thinking about this kind of data, we explain:

> Looking at quantitative data can be useful to identify school or district-wide trends and achievement gaps and to set big-picture goals. But when thinking about partnering with teachers through student-centered coaching, we need to use an entirely different type of data. We are looking for student evidence that we can collect *today* and that will inform us about what our students need *tomorrow*. So instead of looking at spreadsheets from big formal tests, we look at things like student writing samples, math problems, exit slips, and responses to reading. In this way, we can gain an understanding of where students are in relation to that day's learning and plan for next steps in instruction moving forward. (p. 106)

If student evidence is a driver for knowing where students are in relation to the desired learning, teachers and coaches need to be thoughtful about what kinds of evidence they use. A broad variety of digital tools is available, along with more traditional forms of student evidence, such as writing

samples and exit slips (see Figure 3.1 for some examples). Because there are so many options, we thought it would be helpful to consider the qualities that make the evidence useful in propelling student learning forward. Regardless of setting, teachers and coaches will find student evidence most helpful when

- it doesn't take long to create;
- it isn't necessarily something "extra" but can be what students are already producing;
- it is descriptive in nature and makes thinking visible;
- it is aligned with desired learning outcomes, standards, and learning targets; and
- it can be produced and shared virtually.

FIGURE 3.1 ● Examples of In-Person and Virtual Student Evidence

EXAMPLES OF IN-PERSON STUDENT EVIDENCE	EXAMPLES OF VIRTUAL STUDENT EVIDENCE
Anecdotal evidence from conference notes or a Noticing and Naming Grid	Anecdotal evidence collected from notes or with a Noticing and Naming Grid in a virtual lesson
Student journals from reading, writing, math, or science	Digital reflection journals and photos of work
Quizzes or exit/entrance tickets	Online quizzes from Pear Deck, NearPod, etc.
Anything students are already producing in class	Digital work from Padlet, Flipgrid, video, etc.

BE THOUGHTFUL ABOUT THE AGE LEVEL AND CONTENT AREA

The pivot to remote learning has caused an incredible level of acceleration in the area of technology integration. For teachers who weren't accustomed to using EdTech tools, they have suddenly found themselves in a crash course on things like Canvas, Google Classroom, Padlet, Quizlet, and perhaps even Zoom. And while many educators have been successfully

using these tools for some time now, it has also been exciting to see the new resources that have sprouted up in recent months. While these tools and programs offer lots of possibilities for students to demonstrate their learning, there are a few notable circumstances where we have to think even more outside the box about how to collect student evidence.

One of these areas relates to the age and developmental stage of the students we are working with. It's great to think of all the ways fourth graders to high schoolers can easily access and use technology, but what about our PreK and primary students? Jessy, an elementary coach, recently shared how she faced this issue when co-planning a writing unit with a first-grade team. When doing similar planning with the upper elementary grades in her school, they created digital writers' notebooks for students in Google Docs. This provided an easy and efficient way for students to share their writing and for the teachers and coach to give feedback through the comment feature. But what about six- and seven-year-olds, most of whom are still spelling phonetically, developing their handwriting skills, and relying heavily on pictures to help tell their story? Jessy and the team grappled with this and came up with three ideas to try. The first involved using Flipgrid, so that students could take a video of themselves reading their stories as they pointed to words. The second was having students take a "story selfie," or a picture of their story, and upload it into the LMS. The third was a "give one, get one" plan where family members could pick up a blank story packet for their student and then would receive a new one each time they brought a completed packet back to the school. In coming up with three different options, Jessy led the team in thinking about equity by providing options for people to choose which method would work best for them and their student. This also put the group squarely in the learner mindset by giving several things a try to see what would get the best results.

WHAT ABOUT ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE?

There seems to be an age-old debate in education about the value of qualitative versus quantitative data. We recognize that both are important and strongly believe that anecdotal

evidence can be a valuable tool for understanding where individual students are at any given moment. It's easy to limit our view of "evidence" by solely including tangible things that students have produced or created. Yet we can also gain evidence through what we observe students doing or by what they tell us directly, as in reading and writing conferences. For coaches, anecdotal evidence is gathered in the moves for co-teaching, such as You Pick Four, Co-conferring, and Noticing and Naming. These moves, particularly what they look like when coaching from a distance, will be explored in Chapter 5.

DISPATCH FROM THE FIELD

Rachel Jenner, High School Instructional Coach

I was recently partnering with Rebekka, an instructor in the Health Careers (CNA) program at the high school technical center where I coach. Rebekka was committed to providing her students with hands-on, interactive activities during the limited time they were in the building, so we decided to record more traditional lectures for students to view prior to coming to class. This was especially important for them to earn their contact hours (as required by the State Board of Nursing). Rebekka's stress level was high because she was spending a significant amount of time preparing the videos. Yet even with all her effort, it was unclear whether students were gleaning pertinent information or even viewing the videos, and we were unable to gain a sense of their knowledge through class because only a handful of students were engaging in the discussions. As Rebekka and I reflected on the situation, we realized that we hadn't planned for how the students could demonstrate their understanding of the material. That was quite an aha for us!

The first thing we did was tackle the issue of the recorded lectures. When students got to class, we started with an open-ended entrance ticket in Google Docs. This allowed us to see what information they retained from the lecture, and it opened up a conversation about why some students might not be viewing the videos and how we could work with them to make that happen. In other words, it gave us valuable insight about where they were with both the content and the process. We then revisited their entrance tickets at the beginning of each class period, asking students to add information so that they (and we) could see their additional learning.

We also needed a way to hear from more than just a few students during class discussions. To do this, we used whiteboards to allow every student the chance to answer Rebekka's questions. I kept track of the responses to those questions so that we could use that information when we planned

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