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Five Minute Coaching!


The Big Idea

A real coaching session in five minutes or less.

This is one tool you should use every day!

The Why?

Observe, record, summarize, post conference. That's the ideal for coaching, but when you only have five minutes, not 60, you can still have a meaningful impact. A single five-minute coaching (5-mc) session isn't going to change the world, but over time it can have big benefits:

1. Shows teachers you are invested in their growth
 2. Helps them become more reflective practitioners
 3. Helps them connect actions to results to improve future performance
 4. Provides you with information you would not have otherwise learn
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The How

Ideally, you should conduct a 5-minute coaching session after some sort of event such as a meeting, presentation, phone call, or completion of a project. 5-mc is meant to be informal, so don't take notes! The best place to do 5-ms is at a teacher's door, standing in the classroom, or walking in the hallway. You can plan to do 5-mc, but it should feel spontaneous.

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MVP

A five-minute coaching session begins with you standing face-to-face or side-by-side a teacher and then doing this:

1. **Make an affirming statement: "Great lesson yesterday!"**
2. **Ask: "What else went well?"**
3. Be quiet, listen, smile, and nod
4. **Ask: "Did anything surprise you?"**
5. Be quiet, listen, smile, and nod
6. **Ask: "Is there anything you would do differently next time?"**
7. Be quiet, listen, smile, and nod
8. **Say something optimistic: "I'm excited to see what you do next!"**
9. **Thank them for sharing: "Thanks for sharing."**

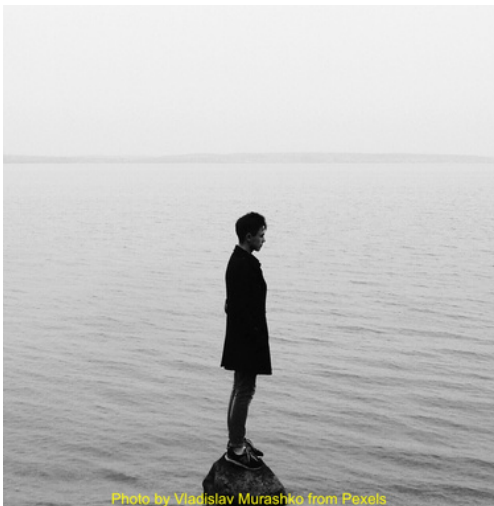


Photo by Vladislav Murashko from Pexels

ON AN ISLAND?

5-mc is a great tool for APs who are isolated and/or don't have significant instructional leadership opportunities. You don't need any support or coordination and teachers can give you feedback on your technique.

Be aware of these challenges:

Remaining
quiet

Memorizing the
questions so they
feel natural

Staying
present

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Step	Purpose	Details
1: Statement of affirmation	Sets a positive tone, shows that you value them. You can increase the power of the affirmation by linking what you saw to a specific outcome.	Say with enthusiastic sincerity and a big smile: "I appreciate the work you are doing with x" or "The kids were having so much fun with that activity yesterday!" Increase value by connecting a concrete action to a positive outcome: "When you (observed behavior) the impact was (result), it was (superlative)." For example, "When you incorporated movement, I saw students who were normally more passive become fully engaged."
2: What else went well?	Allow them to reflect on positives.	Say: "What else went well?" Using "else" indicates that you are building on the affirmation and that this process is about accentuating the positives. If you want to hear more, you can say "Tell me more."
3: Did anything surprise you?	Helps them reflect more deeply without judgement.	Say: "Did anything surprise you?" Sometimes "nothing" is a legitimate answer. Even if you disagree, accept it and move on. Using "Did" instead of "what" gives them an easy out, which increases comfort and trust.
4: Would you do anything differently next time?	This is about what they would do differently. It doesn't need to be negative.	Say: "Would you do anything differently next time?" Again, using "would you" instead of "what would you" gives them an easy out. If they say nothing, accept it and move on.
5: Statement of optimism	This ends the conference on a positive note.	Say: "Thank you so much for sharing x with me, and please let me know what I can do to continue to support your work and growth."

BONUS POINTS:

- Let teachers know that you are developing your coaching skills by doing 5-mc.
- Tell them you will try and each person every couple of days.
- Tell them you want to be a better listener and won't be giving feedback.
- Ask them to help remind you.

Doing this helps teachers understand that you won't be giving feedback and that you are trying to be a better listener. Also, by making your growth goals transparent, you are modeling that growth mindset we want kids and teachers to have. Finally, asking for help is a great way to get teachers to invest in the process.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

- **What if something was bad but they don't talk about it?**

That's okay. If they aren't ready to go there, then they aren't ready to grow from it and 5-mc is about their growth.

- **What if they don't talk about something they should change?**

Same as above, 5-mc allows teachers to reflect at the level they are at. Just stay consistent and eventually they will go deeper. Remember, many teachers have been traumatized by or are intimidated by administrators. They may not feel comfortable being transparent. Your acceptance of that is one way to build trust.

- **What if they ask for feedback?**

Don't give them feedback! If they are insistent, tell them, "This is about you, for you, and I want you to indulge in the self-reflection. If there is something specific you want to talk about, let's schedule a separate time."

- **Do I ever write anything down?**

If you hear something that you need to remember, you can go write it down after the session is over. A good example is if a teacher shares that a parent or child is ill. Put that on your calendar for a few days later and come back and ask them about it! If you become aware of a concern, you can raise that at your ILT meeting.

- **What if I don't have five minutes?**

You don't have to ask all three questions! If you do 5-mc regularly, you can skip questions but still give teachers the chance to reflect. In schools where leaders consistently use 5-mc, teachers actually begin to answer the questions before they are asked - which is really the whole point.

Questions for
your team:



For our team and context, what value can 5-mc add? Is it allowing us to do something we can't or don't currently do?	Are we willing and able to let teachers know what we are doing and have them help us to be accountable?	What will be the hardest part of 5-mc for each team member?
Can you think of other ways to use 5-mc to help teachers reflect on things other than their teaching?	What information might teachers need to make this work?	Do we want to target specific teachers or implement with everyone?

WHAT'S COMING?

Adding value through APEx Community...

In APEx Community we use five-minute coaching in our group-coaching calls. I often model the technique, then have members coach each other. We analyze each coaching session and keep working on our skills. We also look at ways to adapt the 5-mc questions to get important feedback on other things like personal lives and school culture.



The Assistant Principal Podcast

- 8/11: SC Elementary AP of the Year, Dr. Tia Jones (part 1) on relationships and more!
- 8/18: Key structures to super-charge your ILT

APEx Community

- **Membership** enrollment closes September 9!
- 10/10 member challenge - implementing the 10 strategies for supporting beginning teachers.
- TBA: New AP support group
- 8/23 Webinar: digging deep into building the ILT

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- 8/16: ILT meeting template and customization
- 9/30: Using an early career teacher checklist to focus your support