

Coaching for Learner Autonomy: High-leverage Teacher Actions

Overview

This document outlines four high-leverage teacher actions that support learner autonomy by creating opportunities for students to think, make decisions, and problem-solve independently. Each section includes aligned teacher moves, reflective questions, teacher leader moves, and coaching considerations to strengthen instructional practice. Designed for use in planning, walkthroughs, and coaching conversations, this tool helps instructional leaders provide targeted support that builds teacher clarity, confidence, and agency while promoting deeper student thinking and independence.

Coaching High-leverage Teacher Actions

High-leverage Actions	Teacher Moves	Teacher Questions to Consider	Teacher Leader Moves	Teacher Leader Questions to Consider
<p>Expectations for each student’s performance are clear, demanding, and high, and student work is aligned to state content standards and learning objectives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unpack standards and lesson objectives to define clear success criteria • Develop and reference anchor charts that highlight key learning expectations • Plan and deliver a clear, concise teacher model that demonstrates the thinking process behind the task • Use think-alouds to make connections between the success criteria and the intended learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will I clearly communicate what students are expected to learn and do? • How will I make the purpose of the lesson explicit throughout instruction? • What language or visuals will help students understand the success criteria? • How can I model my thinking in a way that makes the learning process visible? • When and how will I reference the success criteria during the lesson to guide student thinking? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-plan with teachers to unpack standards and define the essential knowledge and skills • Model how to write clear, student-friendly success criteria • Support teachers in planning or rehearsing think-alouds that make the cognitive process explicit • Provide and co-create anchor charts or visuals that reinforce clarity • Observe and give feedback on the clarity of learning goals, modeling language, and the use of success criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What language or visuals will make the purpose of the lesson unmistakably clear for all learners? • How will students know what “good” looks like without needing an exemplar model? • In what ways can the teacher’s modeling make the thinking process transparent for students? • How will success criteria be referenced throughout the lesson to support student independence? • How can expectations be reinforced during instruction without re-explaining the task?

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<p>Teacher practices display understanding of each student’s anticipated learning abilities and challenges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use recent student data to anticipate likely misconceptions • Connect past learning to current content to prevent misunderstandings • Reference anchor charts or task expectations during modeling to support clarity • Ask guiding questions that surface student thinking and reveal misconceptions • Use small-group or targeted instruction to address common or anticipated areas of difficulty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What misconceptions or gaps from recent student work should I anticipate? • What prior knowledge might make this task challenging for students? • What questions will help surface student thinking without leading them? • What evidence will signal that a misconception is occurring during the lesson? • How will I adjust instruction in the moment when confusion arises? • What supports or scaffolds can I prepare to address likely areas of difficulty? • How can small-group or targeted instruction help address common misunderstandings? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review recent student work with teachers to identify trends and misconceptions • Engage teachers in backward planning conversations to pre-empt areas where students commonly struggle • Model how to design questions that draw out student thinking and reveal misconceptions in real time • Support teachers in planning intentional checkpoints that allow for quick adjustments during instruction • Provide feedback on how effectively the teacher responds to emerging misconceptions and adapts instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What evidence from recent student work suggests specific areas of confusion? • How will you know—during the lesson—that a misconception is occurring? • What questions or prompts will help surface student thinking without leading them? • How will you adjust instruction immediately when a misunderstanding arises?
<p>Teacher consistently provides differentiated instructional content and strategies to ensure students have the opportunity to master what is being taught.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use scaffolds such as graphic organizers, sentence stems, guided notes, or routines to organize student thinking • Model how to use supports effectively without lowering rigor • Introduce structures that help students access complex tasks while maintaining cognitive demand • Gradually remove scaffolds as students demonstrate readiness for independent thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What scaffolds will help students access the task while still thinking independently? • How will I know students are ready for fewer supports? • How can I adjust scaffolds without reducing rigor or depth of thinking? • Which students may need additional supports—and which may need fewer? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-plan scaffolds with teachers to ensure supports align with lesson demands and student needs • Model how to scale scaffolds up or down based on readiness • Guide teachers in identifying where scaffolds are most effective • Support teachers in planning for the gradual removal of supports as students gain confidence • Observe and provide feedback on how scaffolds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which scaffolds best support students at the start, middle, and end of the task? • How can supports be differentiated to meet the needs of varied learners? • How will students demonstrate readiness for fewer scaffolds? • How do scaffolds contribute to building student independence rather than dependence? • What evidence will show that scaffolded

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			contribute to student independence	instruction is leading to deeper thinking?
<p>Students are provided opportunities to monitor their thinking to ensure they understand what they are learning, are attending to critical information, and are aware of the learning strategies they are using and why.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide tools such as rubrics, success criteria, or checklists to help students evaluate their own work • Prompt students to compare work to the criteria and identify next steps • Build reflection routines into the lesson so students pause and assess progress while learning • Offer timely, specific feedback that reinforces reflection and supports continued improvement • Model reflective thinking so students see how to analyze their own learning process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What tools will help students monitor their learning as they work? • How will I embed moments for students to reflect during the lesson—not only at the end? • What prompts or routines will help students identify strengths and next steps? • How can my feedback reinforce student reflection and self-assessment? • How can I model reflection to help students internalize this practice? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share or model tools that promote student metacognition and self-monitoring • Co-plan reflection checkpoints for students to pause, assess, and adjust work • Review student reflections with teachers to analyze thinking depth and guide next steps • Help teachers embed reflection throughout the lesson cycle, not just at the end • Provide feedback on how reflection supports learner autonomy and instructional decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What tools or routines will best support meaningful student reflection? • How can reflection be embedded throughout the lesson to promote autonomy? • What evidence will show that reflection is deepening student understanding? • How will student reflection inform the teacher’s next instructional moves? • How can these reflection practices help students take a more active role in their learning?