

Question: What skills do coaches need?

Answer:

- **Interpersonal skills:**

The most frequently mentioned characteristic of an effective coach is “people skills” including the ability to build relationships, establish trust and credibility, and tailor assistance to individual educators’ needs (Taylor & Wasik, Project CHOICES’ Coaches Training, 2009).

- **Solid knowledge base:**

Effective coaches have a thorough understanding of how children learn and have a wide range of skills that include developing questioning strategies to classroom management – all designed to improve student learning.

“Effective leaders make people feel that even the most difficult problems can be tackled productively. They are always hopeful – conveying a sense of optimism and an attitude of never giving up in the pursuit of highly valued goals. Their enthusiasm and confidence (not certainty) are, in a word, infectious” (Fullan, 2001, p.7).

Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Knight, J.M. (2007). *Instructional coaching: A partnership approach to improving instruction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Kowal, J. & L. Steiner, Issue Brief, Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, September 2007.

*“Leading
change is
like herding
cats.”*

*-Chris Wasik and Pandora
Taylor, Project CHOICES
Consultants, 2009*