

Coaching Role Play Scenarios: Overview

1) The Struggling New Teacher

Overwhelmed by everything, dealing with common challenges for new teachers, and struggling to focus and prioritize what to work on.

2) The “Everything is Great!” Teacher

Stuck in routine and “how I’ve always done it,” and doesn’t want coaching—doesn’t see the need for it.

3) The Teacher With A Deficit Mindset

Often uses the phrase “these kids” with a negative connotation; talks about high expectations but there’s low rigor in instruction; comes from a different background than students.

4) Disempowered Teacher

Often complains about the administration and all the changes; feels unappreciated and not listened to; feels like coaching is a waste of time.

5) Emotionally Distraught Teacher

Mid-career teacher who is questioning whether or not to stay in teaching; might be on the road to burnout or may be depressed.

Coaching Role Play Scenarios:

1) STRUGGLING NEW TEACHER

Description: You are a first-year teacher struggling with the workload and the emotional strain of teaching. You're new to the community that you're teaching in. You feel like you're underserving your students because you're so new and struggling and you are questioning whether you should be a teacher. You've wanted to be a teacher for a long time—and although you knew it would be hard, you didn't think it would be *this* hard.

You're dealing with many of common challenges—prioritizing, keeping track of assessments, report cards, other deadlines and administrative work, occasionally managing the classroom, keeping your classroom organized, and so on. You're also not seeing the results you want to be seeing from your students—it seems like they aren't learning as fast as you'd hoped and you're not sure why.

Sometimes when you talk to your coach you go all over the place—from worrying about whether you are doing right by your kids to complaining about the colleagues who talk poorly about kids. When you're asked what you want to work on in coaching, you sometimes suggest things like Project Based Learning, Socratic Seminars, or other things you've heard about that you feel you should offer your students. Overall, you trust your coach and have a good relationship with her. She was assigned to you because you're a first year teacher.

Your strengths are your passion for teaching, your commitment, and your enthusiasm.

Timeline: This conversation takes place in mid-November of your first year teaching.

Notes:

- The grade level and content for this teacher is up to you.
- You are welcome to “be” anyway that you want—get really emotional if you want, or be more withdrawn and less communicative.
- You're a bit impatient with yourself—and hard on yourself. You might have perfectionist tendencies.

Coaching Role Play Scenarios:

2) THE “EVERYTHING IS GREAT!” TEACHER

Description: You’ve been teaching elementary school for 17 years and you have a somewhat traditional, but high functioning classroom. You still give spelling tests on Fridays, you do a lot of textbook based reading and teaching, and you are suspicious of all of these new strategies that teachers are using. Students are compliant, you don’t deal with behavior issues, and enough students pass your class (although that’s also because of how you grade--which isn’t based on mastery of standards).

Sometimes you feel like you should know what others are talking about when they reference things like “sheltered instruction” or “AVID strategies” and you feel embarrassed that you don’t. You are masking a number of knowledge and skill gaps in your practice. The student population in your district has shifted in the last decade and there are small groups of EL students now.

You don’t feel like you need or want coaching. It was assigned to you because everyone in the school gets coaching at some point during the year. You’re very friendly to your coach, but you don’t implement the things you two talk about. You’re not really interested in reflecting on your own practice. You feel uncomfortable with having the coach observe you.

Your strengths are that you have deep knowledge of the community, you have a lot of relationships with students and parents, and you have persevered through many changes in the district. You’re still there. That counts. You’re also organized and have developed many strong, basic routines. You could mentor new teachers—but no one has ever asked you to.

Timeline: This conversation takes place in September.

Coaching Role Play Scenarios:

3) TEACHER WITH DEFICIT MINDSET

Description: You have been teaching for 3 years in a community that is different (racially & socioeconomically) from the one that you were raised in. You describe yourself as having high expectations for kids. You set big goals for student growth and you share those with your class. Your classroom is organized, instruction is very structured and routine, and you have developed strong routines for assessment.

You are definitely the one doing the heavy cognitive lifting in this class—although you purport to value rigor. The tasks that students are given are low on Blooms and Webb’s Depth of Knowledge. There’s a lot of memorization (Example: “They just have to memorize the multiplication tables!”) The content that they explore is also often low in relevance to students and as a result, there’s often low student engagement. There may be compliance, but not engagement.

Your coach was assigned to work with you on incorporating strategies to support English Learners. You meet every other week.

Frequently when talking with your coach, you use the phrase “these kids” coupled with some kind of deficit reference. For example, when your coach suggested that you incorporate discussion structures, you said, “Well, that might work for the kids in Ms. T’s class, but these kids need much more structure. They can’t handle it when I loosen up.”

Your strengths are that your classroom is organized, instruction is very structured and routine, and you have developed strong routines for assessment. You also do have a value around rigor and high expectations.

Timeline: This conversation takes place in January of your third year teaching.

Notes:

- The grade level and content for this teacher is up to you. You choose what grade level/content you are teaching.
- You are a bit arrogant—or convinced that what you are doing is right. You feel that you have the answers and knowledge about what kids need. You might get irritated if I push on what you’re saying.

Coaching Role Play Scenarios:

4) DISEMPOWERED TEACHER

Description: Every time you turn around there's something new—and now it's coaching, which is supposed to solve every problem in your school. You've been teaching for eight years and you've done a good job in spite of constantly changing administrations, two new superintendents, new standards, new assessments, and so on. The latest set of administrators have launched a whole slew of new programs and initiatives—in fact, they announced that your school has 12 “top priority” goals for this school year.

You feel like a victim—of unprepared and naïve administrators; of the dysfunctional district; of federal education policy. You feel like you have a lot of experience, you know what your kids need, you know what works—and you feel like your experience and expertise isn't listened to. You're not enthusiastic about coaching—it's not what your school needs (it needs to focus on student behavior, you believe). Students are out of control, admin isn't paying attention to the right things, and you have no control over what goes on. You feel powerless and are starting to feel hopeless.

Your coach is supposed to work with teachers on integrating technology and supporting English Learners—the district received a grant to fund coaching in these two areas. You feel like this is a waste of time and resources.

Your strengths are that you've stuck through a lot of changes, you do care about kids—and once really loved teaching.

Timeline: This conversation takes place in October.

Notes:

- The grade level and content for this teacher is up to you. You choose what grade level/content you are teaching.
- When portraying this teacher, you are welcome to “be” anyway that you want—you could get really emotional if you want, or you could be more withdrawn and less communicative. You are welcome to cry or get mad at the coach.



brightmorning

www.brightmorningteam.com

Coaching Role Play Scenarios:

5) EMOTIONALLY DISTRAUGHT TEACHER

Description: You are a mid-career year teacher, and you are having a really hard time. There was a fight in your classroom today, your principal gave you low ratings on your latest observation, your grade level team is constantly bickering with each other, and you just don't think you can "do this anymore." You work all the time—you have no social life, you never exercise, you skip lunch—and you never feel like you're doing enough.

You expected your first year or two to be like this, but now, in your (3rd/4th/8th....) year, it just feels impossible. You are seriously thinking about whether you should quit because you also don't feel like you're doing much of anything good for kids: "A sub would probably be better for them," you say. But you also say, "I'm not a quitter."

In your classroom, you are aware that sometimes things are disorganized. You lack some basic routines and procedures, you spend a lot of time at school but aren't sure what you're doing with that time—you often don't plan lessons. You often feel unfocused and scattered.

Your strengths are that you are really passionate about teaching, you care deeply about kids, and you devote a lot of time to teaching. Your heart is in the right place and you truly want to be a teacher.

Timeline: This conversation takes place in October.

Notes:

- The grade level and content for this teacher is up to you. You choose what grade level/content you are teaching.
- When portraying this teacher, you are welcome to "be" anyway that you want—you could get really emotional if you want, or you could be more withdrawn and less communicative. You are welcome to cry or get mad at me (your coach) or anything else.