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The Process Evaluation of Head Start's Early Learning Mentor Coach Initiative (ELMC): Informing Research and Practice

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Defining Mentor Coaching

- A partnership between a more experienced staff member or consultant, who has specialized knowledge and provides individualized support, and a learner or protégé to support his or her own capacity to reflect on his or her own behavior and actions, develop new skills, and grow as an effective professional



Can you help me, Mrs. Martin? This wasn't covered in any of my education courses.

Professional Development Goals of Mentor Coaching

- Used in Head Start, Childcare, PreK, QRIS to:
 - Build staff capacity
 - Refine staff skills
 - Implement new staff skills
 - Promote positive relations among staff
 - Increase staff knowledge on specific topics
 - Improve classroom environments
 - Encourage staff participation in continuing education

Forms and Content Areas of Mentor Coaching

- New teacher induction programs
- Informal relationships between junior and experienced staff
- Formal relationships between mentor-coach and staff
- Mental health, child development, classroom structure, interaction with children, assessment use, family engagement, etc.

Research Is Limited

- Types of early childhood coaching strategies used?
- Common and essential features?
- Structure and goals of approaches?
- Types of recipients?
- Fit within larger PD context?
- Effectiveness on staff, programs, and children?

Head Start Early Learning Mentor Coach (ELMC) Initiative

- Funded to improve teaching practices in Early Head Start and Head Start grantees
- Grant to 130 grantees in 42 states and DC ranging from \$87,409 to \$225,000 (average \$215,513)
- Grantees from all geographic regions and Tribal and Migrant/Seasonal Head Start programs
- From September 2010 to February 2012
- Grantees determined their mentor coaching goal, approach, and focus

The Evaluation

- **Goals**
 - Describe the implementation of the ELMC grants
 - Examine implementation factors of the ELMC efforts
 - Examine factors that appear to be related to successful mentor-coaching
 - Develop and Refine a Coach Conceptual Model
- **Design**
 - Mixed-method design and descriptive analysis
- **Participants**
 - Grantee representatives
 - Mentor-coaches
 - Staff who were mentor-coached

Methodology

- Data Collection Methods
 - Online census surveys to full population of grantees and mentor-coaches
 - Telephone interviews to samples of mentor-coaches and program staff
- Sampling for Telephone Interviews
 - 65 grantees were sampled for the telephone interviews
 - Randomly selected one mentor-coach from each sampled grantee
 - Randomly selected two staff being mentor-coached by the selected mentor-coach

Response Rates

	Number	Percentage
Grantee Census Survey (N=130)	121	93%
Mentor-Coach Census Survey (N=455)	384	84%
Mentor-Coach Interview (N=65)	54	83%
Staff Interview (N=109)	80	73%
Mentor-Coach and Staff Interview Matched Pairs	49	91%

Dimensions of Coaching

- **Basic**
 - Type of Coach; Type of Coachee; Purpose and Goals, Knowledge and Skills of Coach
- **Structural**
 - Authority; Location; Ratio/Span of Control; Duration; Frequency; Span; Age Level; Subject
- **Procedural**
 - Form; Roles; Needs
- **Quality Dimensions**
 - Dispositions; Role clarity; Relationship; Task Enactment

Grantees: Selected Preliminary Findings

- $M = 3$ (0-13) mentor coaches hired by grantee
- 45% had mentor-coaching before ELMC
- 37% did not have any full-time mentor coaches
- 98% reported interpersonal skills important for hiring
- 89% reported experience training, teaching, or mentoring coaching adults important for hiring
- 68% language or cultural match important for hiring

Grantees: Selected Preliminary Findings

• Commonly Endorsed Goals

- 87% improve quality of staff practice
- 72% improve CLASS assessment scores
- 61% improved assessed child outcomes
- 54% train teachers on school readiness

• Less Common Endorsed Goals

- 26% train on particular curriculum
- 23% support education and career development
- 20% improve services for dual language learners
- 15% improve quality of staff practice with families
- 6% improve serve for children with disabilities



Mentor Coaches: Selected Preliminary Findings

- 44 % had another job role in grantee
- 74% were white
- 87% had at least a bachelor degree
 - 41 % had a masters degree
- 50% had 18 years or more ECE experience
- 50% had 12 years or more experience providing PD
- 50% had 2 years or less providing mentor coaching
- 64% serve 2-9 centers; 12 staff is the median caseload size
- 57% work with classroom staff only (lead or assistant)
- 19% work with home visitors staff
- 25% work with a combination of different staff types



Mentor Coaches: Selected Preliminary Findings

- **Common Roles**
 - 75% collaborative partner
 - 58% emotional supporter
 - 58% teacher/instructor
 - 50% problem-solver
- **Less Common Roles**
 - 29% assistant to staff
 - 28% technical expert
 - 18% supervisor
 - 9% crisis Intervention
- **Most Typical Strategies**
 - Demonstrate or model skills
 - Observation, feedback, and discussion
 - Sharing materials and resources

Top Qualification: Interpersonal Skills

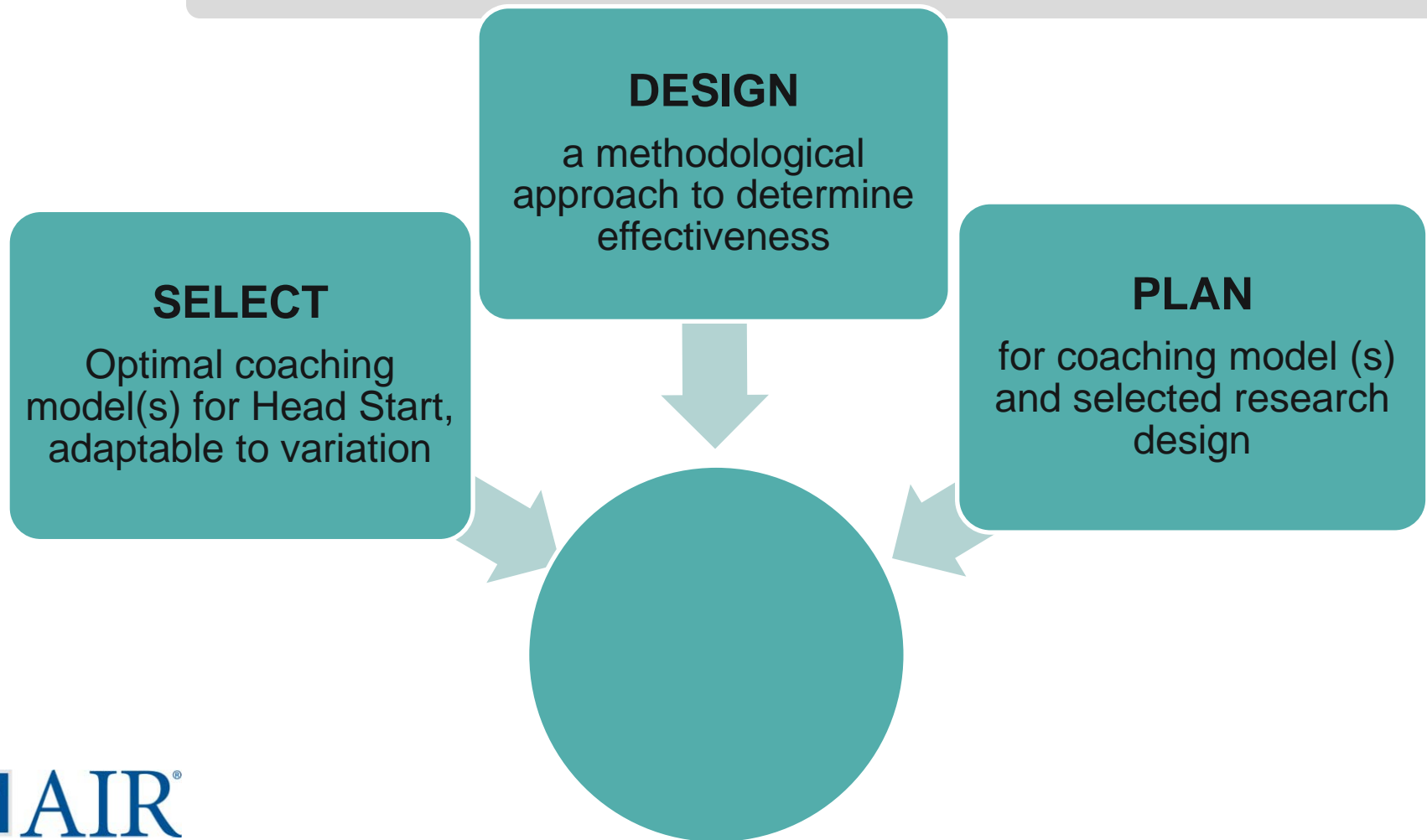


Next Steps: Informing Research and Practice

- Conceptual logic model
- Final ELMC report released 2013
- Head Start Professional Development (HSPD): Developing the Evidence for Best Practices in Coaching



HSPD: Developing the Evidence for Best Practices in Coaching



HSPD: Developing the Evidence for Best Practices in Coaching (2012-13)

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