

What Coherent Instruction Actually Requires

The Four Organizational Conditions That Make Instructional Coherence Possible

Everyone talks about instructional coherence. Very few organizations have defined what it actually requires of them. This brief lays it out plainly.

Coherence is not about making every classroom look the same. It is about building the organizational conditions that produce a consistent baseline of instructional quality across every classroom, every day. That is a fundamentally different project than standardization.

The Four Non-Negotiable Conditions

Clarity

Does everyone know what good instruction looks like here? Not in abstract terms. In specific, observable, agreed upon terms that your leadership team can articulate consistently. If your teachers would describe your instructional expectations differently from how your leadership team describes them, you do not have clarity. You have assumptions.

Alignment

Do your systems reinforce the same priorities? When a teacher is coached on questioning, does the walkthrough form look for questioning? Does the PD calendar support it? Does the principal's feedback reference it? If these systems are pointing in different directions, teachers receive conflicting signals and default to whatever feels safest, which is usually what they have always done.

Accountability

Is there a mechanism for knowing whether coherent instruction is actually happening? Not punitive accountability. Diagnostic accountability. Does your leadership team have a clear, honest picture of what instruction looks like across classrooms right now? If you cannot answer that question with confidence, your organization has a visibility problem.

Sustainability

Can you maintain instructional coherence without heroic individual effort? If coherent instruction in your building depends on one exceptional principal or one tireless coach, it is not coherent. It is fragile. Sustainable coherence is built into systems, structures, and organizational habits that outlast any single leader.

Most schools have clarity. Few have all four. The gap between one and four is where instructional improvement stalls.