



## Coaching with Match Teacher Residency

### The MTR Mission

Our program's mission is to create "jaw-droppingly good" first-year teachers. Like, the best you've ever seen, ever. And we only have about 60 days in which to do it. In other words, in about 3 months time, spread over most of a year, we have to get our trainees from near-zero teaching skills/knowledge to, "WOW, that guy is amazing! ...WHAT? He's a first-year teacher? There are only two words for that: SERIOUSLY SHOCKING!"

### The Teacher Residents

All of our teachers have a primary, Monday-Thursday job in the MatchCorps as tutors. This is an 11 month residential fellowship program (August through June) that's super selective: we had over 2,000 applicants last year for 100 slots. Each tutor works with 6-7 Match Community Day (Elementary), Middle, or High School students in small group or 1-on-1 tutorials every day. They also run extra-curriculars, coach sports, or serve as Teaching Assistants or Administrative Assistants.

About HALF of the Match Corps are also in our program, the Match Teacher Residency (MTR). MTR is a 12-month program (August through July) that fully includes all aspects of MatchCorps above, but is designed for those who know they want to teach in an urban school following their fellowship year. The purpose of this program is to create unusually effective, rock-star rookie teachers. Match Teacher Residents train with us on Fridays and Saturdays every week, in addition to their Monday-Thursday tutoring job. It's an intense year for them!

### The Philosophy

There are 4 parts to our philosophy as a program:

- 1.) No Excuses
- 2.) Focus on Classroom Management
- 3.) Practice
- 4.) Directness

#### **1.) No Excuses**

We are mainly training teachers for urban, No Excuses charter schools. Schools like Match, Roxbury Prep, Boston Collegiate, Edward Brooke, Boston Prep, KIPP, Achievement First, Uncommon Schools, etc.

Because we are training teachers to teach in a specific context, we are freed up to be much more specific and prescriptive in our training. That is, we can say, "We're going to train you how to give a demerit correctly," and it works because most of the schools we're sending people to have a demerit or demerit-like management system. We can say, "You have to care about posture," and it matches up with the expectations of most of the schools our people will end up in.

#### **2.) Focus on classroom management early and often**

We believe that most rookie teachers implode early on in their first year because of classroom management issues. Therefore, a lot of our training, particularly early in the program, is geared towards making our teachers very strong in classroom management.

None of our classroom management ideas are revolutionary. They're just laid out in a way that is simple ("moves") so our trainees can learn them step by step. We put an enormous amount of emphasis on our trainees practicing these moves until they become automatic.

### 3.) Practice

As a program, we are very focused on practice. We don't think good teaching can be learned sitting down. You have to do it, get feedback on it, and then do it again. We try to maximize "at-bats" of practice. We have our people practice specific moves, like giving directions, a LOT.

### 4.) Directness

Because we have so little time, and because we're training teachers for a specific context, we are very direct with our feedback.

In lots of teacher coaching situations we've seen, the coach kind of has to do a feedback dance. Lots of positive stuff has to be layered on before even a whiff of criticism can get in there. And then coach is forced to utter phrases like, "You might try..." and "I wonder if you could..." and "What do you think of..."

We have banished the feedback dance from our program.

We are clear with the trainees from the beginning that they will be getting very direct feedback, and that a lot of it is going to be critical. We say stuff like, "It's ok to be really terrible at something when you first start out, and what counts is not whether you start out great, but whether you can take feedback and use it to improve quickly."

They hear a lot of this kind of talk, and they read and talk about *Mindset*, by Carol Dweck, and they are told again and again that teaching is one thing in their very successful lives that they should NOT expect to be easy or failure-free. In fact, we sort of beat the dead horse of "you're going to fail" lots of times so they're not surprised by it when it happens.

So if you coach in our program, you can be very direct and specific. You can say things like, "When you are redirecting a student, you make a weird face like you just tasted something sour; you have to relax your face and not be scared to discipline," or "The kids were happy and engaged during your lesson, but your questions during Guided Practice weren't driving the Aim because you were filling in the difficult answers yourself. Let's go back to your lesson plan and rewrite all your questions."

This kind of specific, direct, and actionable feedback allows trainees to change small things quickly and see success.

### Structure of the Program

There are Six Phases of our program. Our people start with us in September.

Phase 1, in September and October, is a series of classes on classroom management, building relationships with students and parents, basic lesson planning and execution, using data, and creating a growth mindset for yourself and students.

Phase 2, in October, November, December, and early January, is simulated classroom teaching. We call it "Group of Six." Basically, there's a group of six trainees with one coach. One trainee gets up to teach. The other five act as students, and do all the things students tend to do, including misbehave, answer questions wrong, not pay attention, etc. The trainee teaches and manages the class, and the coach gives feedback to the trainee. Often it is "real-time" feedback – you stop them right in the middle of teaching, give a specific direction, and then make them implement the change on the spot. There are many rounds of this practice.

The goal of this phase is to establish the trainees' basic teaching skills even before they are in front of students. It's a safe space to make mistakes.

At the end of Phase 2, trainees go through what is known as the Gateway, which is a test of their basic teaching skills. MTR hires Match high school students to sit in a room, listen to a bunch of five-minute lessons by different MTR trainees. The trainees have to show, in their 5 minutes, that they can handle managing a classroom with poise and not get thrown off by the strange things that kids do.

The Gateway serves as a weeding-out point in our program. Trainees who do not progress far enough in their classroom management skills during Phase 2 fail the Gateway and leave the program. We consider this a totally healthy and necessary thing. In the past 3 years, we've found that failure to develop these basic teaching skills after so much practice portends a pretty terrible first-year classroom, an unhappy teacher, and unhappy kids who aren't learning much.

Phase 3 – running from late January through May – is spring student teaching. Those trainees who have passed the Gateway teach small classes of MATCH students on Fridays and Saturdays. The coaching here is still focused on classroom management, but there is much more feedback on instruction added in.

Phase 4 is the month of June, and consists mostly of unit planning for July.

Phase 5 is Summer Student Teaching. Our people teach summer school for a month. Depending on each trainee's needs, feedback here can focus on management, instruction, curriculum, or a mix of all three.

Phase 6 is known as Personal Training. It is coaching trainees in the fall at their teaching job.

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So that's our program! If you're interested in coaching or learning more about what we do, please email our Director of Coaching, Laura Mahajan, at [laura.mahajan@matcheducation.org](mailto:laura.mahajan@matcheducation.org).