Coaching Journal

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ITEC 7460

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October 16, 2015

Developing a Relationship for Coaching, Surveys, and Instructional Goals Established

Throughout this semester, I will be coaching my co-teacher who I have a strong foundational relationship with. Together, we feel comfortable communicating honestly and give each other constructive criticism as well as positive feedback on a daily basis. Since we already have a strong relationship, I did not spend too much time discussing personal things with my co-teacher during our sessions. Instead, different tools and strategies could work in our classroom. We also talked about strengths and weaknesses of these tools in an inclusion class.

My first coaching session was impromptu with my co-teacher. As we were planning our classroom one afternoon, my co-teacher was expressing some of her dissatisfactions with technology. At the beginning of the school year, our laptops were refreshed and our staff drive was wiped clean. Even for those teachers who were tech savvy. We were having difficulty finding our resources, using the new computers that did not quite work with our projectors (and still don't), and using new tools and software that have been pushed out to us.

Since the teacher I am coaching is a special education teacher, she works with many software programs that I am unfamiliar and she feels like there has not been proper training given to her on many of the tools she is required to use. Instead of just complaining, I suggested that we channel our frustrations and produce a result. We went issue by issue and listed possible solutions to each problem. These solutions are not fool proof, or even the best solution. However, these solutions allow us to work with the technology despite its shortcomings. The list we came up with includes the following:

Issue	Proposed Solution
New technology being given to use without professional learning	During the summer, I attended optional professional development on the Office 365 program. I offered to train her during our required weekly sessions on how to navigate and use the tool. For example, we recently implemented Microsoft 365, which has many different features. For the tech savvy teacher, this can be figured out with a little exploring. However, for teachers who are, "slow at learning technology," this is overwhelms them and causes them to shut down.
When professional learning is done, there is no follow-up.	Because we have each other to remain accountable, we can evaluate and implement the content at an appropriate pace. As a three man team, we design and plan together, which makes this easier to reflect on. If any outside assistance is needed, I have volunteered to be the liaison between the county office and our team.
Lacking basic computer skills needed in order to successfully use	Before fall break, I walked my co-teacher through how to create a PowerPoint with basic animations, sound effects, and transitions. This is a skill she indicated she wanted to learn, and something she could implement the week after fall break in our classroom. This built confidence and increased our ability to communicate as coach and coachee. The ability to make PowerPoints is something that she can do with the students.

When we discussed this, we realized how putting a plan in place for reflecting on professional development gave us more focus and incentive to try new things in our classrooms. This provided a strong foundation our coaching sessions. During our session, we also strategized ways on how to move my co-teacher up on the LoTi scale. When we began our sessions, she was at a one and our goal for the end of the coaching sessions was to have her at a three. As Knight states over and over again in his book, the most important part of coaching is developing relationships with the person or group of people you are coaching. This was a great starting point that allowed us to be realistic with one another. An essential part of coaching is making sure the coachee knows their opinions are valued. "If we are creating a learning partnership, if our partners are equal with us, if they are free to speak their minds and free to make real, meaningful choices, it follows that one of the most important choices they will make is how to make sense of whatever we are proposing they learn" (Knight, location 678). By sitting down and discussing

how apprehensive my co-teachers is about using technology for basic things, I am validating her current position as well as building a foundation for our coaching sessions.

Moving to a Two on the LoTi Scale: Creating Technology for the Teacher to Use.

The primary goal of the instructional coach is to use research backed practices to help teachers feel confident and to help students achieve maximum success. Using the LoTi scale helps me, " [collaborates] with teachers so they can choose and implement research-based interventions to help students learn more" (Kinght, location 458). I like the LoTi scale because it is all about student interaction technology. This puts the teacher in the facilitator seat and gives students ownership and responsibility in the learning process.

The day after our initial coaching session, my co-teacher and I sat down to put a plan in action. In our previous session, we decided that we need to gradually increase her comfort level with technology and slowly move up the LoTi scale. We both agreed that it would be best if she created a lesson for her to teach. Since we started this before Fall Break, we sat down with our plan books and found a day where we could use a new lesson. Then, we decided the content of the lesson. Finally, we went over the way we would present the lesson and what we would have the students do during this brief time of direct instruction.

When we returned from Fall Break, my students were assigned a Web Quest from my web design class. This Web Quest incorporated many higher order thinking skills and we were not sure how or what would stick with the students. My co-teacher decided that it would be best to do a foundational level PowerPoint to review the information taught on the Web Quest and see how much of the information the students retained.

My co-teacher strives to be excellent in each aspect of her career, so she decided she wanted to make a PowerPoint with both transitions and animations. I wanted to give her plenty of time to complete this without feeling stressed, so we decided to schedule it on the Thursday after Fall Break. Before finishing our face-to-face portion of the session, I went through the basics of how to insert transitions and animations with my co-teacher. She took notes, but was not too concerned since she has a son who is tech savvy to assist her over the break.

Over the break, my co-teacher diligently worked on the PowerPoint and we corresponded several times by email about the content and presentation. In addition to the PowerPoint presentation, she created CLOZE notes for the students to use while she was presenting. We have planning right before our two co-taught social studies classes, so we practiced the lesson and ran through the PowerPoint one last time before the students came.

 Once our fifth period came in and completed their warm-up, the presentation began. The presentation was concise and reflected the standard accurately. To our delight, most students did comprehend the content presented in the Web Quest and were able to answer the questions. As a result, the class period was more like a conversation than direct instruction.

Follow-Up and Next Steps

Follow-up is the crux of coaching. These detailed, specific conversations show what stuck with the candidate and what they need more help on to feel confident. For Knight's book, he looks at Jean Clark who talks about the importance of follow-up Clark states," recognizing teachers also provides an opportunity for follow-up and dialogue: "If you don't have the follow-up and you don't have the opportunity to continually reuse it and talk about it and dialogue about it, it's not going to stick" (Knight, location 4094).

Following my co-teacher's lesson, we both stayed after school together to discuss the implementation. The two of us were ecstatic about the students' participation and ability to discuss the material. The lesson went without any mishaps and the students enjoyed themselves. As my co-teacher glided throughout the room, I could tell that she was excited to have a chance to be the main presenter in the class. She was proud of her accomplishments and so was I! We talked about how the slides contained the appropriate amount of content and were sized so all students could easily see and read the material.

Because my co-teacher completed this project with such success, we felt that it would be appropriate if our next session focused on tools and strategies for the students to use. From there, she would choose the tool she felt most comfortable with and we would began planning and creating the next assignment. We scheduled a time to meet the next week of school. I needed to have a list of tools that she could as homework for the next session.

Tech Tools for Students to Use- Selecting a Tool

For our fourth session, my co-teacher and I met during our planning period and went through a list of five Web 2.0 tools that engaged students: PowToon, EdPuzzle, Kahoot, Quizizz, and Socrative. We have a wide array of learners in our co-taught classes, so we were very careful when we evaluated sources. Aside from developing relationships, choosing valid resources teachers and students want to use is essential to the value of instructional coaches. Knight echoes this thought by stating, "ICs and teachers should also consider the options for format, content,

location, resources, and the obstacles that might interfere with students' performing a given task successfully" (Knight, location 3315).

My first step in this process was an overview. I gave my co-teacher a brief overview of each tool, and we discussed the strengths and weakness of each tool and how it could connect to the content we were preparing on modern Middle Eastern contents. Although my co-teacher seemed to like the majority of the tools presented, she felt it would be powerful to have students view and interact with videos from the three modern conflicts we discuss: The Persian Gulf War, The War in Afghanistan, and The War in Iraq.

The tool that does the most effective job with this is EdPuzzle. I thought it was an excellent choice, and we settled on this tool. In order to differentiate this, I would make one higher level video with my voice and my co-teacher made a video with her voice. This way we could just simply tell students whose voice to find on the web page and they would not know the difference. We decided to use the same video, but differentiate based off of the audio notes feature. She would give the students who scored low on our recent scholastic reading inventory additional support and I would stretch the students who scored at and above grade level.

Creating Materials for Students to Use (3 sessions)

While using EdPuzzle, teachers can crop videos, add audio notes, record over the video's original audio, and insert quiz questions. For the videos on modern conflict, we felt the students would be best served by the audio notes and quiz questions. We use the same questions to asses, but inserted different audio notes. While this took more work than we had originally anticipated, the results were amazing. My co-teacher liked her product so much she decided to have her observation scheduled for this day!

When I first began coaching, I was extremely nervous and hesitant about seeming condescending during the process. However, once I immersed myself into the coaching process, I really saw how great it made my co-teacher feel to finally be able to conquer technology! This is not just meeting with a co-worker and showing them interesting techy tools; this is changing the way they teach and improving their confidence and connection with students. We also collaborating, which is great for observational data and cohesiveness as a team. Knight says, "Collaboration, then, is not one person telling another what to do; collaboration is people working together as partners, reflecting and cocreating together" (Knight, location 741). Because we both have ownership in these lessons, we are both more engaged with the content and create content that works for students regardless of ability or learning style. Our different backgrounds are a great strength of us co-creating curriculum.

Implementing EdPuzzle and Quizizz (Two days- four class periods)

After an extensive amount of time preparing the materials for EdPuzzle, we implemented it with students in a Web Quest format. The students had two days to watch the videos we made to help teach them the content, and prepare them for the types of test questions we would be asking on the assessment.

When I began my observation, I began to watch my co-teacher and my students through a different lens. In this coaching role, it is best that I try to make myself neutral. I love how Knight states how ICs should act during an observation. He says, "As an observer, the IC should try to remove his personal judgments from the activity of observing. Rather than seeing himself as evaluating the teacher, the coach should see himself as a second set of eyes in the room, using

the observation form or other data-gathering methods as tools for recording relevant data about

how the lesson proceeds" (Knight, location 2571). In my observation, I was trying to take it all

in, seeing what doesn't work and what doesn't, and jotting down bullets for conversation.

As usual, the students took a while to access the website, but by the time they got settled it

was an incredible experience. Because my co-teacher had ownership of this project, she was

gloating the whole time. The students were fully engaged because they were constantly

answering questions and interacting with the content. At then end of the day, it was a complete

success. Students got to work at their own pace, the teachers got to facilitate, and the students got

to engage with our content by working with videos that showed primary footage.

As for Quizizz, the results were still successful, but did not have as much of an impact as the

EdPuzzle activity. Whenever we implement something with cell phones, we always have a few

students whose phones do not comply or that do not navigate the app correctly. While it was

successful for most students, the massive amount of troubleshooting that took place was

frustrating for both of us.

Final Thoughts and Follow-up Plan Developed

After we implemented these things, we talked about how and if we would implement them in

the future. We decided that we might use Quizizz again, but if we do we felt like it would be best

to implement it in the computer lab. We loved EdPuzzle, but agreed that it would be too time

intensive to create a Web Quest for each topic. However, we said we might want to do it as a

whole group as a listening sheet. Overall this coaching experience got us out of our comfort

zones and forced us to try new tools with our students. In the future, we are looking forward to

using more technology tools and materials that we create together for all students. This was the

last formal part of our coaching journey and a critical piece. Knight states, "The collaborative

exploration of data taking place during this meeting is not an opportunity for the IC to share his

"expert" opinion on what the teachers did right or wrong. More than anything else, it is a

learning conversation where both parties use data as a point of departure for dialogue" (Knight,

location 2550). These follow-ups were the perfect way to review our current standing and take

the next steps forward to becoming the most effective teachers that we can be.

References

Knight, Jim (2007-05-01). Instructional Coaching: A Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction SAGE Publications. Kindle Edition.