

Coaching Journal

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Coaching Session 1: 10-3-18**Strategies**

The first coaching session was one-on-one with my student teacher in art education, Ms. Danielson, who also happens to be an employee of our school as the media center paraprofessional. Although she is currently working in the media center, her previous experience was as a paraprofessional in kindergarten, so her knowledge, understanding, and implementation of technology was lacking. In completing her student teaching, she is integrating visual arts with media center lessons, and teaching occasional lessons within my classroom as well. Being that we are in a new school building, we have an abundance of technology available, and she requested coaching in use of technology for instruction and assessment. In this initial meeting, I explained the scheduling for coaching sessions, as well as the partnership approach as described in Knight. “Whether they are observing a class, modeling an instructional practice, building an emotional connection with a teacher, or providing constructive suggestions, coaches use the partnership principles as a point of reference (Knight, 2007, p.40). We took time to evaluate her goals as a student teacher, the requirements of her education program, and how we could align our coaching goals with our school improvement plan. “Setting reasonable and realistic goals that are linked to the school’s educational goals and curricular standards is a critical first step toward establishing a solid coaching relationship and helping teachers integrate information and communication technology into their classroom activities” (Coaching Whitepaper, 2011, p.14). We discussed the technology that was available, including the Simplicity tv, Recordex device, Smart Notebook, Office 365 including OneDrive, and tools such as FlipGrid and Seesaw. Concepts discussed involved use of OneNote or Seesaw for digital journals, FlipGrid for teacher instruction and student assessment, and use of the Recordex with the Simplicity tv for instruction, including the recording and playback of lessons. “Offering choices does not mean

that everything is up for grabs”, but as her partner, I wanted to give Ms. Danielson a say in where we started (Knight, 2007, p.41). These are tools and techniques that the student teacher has limited experience with, but has attended professional learning that explained how these technologies are used within varying classrooms. One of the difficulties was just knowing where to begin, as she is teaching six different grade levels, kindergarten through fifth, and is overwhelmed by general requirements of her education program, in addition to technology use. “The first stages in helping teachers develop and implement a coaching project is determining the teacher’s technology skills and instructional strategies. This information helps the coach and teacher to define a lesson or project that the teacher can successfully implement, or to identify the kind of coaching, resources or skills the teacher might need to carry out the project” (Coaching Whitepaper, 2011, p.14). We decided that the use of the Recordex device and Simplicity tv was of most importance for instruction, so I demonstrated how I use these tools in my own classroom, and then we worked through a mock lesson in her classroom within the media center. In introducing the After-Action Form, I explained the importance of receiving feedback about the first session and specifically the training using the Recordex and Simplicity tv. After evaluating my coaching session based on her feedback, I will develop a plan for proceeding with the second session, and provide her with feedback as part of our equal partnership. “Equality does not mean that coaches and teachers have equal knowledge on every topic, but it does mean that the collaborating teacher’s opinions are as important as the coach’s, and both points of view are worth hearing” (Knight, 2007, p.41). My After-Action form is available for viewing in Appendix 1.

Skill and Affective Changes

A prominent change I noticed was Ms. Danielson's willingness to implement tools for instruction. She had previously been content with her current teaching method of direct demonstration to engage students in an art lesson, and assessment of student understanding through observation. She had been interested in making a change, but was also wrapping her mind around teaching art in general, and technology seemed to her to be an extra step that could hinder her progress instead of help. Even though she was willing to learn, I wasn't convinced that she would actually be able to implement these tools in her classroom on a daily basis, as we discussed that it is easy to revert to what works in the moment.

Reflection on Challenges and Solution

A challenge that I've found is finding time to observe Ms. Danielson and assist with implementation of technology while an actual class taking place. Because she is student teaching while also fulfilling her duties as a paraprofessional, her class schedule is the same as mine. Therefore, I am teaching art at the same time that she is teaching art. Although the arrangement is beneficial to her position, it is not the typical student teacher arrangement in that I am unable to supervise her within my classroom. In discussing this dilemma, we realized that each of us has an open block during the schedule at different times. To solve the problem, we agreed that when either of us has an open block, we will observe in the other's classroom. She can observe my instruction using the Recordex and Simplicity tv, and I can plan to assist or team-teach when I have my open block, with a goal of increasing her skills and confidence using those technology tools.

Coaching Session 2: 10-24-18

Strategies

In following the partnership approach, I have assessed Ms. Danielson's needs, worked with her to set goals based on her student teaching and our school's improvement plan, modeled and observed technology use, and given and received feedback. "Just giving a teacher a technology tool and expecting him or her to maximize its learning potential is a strategy destined for failure. A majority of teachers, including those raised in a digital age, do not have the knowledge or skill set to use technology effectively to maximize student learning" (Coaching Whitepaper, 2011, p.2). During the second session, I worked with Ms. Danielson on incorporating further technology into her specific lessons. One of her goals was to use the Recordex device to actually record herself teaching a lesson, so that she could use the recorded video for instruction purposes during subsequent lessons. Previously, I coached her on using this device in connection with the Simplicity tv so that students could easily view on the screen what she was demonstrating at her teaching table. The use of a recording would provide an opportunity for her to assist students and reinforce learning at each step along the way. It alleviates repetition and provides for a one-on-one approach with students verses whole group instruction. "Teachers who have experienced technology as a teaching tool for professional learning, and who in the process have developed the skills for powerful use of technology in the classroom, can greatly improve student learning" (Coaching Whitepaper, 2011, p.6). During our meeting before school, I demonstrated the steps to creating and playing back the recording, including how to stop and start, as well as incorporating a split screen so that she could use the video along with internet resources. In assisting her class during my open block, I was able to help set up the recording aspect so that she could practice using that video with her other fifth grade classes who were participating in the same lesson. By using the partnership approach, we were able to work alongside each other to make the recording happen, using reflection in action.

“Reflection in action occurs while people are in the midst of an activity” (Knight, 2007, p.48).

We made plans to record her teaching the next part of this lesson ahead of time, so that when I am observing this same class during the next time I have my open block, I can evaluate her effectiveness in using this tool on her own. We decided to complete another After-Action Report together to reflect upon our work, evaluate what could be improved, and further develop our plan. “One of the strengths of peer coaching is that it provides for structured opportunities for reflection that help teachers improve their instruction. The peer coaching program provides coaches with a variety of tools to gather input, debrief participants, and analyze results” (Coaching Whitepaper, 2011, p.15).

Skill and Affective Changes

Ms. Danielson was very open to expanding her understanding of the Recordex device, although again, she was fearful that it would be too complicated and impede with what she wanted the students to learn and accomplish within that time frame. I realized that merely demonstrating use of this tool would not ensure that she would try it in her classroom, so I made certain that when I had the opportunity to be in her classroom, I would assist her in trying this during a lesson. What we found was that the time interruption was minimal, and a few students were already familiar with this form of instruction in previous school settings. Although it was still evident that Ms. Danielson was more concerned with her actual teaching rather than the use of technology, we also discovered that using the recording with subsequent classes was more engaging for the students and saved time and energy on Ms. Danielson’s part, that she could devote to one-on-one instruction as the lesson unfolded. This gave her a much more positive attitude towards use of technology to enhance instruction.

Reflection on Challenges and Solution

A challenge I uncovered during this session is being aware of the concept she is teaching during the time that I will be in her classroom, so that I am showing up with a plan to observe and assist with a direct focus on technology. During my first open block, I realized that while I was walking in with the goal of observation, I naturally spent more time working through the lesson with her as a supervising teacher, as she had questions about the content and assessment. In order to truly observe and assist with specific technology, I needed to be aware of what she was teaching ahead of time, and answer any content questions prior to the classroom visit. We were both aware of this as my time in her classroom ended, and decided that she would email me her lesson plan at least three days in advance, and that we would address any concerns unrelated to technology in a separate conversation. We also decided that it would be helpful for me to use an observation form during my visits to her classroom, to keep the visit focused on technology, and to provide feedback for her as a follow-up tool. This Observation/Feedback form is available for viewing in Appendix 2.

Coaching Session 3: 11-14-18

Strategies

During our third session, we reviewed Ms. Danielson's goals, as well as all feedback from prior sessions, including the classroom visits. It was important to take into account Ms. Danielson's views on the success of our coaching sessions as well as implementation of technology. "ICs who operate from the partnership principles enter relationships with teachers believing that the knowledge and expertise of teachers is as important as the knowledge and expertise of the coach" (Knight, 2007, p.50). Feeling that we had met her goals for instruction, we did not see the need to add FlipGrid or other recording programs into her training, as she had yet to use technology for assessment purposes. Because our school uses OneNote within Office

365, we decided that creating and implementing digital journals for the specific fifth grade class that I was observing would be our next step. The journals would provide an opportunity for students to create artist statements, list the steps of a process, and reflect upon their own work using specific criteria. Many classes already have OneNote profiles, so we needed to speak with this homeroom's teacher for permission to create a Visual Art digital journal within their profiles. The homeroom teacher was eager to allow this, as she felt it could only enhance her students' knowledge of OneNote and provide further practice for all involved. "And when teachers can work collaboratively to share ideas and improve teaching practices, a community of practice can emerge to provide a scaffold for support and growth" (Coaching Whitepaper, 2011, p.6). We set a goal of having the digital journals set up by the next time that I would be visiting, and created five student journals together during this session. During my classroom visit, Ms. Danielson will be instructing the students on how to access the journal through OneNote, and then create an artist statement based upon their learning goals. Students will have finished the lesson that I had previously observed, and I will be available to assist students with accessing their journal and finding the area to type their statement. The students' artist statements will be used as a means of assessment, and use of digital journals provides an engaging method for students to document their own learning. "Coaching support for teachers is a powerful means of both modeling and harnessing the potential of technology to improve teaching and learning. Teachers who receive coaching in the use of technology tools to improve student learning, and who learn from and collaborate with peers via professional learning communities, will develop confidence and effectiveness in designing and supporting technology-rich environments that maximize student learning" (Coaching Whitepaper, 2011, p.3). We will continue the conversation through analyzation of the Observation/Feedback form during the classroom visit

as well as the After-Action report for follow-up, with the goal of expanding use of digital journals within Ms. Danielson's art lessons. "By encouraging teachers' voices, through dialogue, and by observing teachers' reflection, ICs demonstrate that they have faith in teachers' abilities to invent new useful applications of the content they are exploring" (Knight, 2007, p.50).

Skill and Affective Changes

Ms. Danielson was excited about this opportunity to branch into assessment through technology, but also fearful that the technology may be inadequate or that she would lose student engagement through the process. Previously, she had assessed through student observation, questioning, and closing activities such as a ticket out the door. While these required self-assessment, Ms. Danielson worried that students would not be able to develop a statement on their own, and that accessing the journals individually may take up too much time. Although she had observed my use of digital journals with a fourth grade class, she wasn't sure that she would be able to provide the correct steps of be able to troubleshoot, and that the majority of this lesson would be about using OneNote itself as opposed to the actual creation of the artist statement. I suggested that we ask for three volunteers from the class to come by before school so that we could implement a mini-lesson to work out any kinks, and then those students could also be available in case multiple students needed assistance during their class time. This worked out well in that when we met, none of these students had any issues accessing their journals through the OneNote platform, and understood the process well enough to assist struggling peers. Although we did need to spend more time outside of our normal planning time to practice, Ms. Danielson believes this contributed to her confidence in teaching digital journaling as a lesson, and therefore to overall student success and engagement.

Reflection on Challenges and Solution

A common challenge throughout the coaching sessions was helping Ms. Danielson overcome her hesitancy to use technology in an actual art class setting. Her many requirements of her degree program had technology low on the list, although it was expected as a component of her teaching. I believe having a technology coach that was also an elementary art teacher was beneficial in convincing her that it could be done and that we would be working through it together. I also had to recognize that we had two different teaching styles, so although her observation of my use of technology was helpful, it was even more important that I worked with her in her classroom towards her specific goals for her students. I had to separate myself from her actual art lessons and focus specifically on the technology, which was difficult at first. Use of the forms for feedback was instrumental in shifting my focus, and provided a way to begin the conversation at our next coaching session. Not only did Ms. Danielson's confidence increase, but I developed confidence in my ability to coach a teacher in use of technology within my same subject matter. In the future, I plan to further develop feedback forms for myself and the individuals I am coaching, as I recognize that one form does not fit all. I look forward to continuing to develop my strengths as an instructional technology coach.

References

Coaching Whitepaper. (2011). Retrieved November 15, 2018, from

https://www.softchalkcloud.com/lesson/files/GRyv9swdxK8zkr/ISTE_Whitepaper_June_Final_Edits.pdf

Knight, J. (2007). *Instructional Coaching: a Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Appendix 1

After-Action Report

Teacher _____ Subject/Grade Level _____

Technology Tool(s) _____

Strategy/Goal _____

What was supposed to happen? _____

What happened? _____

What accounts for the differences? _____

What should be done differently next time? _____

Additional Comments _____

Appendix 2

Observation/Feedback Form

Teacher _____ Class _____

Lesson Title _____

Lesson Objectives _____

Technology Objectives _____

Observations of Lesson Implementation _____

Needs Assessed _____

Assistance Offered _____

Ongoing Feedback _____
