Coaching Journal
Rebekah Yoder

1st Session:

Strategies:

Brooke is a first grade teacher, and this year she started to get very excited about using technology in her classroom. She has been teaching for many years and had not really used technology extensively until this past year. As a result, she was very excited, but she was not sure which tools to use to best support her students and what they needed. She approached me asking for help, so in this case, the enrollment process was done without any of the methods that Knight (2007) discussed. She simply knew I was the technology coach, and we had talked and even worked together some the year before when I was still a classroom teacher, so we had already formed a good relationship as colleagues.

We set up a time to meet after school and discuss what she would like to do with her students. In one of my professional developments I had led, I discussed an app called Movenote that allows students to take or upload a picture of something and then record themselves talking about the picture. As I talked with Brooke, I discovered that she loved the idea of Movenote, but she was not sure how to use it with her first graders. I suggested that she use it in her guided reading rotations. Her students could take a picture of the book they were in the process of reading and then record themselves summarizing the book. Through this meeting, I used the identify strategy to determine "the teaching practices to be implemented in the teacher's classroom" (Knight, 2007, p. 99).

Skill and Affective Changes:

After the meeting, Brooke seemed very excited about the possibilities of using this app with her students, and she was also more knowledgeable of how to actually operate the app. She

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saw the value in students verbalizing their thinking instead of just writing down their book summary on a piece of paper. This meeting gave her a direction to move in as she began the process of technology integration. She now has a plan for what to do with this app, and she believes that it will be very effective for her students. I believe that the relationship that the two of us already had made her more receptive to implementing my suggestion. She has always seemed to like and respect me, and the fact that she was the one to initiate this technology assistance also made her open to what I had to say.

Reflection on Challenges and Solution:

I felt very good about this coaching session. Brooke was very receptive to the information that I gave her, and she appeared to be very excited to get started with this app in her classroom. I did not face any challenges when using this strategy. This teacher is one of the absolute best teachers in the entire school, and because of that, she knew that technology was the next big thing and she wanted to be a part of it. According to Knight (2007), teacher and coach share the strategy of identification. She identified the app that she wanted to use and the content area she wanted to use it in with her students, and then I helped her come up with a way to utilize it effectively. So as a result, I definitely saw this strategy in action as I worked with her – effective coaching must be a partnership with both teacher and coach working together as equals.

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2nd Session:

Strategies:

After Brooke and I worked for several weeks to get Movenote up and running in her classroom, she asked me if there was another Web 2.0 tool that she could teach her students. I immediately thought about Thinglink because of how perfect it would be for the social studies and science review activities she does. I explained to her what the tool does and then I walked her through the process of using the program. Since this was a brand new program for her, I suggested modeling the program for her students, and she jumped at the idea. I used a lot of Tricia's suggestions for model lessons as I worked with Brooke's class (Knight, 2007). I had worked with Brooke's class several times throughout the year, so I already knew most of them, but as they were entering my computer lab and getting settled, I talked with them informally. Once I began the lesson, I reviewed the social studies content they had already learned that I was going to integrate into this Thinglink lesson. As I modeled how to use Thinglink, I had lots of interaction with the students. I had volunteers come up to my computer and help me go through the process of creating a project on this website. In addition, I had students go to their own computer and complete each step as it was modeled up on the board. Also, as I talked, I used the word "we" a lot to drive home the point that Brooke and I were in this together. As I taught and modeled, Brooke sat there and took lots of notes, but she also interjected her own ideas and suggestions when appropriate.

Skill and Affective Changes:

Modeling Thinglink for her students helped Brooke to better understand the program, and she immediately began implementing it into her daily activities. Her students were also very

excited about it, and any time they saw me in the hallway they would tell me about the newest

thing they had done with Thinglink. When we talked about the modeling later, Brooke told me

that she loved how I had the students very actively involved in the process of learning about

Thinglink instead of them just sitting there while I talked and showed them how to use the

program. She said that she would now do that same thing when teaching new programs to her

students.

Reflection on Challenges and Solution:

I believe that this coaching session went very well. To be honest, I did not face any

challenges using the modeling strategy. I think it is very important for teachers to understand

how to teach a new technology program effectively, and that was what Brooke was specifically

watching for during this modeling time. According to Knight (2007), modeling is such a great

way for teachers to actually visualize and understand how to teach a new concept for students. In

this example, Brooke specifically learned a teaching strategy for introducing new technology,

and she absolutely loved it. This coaching session truly showed me the value of modeling. As a

young teacher, I have been nervous to offer a lot of modeling opportunities simply because there

are so many experienced teachers at my school. However, it was so encouraging to see how

much Brooke learned from the modeling session, so I now have more of a vision for how to

begin utilizing modeling with my teachers – focusing on the process of teaching a technology

tool.

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3rd Session:

Strategies:

About a week later, I met with Brooke again to follow up with her on how things have been going as she has used Movenote and Thinglink with her students. As a result, I used Knight's strategy of reflection in our meeting. As Knight stated, "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, 2007, p. 25). Sitting down with her and just hearing her talk about her experiences with these two programs was very helpful to both her and me. As we talked, she mentioned some concerns she had, and I was able to help her come up with ways to deal with the issues that arose. In addition, I suggested having a place on her eCLASS page to showcase all this great student work for the parents to see, and she loved that idea, so I helped her get that set up. This debriefing/reflection time was very beneficial to both of us because it allowed us each to pick the other one's brain as we came up with solutions and next steps.

Skill and Affective Changes:

Brooke is just such a positive person, and she is always so enthusiastic and excited after we have completed a coaching session. She truly is hungry for knowledge, and she wants to learn all sorts of ways to utilize technology effectively with her students. She showed me the student work that was done on Movenote and Thinglink, and I was blown away. It was very evident that she used these programs to truly enhance her teaching and her students' learning. It was a great way to see how my coaching truly affected her classroom because she came up with such great

ways to utilize both programs with her students. She used my suggestions and then built on them to come up with new ways to use the programs. It truly was very exciting to see!!

Reflection on Challenges and Solution:

This coaching session also went very well. Every coaching session I have had with Brooke has gone very smoothly, and I think one huge reason for this is the mutual respect we have for one another. That goes a long way. I also realized how important the reflection component is to effective coaching. If I just work with a colleague a couple times and do not provide times for reflection, then the coaching will not be as beneficial. According to Knight, "one of the most important choices teachers will make is how to make sense of whatever it is they are learning with their IC" (Knight, 2007, p. 47). Now I know that I must provide time for that. Brooke loved the opportunity to sit down with me and just process through how things were going and what she still wanted to learn. In addition, I learned things through this reflection process too – Brooke had some great ideas for using these apps that I had never thought about before. Reflection truly is a process that benefits both the teacher and the coach.

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References

Knight, J. (2007). *Instructional Coaching: A Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction*.

Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.