

COACHING JOURNAL

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On the first day of coaching with Mrs. G, I introduced a tool called Plickers. One of our school's goals is to "develop and deliver flexible formative assessments in all core content areas for monitoring student progress and adjusting instruction to meet individual student learning needs." We also strive to promote positive behavior and effectively model student learning and engagement. With this in mind, learning more about my partner through the provided surveys (Technology Usage and Adaptor Survey) and through conversation, we decided to focus on Mrs. G's goals of introducing a new technology component each quarter and working on engaging students while maintaining appropriate classroom behavior. I learned about peer coaching from the *ISTE Whitepaper* article and thought that this would be a good method to use for coaching. In the *ISTE Whitepaper* article it states that "One of the strengths of peer coaching is that it provides for structured opportunities for reflection that help teachers improve their instruction." In our meeting I started a conversation, restating goals and how I would first model the lesson and how to use Plickers. I showed Mrs. G an example that I created for a lesson with my class and then we worked together to make sure she was signed in and that she understood how to use Plickers for when she taught on her own. We agreed to use the Instructional Coaching Observation Form for observing and follow up discussion.

During this coaching experience I decided to use "The Big Four" teaching practices from Jim Knight's *Instructional Coaching: A Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction* where I focused on the first strategy which is *Behavior* (Knight, p.142). I noticed from a previous visit that Mrs. G had to speak with a few students multiple times so I made note of it as something that we could work on. I believe that the coaching session went fairly well. The good thing is that my partner is already excited about learning new technology tools and engaging her students while promoting positive behavior. Most of the students were engaged, however, there were a

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few who had their challenges. Mrs. G and I discussed how we thought things went and ways in which we could continue to improve student engagement. I suggested some ideas I read from Knight's book that talked about *teaching expectations* and *opportunities to respond* (Knight, p.143,146). She was open and decided to give my suggestions a try. I believe that we are off to a good start.

In this second coaching session Mrs. G and I worked together to model a math lesson and strategies that I had previously discussed with her which included the *Behavior* skill from "The Big Four" teaching practices. We talked about giving more attention and praise to students who are displaying the desired behavior opposed to giving so much attention to the ones that are not. (Knight, 2007) "Teachers should give more attention to the kinds of behavior they want to encourage than they do to the behavior they want to discourage."(p. 143) As we came to a close with our lesson I introduced Kahoot to the students and they were really excited. I wanted to keep in mind Mrs. G's goals, so I thought it would be fun for the students to learn about this technology tool. Kahoot allows students to get more practice in what was taught and can be used to assess student learning. They all had individual laptops where they logged in using the given code from teacher and explored a fun activity that extended practice of multiplication and division problems.

Afterwards, we used the "After-Action Report" (Knight, p.131) to touch basis on how the lesson went. I think that there are definitely some improvements since the last session. Students appear to be a little more alert and showing that they understand what is expected of them. I noticed that there wasn't as much redirecting going on when compared to the last session. My partner seems to be comfortable with implementing "The Big Four" teaching practices which is

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great. At first I was nervous about how I would start off with coaching and getting my partner to feel comfortable about the practices that we would be integrating but now that I am in the act of this process, I am beginning to see how the realities of coaching and the course literature are connecting. I believe that as I continue to coach things will become clearer and I will be able to support more of my partners need. We will continue to work on strategies and skills that will support increase in student engagement as well as managing appropriate classroom behavior. I will continue to reflect on ways to improve my practices with coaching.

For my final session with Mrs. G, I used Knight's *Instructional Coaching: A Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction* where I focused on one of the strategies called *Formative Assessment* and used the skill *developing appropriate, high-quality assessments* (Knight, pg.170). With this strategy I thought that it would be good to use a tool called Spiral. Spiral offers four different assessments in which students can collaborate with one another using technology and display engaged learning. The awesome thing about it is that teachers can design different assessments that they can use again at another time or share with colleagues and then also use the tool to reflect on student data because it saves student responses and grades.

Referring back to our goals, I knew that using Spiral would definitely attract all of the students' attention because everyone had a task to complete on their laptops as they listened, answered questions, and had discussions with their peers. Not only did using Spiral promote student engagement while displaying appropriate behavior but it was also another tool that Mrs. G could add to her repertoire.

I think that this coaching session went really well. I am feeling a lot more confident with coaching and I think that my partner Mrs. G is also enjoying the new ideas and tools that I have

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shared. We are learning so much from each other and I believe that the students have also greatly benefited from this experience. I believe that reading Knight's *Instructional Coaching: A Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction* and using "The Big Four" teaching practices was a good start for a new coach as myself. There was a lot of informative information that helped guide my thinking and allowed me to see how to explore different tactics while coaching. The most challenging thing for me during this process was identifying how to get started. I was nervous about how to approach coaching and was eager to do well. I am a lot more confident now and I look forward to my coaching journey. In the future, I hope that I can be a great tool for teachers and students as I continue to learn and sharpen my skills.

References

Knight, Jim. (2007). *Instructional coaching: A partnership approach to improving instruction*.

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ISTE Whitepaper article (2011)