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ITEC 7460 – Professional Learning and Technology Innovation

Coaching Journal

**February 21, 2014**

 Today I met with Ms. M. to discuss her responses to the group-developed Teaching with Technology Profile. I had some questions about her response that she utilized student-owned mobile devices as I was under the impression that she did not allow students to use any electronics in her classroom. Ms. M. stated that these mobile devices were used by students on their own at home. Ms. M. did respond on the survey that she utilizes test prep websites, Google Apps, PowerPoint, TeacherTube, SchoolTube, and YouTube. When we discussed this response, she told me that she really utilizes primarily PowerPoint within the classroom and referenced her response to the survey that she is consistently afraid that technology will wind up not working, and that is why she does not typically use it. Although she responded on the survey that she utilizes interactive voting devices like iRespond, she told me she does not actually use these because they are “too big of a hassle.” She also indicated on her survey that she posts student work to the internet monthly and that students digitally collaborate with peers or experts bimonthly. Although she affirmed that during our meeting, I spoke with my daughter who is in one of her classes, and this is not actually taking place.

I am trying to focus on maintaining a partnership approach as advocated by Knight (2007) to this coaching, and this is helping as so far, Ms. M. does not seem to view me as an enemy. I have stressed to Ms. M. that I am excited to work with her as an equal (Knight, 2007, pg. 40), and she seems open to sharing ideas with me as well. I asked Ms. M. if she would be willing to attempt Socrative as this would allow students to take tests online and provide instant grading for her. She said that she is not as it is against school policy for students to use electronic devices during school hours. This was frustrating as it is not entirely accurate. Students may use electronics at the teacher’s discretion for school-related tasks. I use Socrative frequently, and this has been supported by the principal. I have a feeling that her refusal to use Socrative has more to do with not wanting to upload her tests or fear that students will abuse the use of technology in her classroom. I am wondering if this is due to potential issues with classroom management.

**March 5, 2014**

 Today I met with Ms. M. to discuss her responses to the group-developed Adopter Level Survey. Ms. M. is definitely not a leader in technology adoption. She does not own a smart phone and is not quick to purchase new technology. She indicated that it is simply not a priority for her, and Ms. M. confirmed this in our session. She does own a desktop computer, but she sees no reason to purchase a laptop as she is not interested in utilizing one at home. Interestingly, although she mentioned in her Teaching with Technology Profile that she believes classroom technology is unreliable or outdated, she contradicted that in her Adopter Level Survey. I am wondering if the reliability of the technology is actually the issue, or if she is just trying to find excuses to not utilize it? I am trying to focus on respecting her voice (Knight, 2007, pg. 43) and not forcing my own opinions on her. This is harder than I thought it would be! Ms. M. did indicate an interest in learning about new technology from innovative students and colleagues. Ms. M. continues to affirm that she is interested in learning new technologies. I tried bringing up Socrative again, and she again vetoed that. When I asked her what kinds of technology she felt would be useful to have in her classroom, she told me she did not really know what would be beneficial. While I hope that she will eventually come around to Socrative as it is supported by the principal, I am not holding out a lot of hope about this at this point.

This is definitely different than how I thought this would go. It is really frustrating to get shot down with every suggestion. I am going to focus on finding some new preparatory sites for Geography. I know that I saw some several years ago that were helpful when I was teaching World History. I think that Ms. M. has been teaching in much the same way as she teaches now for many years, and I am not sure that I picked a great person to coach. She seems to be very set in her ways, and I definitely feel like she is resistant. I have to wonder if she agreed to me coaching her because she was hoping it would get the principal and administrators to leave her alone. However, if I continue to approach her as a partner and an equal, I may be able to get her to buy into some new technology.

**March 12, 2014**

 Today I met with Ms. M. and tried a different approach. She has been very resistant to change or implementing Socrative thus far. Instead, I found a fun mapping website that I used to use in World History and U.S. History (<http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/Geography.htm>). We sat down during our session and played with the software. For the first time, I actually saw some excitement about new technology! I think I may have finally found the key to Ms. M. Up until this point, I think I was being misled by some misconceptions about Ms. M. in our department (Knight, 2007, pg. 61). Ms. M. is the oldest teacher in the department, and I have continually heard since I came to Kell that she will not ever change, that she hates new technology, and that she is too set in her ways. I have gotten along well with Ms. M. since I met her; however, I think that subconsciously I was letting these misconceptions fuel my sessions with her. It is not that Ms. M. dislikes technology, it is just that she is somewhat set in her ways about what she is willing to implement.

Today, after we looked through the mapping website, I asked her to show me some of the webquests that she has students do. They are amazing! Webquests have always been something that I have a hard time designing, and she pointed me to some great sites that I can now share with the other Geography teacher. Ms. M. seemed to really feel better about this coaching process when she saw that I genuinely wanted to learn from her as well. Knight (2007) is absolutely right – “instructional coaches should expect to get as much as they give (pg. 50).” By doing this, I saw an actual change in Ms. M.’s entire demeanor. I am starting to actually see why instructional coaching can be so rewarding. I have to admit that the last two sessions really had me down. I am not one to give up, but today was definitely a positive one!

**March 21, 2014**

 A few days ago, I did my first technology workshop with Social Studies on EverFi (kellsseverfi.weebly.com). Ms. M. seemed to be somewhat overwhelmed by the workshop, so we scheduled today’s session to go through some of the possibilities with EverFi. One thing I really focused on was the Ignition course. This course teaches students the importance of being responsible online and how to stay safe. I was hopeful that this course might be of interest to Ms. M. as she is somewhat limited in her technology usage in the classroom. She was thrilled! She loved the animations and the clear and concise lessons. She actually even stated that she may be willing to implement this next year. Not a complete victory, but it is progress! I think it is possible that Ms. M. has finally moved into the preparation stage of change (Knight, 2007, pg. 86). She is preparing for change at the beginning of next school year and seems open to utilizing EverFi. I think the students will really enjoy this. I am so relieved to finally have her out of the pre-contemplation and contemplation stages (pg. 85). I do understand some of her resistance to implementing a great deal of change this school year. With the snow weeks, all teachers are behind on the content for this semester. If I can get her definitely on board for using EverFi Ignition next year, I think her students will really enjoy this.

 One thing that I find really interesting after this fourth session is that I am seeing myself change as well. I think that when I began this process with Ms. M., I was a little cocky about all of it. I love technology, and I thought that just by being excited about it, I could get someone else on board. I failed to truly see Ms. M. as a partner, and I think that was what made Ms. M. so resistant. By stopping by to chat with her when she has time outside of our coaching sessions, she has really opened up. When I finally asked her about her webquests, I saw a real change in her demeanor. This change was evidenced by how open she was to EverFi today. I have a feeling that I am learning more about myself than I am teaching Ms. M. about technology.

**April 8, 2014**

 After the lead up to Spring Break and then Spring Break itself, I was relieved when Ms. M. wanted to schedule a session to talk about EverFi again today. She actually did some playing around in the training courses I set up while she was on Spring Break. She had some questions about how I incorporate grades for students when I use the Financial Literacy course. From there, I opened up my dashboard in EverFi, and Ms. M. was able to spend some time playing on the dashboard and looking at the types of data she will gain from using the Ignition course. As Knight (2007) stressed, dialogue is key to figuring out what a teacher’s next steps should be (pg. 126). Today as we played with EverFi, I encouraged Ms. M. to go back into the training class and talk me through her thoughts on the program as she looked at various modules. I was relieved to find that she was really open to the way that EverFi functions. She even asked some questions about the possibility of utilizing other courses than Ignition. I showed her through the 306 course, which is one on African-American studies, and we discussed the possibility of utilizing this as an extra credit assignment for students at home. Ms. M.’s primary concern at this time seems to be getting through all of her required content without allowing possible internet slowdowns to impact her lessons. I think this is a valid concern, and when she brought up the possibility of this being an extra credit assignment, I was impressed that she did not just dismiss the new technology.

 I believe that the big reason that Ms. M. has actually begun to embrace change a little is that I am finally starting to become a true partnership coach. It is not my job to be the “sage on the stage.” My job is to actively listen to teachers I am coaching and to help them get to where they need and want to be. I actually asked some questions today about Ms. M.’s thoughts on my second technology workshop on Google Apps. She actually expressed interest in these and had some great feedback for me. I think that I have gained an important partner through this process. Ms. M. is teaching me and showing me some different perspectives on the use of technology in the classroom.

Knight, J. (2007). *Instructional coaching: A partnership approach to improving instruction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.