

Coaching Journal

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**Coaching Session 1: 10-19-2016****Strategies**

In the first coaching session, I met with my participant Ms. Nhep, a 9<sup>th</sup>-grade health teacher. She has four years of teaching experience. She volunteered to participate in the coaching sessions as she wanted to increase student engagement through the use of technology. Ms. Nhep previously has asked me for advice and assistance with some technology tools, and when she heard that I was going to hold coaching sessions, she wanted to devote more time to learning new tools for the classroom. During our initial meeting, I explained to Ms. Nhep that we would be using the partnership approach. According to Knight (2007), the partnership approach “is built around the core principles of equality, choice, voice, dialogue, reflection, praxis, and reciprocity” (p.24). It was important for us to lay this groundwork down so that we have a mutual understanding, have an open dialogue, and our sessions are authentic and meaningful. During our first session, we discussed the results of her surveys that she completed that detailed her level of current technology use, her reservations on using technology, and her comfort level of technology. I wanted to make sure that our learning experience was authentic and that she felt that her voice was being heard. We discussed why she was hesitant in trying new technologies and what she has tried in the past and whether it worked or did not. I stressed that collaboration would be key during our sessions to best meet what she wanted to accomplish. Knight (2007) defines collaboration as open dialogue that allows for ideas to flow freely from both people and they feed off of each other (p. 28). I wanted to make sure that she was aware that this was not going to be like the other professional developments she had attended, but something that is on-going and promotes positive change in her classroom. After we talked, she and I came to the conclusion that we were going to start slowly with implementing whole-class technology tools into her classroom. She wanted to learn how to use a Kahoot for quizzing and discussions. Before the coaching session ended, I showed her one of the Kahoot’s I made and we played it as students so that she could see how it worked. For our next session, I

explained that we would be walking through how to make one by modeling it to her. I would like for her to bring her upcoming health test so that we could use it to create a Kahoot from it. I also went over the coaching forms that we will be using for our coaching sessions. I explained that this would help guide our sessions and allow me to gain insight with their feedback. You can find the link to these forms included on the reference page.

### **Skill and Affective Changes**

During our first session, Ms. Nhep seemed eager but hesitant to open up about this process. She completed the surveys prior to this meeting and after seeing her responses, I was looking forward to talking to her about what she filled out. When we started discussing her responses, it seemed hard for her to articulate why she responded the way she did. It was almost a sense of vulnerability that by saying it aloud made her nervous that she would be judged. I did not want to make her feel uncomfortable, so that's when I stressed the concept that we are in this together this is a partnership and together we are going to grow from it and collaborate. After reassuring her that this was different than the other professional development she had attended, she revealed some of her deep-rooted reservations and expressed how she would love to break through these barriers so that she could feel more comfortable implement technology in her classroom. I believe that she started to gain trust on a partnership level that she could do this and she was not alone.

### **Reflection on Challenges and Solution**

I have three years of teaching experience and limited professional development/coaching experience. With that being said, I am ambitious, love to share my ideas with colleagues, and I am willing to try new things. For this coaching session, I relied heavily on what Knight said in his book to develop my plan of action as I did not want to be one of those one-shot professional development programs and I did not want to waste my colleague's time as I know how important this is. I wanted to

approach this session by laying a foundation out for Ms. Nhep and show her that I was invested and wanted to help her. I left part of the coaching session open ended as it depended on how our conversation went. I saw quickly how important it was for me to rely on Knight's teachings as it eased my colleague into our first coaching session. I was uncertain how this was going to work because this was new territory for myself.

### **Coaching Session 2: 10-26-2016**

#### **Strategies**

For this coaching session, my main focus was modeling the Kahoot tool for Ms. Nhep and making her feel comfortable enough to implement it into her classroom. We are using Knight's (2007) instructional coaching strategies and International Society of Technology in Education's White paper on professional development (2011) as the basis of this session. Ms. Nhep and I are going to explore Kahoot from the teacher side of the program and make our own Kahoot together. We met during our shared planning time and she brought her upcoming test so we could turn questions from it into a Kahoot to review with the students. In this stage our of coaching, I am working on preparing her to implement her own Kahoot in the classroom by using the Coaching Whitepaper's (2011) Model 2: Instructional Coach strategy (p. 10). By using her test for the upcoming unit, I am helping her prepare her materials prior to instruction and we are discussing appropriate ways to implement this tool in her classroom (Coaching Whitepaper, 2011, p. 11). Together we walked through each step in creating the Kahoot from the beginning. Instead of creating a practice Kahoot, we used her content materials so by the end of the demonstration she would have a complete Kahoot that was ready to use in her classroom. I walked through creating five Kahoot questions and then she did ten more Kahoot questions while I observed her. As the Coaching Whitepages (2011) notes that collaboration is key in a successful partnership relationship and implementation of technology is considered to be successful when teachers can use

these practices in their own classroom, which are points that I am addressing through our coaching sessions to best meet the needs of Ms. Nhep (p. 14). In this session, according to the Coaching Whitepages (2011), I am implementing Stage 3: Prepare where I am teaching Ms. Nhep the tool, we are collaborating on the implementation of the tools and we are preparing a checklist to assess the design and implementation of this tool in her classroom and for our next plan of action we will be moving into Stage 4: Implement Activities (p. 14). After we created the Kahoot, we went through some troubleshooting techniques and addressed some situations that she may experience while implementing the Kahoot in the classroom. Then we discussed the next plan of action. Ms. Nhep was not comfortable just yet to implement this tool in her classroom so we devised a plan for her to watch me give a Kahoot in my classroom while she observed, took notes, and then we would meet to debrief. Before she could observe me, we had to complete the observation forms so that she could have techniques to watch for when she comes to my classroom. After the session, I wanted to check in on Ms. Nhep to make sure I did not overwhelm her and gather feedback from the session to make her ready to implement this tool in the classroom.

### **Skill and Affective Changes**

Ms. Nhep's biggest concern was being able to implement this tool into her classroom and not being prepared if something did not go as planned could she handle the situation. By having her bring in her test to set up her own game it seemed to ease her into the program instead of having her work on the game by herself. After I guided her through the first five questions, I wanted to provide her with support as she did the next ten. Ms. Nhep started to believe in herself that this tool was something that she could implement into her classroom. She noted that it did not seem too difficult to create her own Kahoot, but expressed that she was glad that we did it together as she did not feel comfortable trying the new tool on her own. We also discussed some of the troubleshooting options and situations that may occur while using the Kahoot. Ms. Nhep was nervous about the uncertainty and ways to react to

the situations. We did not have time to discuss a lot of ways, but we put this on the table to continue the discussion at our next session. This coaching session showed Ms. Nhep that this was a truly a partnership and that I had her best interests at heart. We discussed her becoming ready to implement this tool into her classroom and she noted that she would benefit from seeing me model this in my own classroom while she observed me so that she could see the tool in action. I could see Ms. Nhep opening up to the idea of preparing herself to implement the tool in the classroom and gaining confidence in using this technology in the classroom.

### **Reflection on Challenges and Solution**

The tool itself is fairly straightforward and user-friendly, but the biggest concern and perhaps the greatest challenge is to prepare a teacher for troubleshooting and issues that may arise during class. It can also be difficult to imitate in a session so that she can have experience. I experienced a great challenge trying to think up of different scenarios that I have experienced or thinking of experiences that she may encounter. She wanted to make sure that we were being proactive so that she knew how to react to the technology not responding properly. I did not leave enough time to discuss all of these different scenarios, but I also felt that I was not able to explain some of the scenarios very well or imitate them so she could see them. I explained that we would revisit this at the next session so that I could bring more what if situations to the next session and perhaps during the modeling session something would come up so we can discuss the way I handled it or ask her how she would have handled it. I felt that it was extremely beneficial to have Ms. Nhep bring in her upcoming test so that we could work through the creation of the Kahoot and provide her with the support she needs.

From the last session to this session, I have continued to rely on Knight's (2007) book as I structured these sessions and planned my next steps. I am slowly seeing myself as more of a coach and making a conscious decision in my coaching that relates to the strategies. I am excited to see Ms. Nhep

gain confidence in her ability to use this tool in the classroom and more tools. I hope to continually provide the support she needs to help make her classroom more technologically savvy.

### **Coaching Session 3: 11-02-2016**

#### **Strategies**

During this session, Ms. Nhep and I prepared for her to observe my classroom and address some of the scenarios that I did not get to mention in the previous session. Our main focus was completing the *Technology Coaching Form* to ensure that she gets the most out of the lesson. You can view this form with the link included on the references page. According to Knight (2007), the observation form gives the IC and the teacher an opportunity to “list the critical teaching behaviors that a teacher should be watching for when watching a model lesson” (p. 111). He continues to explain that by collaborating on the form together ICs can check the teacher’s understanding and give them important teaching practices to watch for while observing the IC (Knight, 2007, p. 112). When we were completing this together, Ms. Nhep and I shared similar ideas in what she should be watching for. I believe that it further built upon our partnership and open dialogue. We made sure that she watched for the way I delivered my introduction to the game. This is an important step in making sure this game runs smoothly as students at the start of the game have the opportunity to choose their own nickname and can become out of hand if not managed properly. We also included seeing how I went over each question with the students to ensure they had an understanding of why the correct answer was right and provide them with test taking strategies. Ms. Nhep noted that she was glad that we going over the practices ahead of time to help her focus her observation. Through the creation of the observation form, Ms. Nhep and I communicated classroom management techniques, further discussed situations that may arise and how to handle them, and collaborated on ways to deliver information to students during the Kahoot. She explained that already by knowing all of this information ahead of her seeing it in action

and before she implements it into practice has made her feel more comfortable and less in the dark about how this would look in a classroom. Moving forward, Ms. Nhep and I set up the date to come and observe me in the classroom and finalized our observation form for her to use. We also scheduled the debriefing where we would discuss the observation, answer questions, provide feedback and comments. From this point, we are going to begin looking to switching the roles where I come and observe Ms. Nhep in the classroom and provide feedback.

### **Skill and Affective Changes**

Ms. Nhep seemed to be more excited and less nervous about implementing the Kahoot into her classroom. She does not implement technology in her classroom often and when she does use technology is just for students to conduct research with or have students create a final project with. During our third coaching session, Ms. Nhep and I discussed a variety of teaching practices that she will be watching for when she observes me. The *Technology Coaching Form* helped Ms. Nhep gain a better understanding of the different scenarios that she could face in the classroom and we could talk them out before using it in the classroom. This preview and observation form gave her more confidence and gave her solutions to issues that she thought may arise in the lesson. Ms. Nhep and I collaborated on classroom management techniques that we use and ways that we can deliver information during the Kahoot. I believe that this improved our partnership by giving us both a voice and the lines of coach and teacher subsided as we started collaborating on the observation form. Our dialogue is more open and we have a specific plan that we are focusing on while moving forward into the observation.

### **Reflection on Challenges and Solution**

My strategy in this session was to focus on collaboration and open dialogue between Ms. Nhep and myself. When introducing the *Technology Coaching Form*, I wanted to make sure I explained why we were using it and what the purpose of it was. If I did not explain it, I felt that it would seem like a waste



of time and it would not be meaningful to our discussion. From our discussion that we had, I could tell that she understood how it could help us out. The line between coach and teacher blended more during this session as we spent most of the time collaborating and deliberating about scenarios and strategies to use in the classroom when using this tool. I could see her confidence build since the first session and could tell that she is almost ready to implement the Kahoot we made into her upcoming review day. Perhaps the biggest struggle for this session was coming up with some of the solutions to the scenarios that she thought of as I had not experienced them before. Fortunately, we worked together to develop troubleshooting techniques that could be used in the classroom. I am excited to continue to work with Ms. Nhep to keep encouraging her to use more technology in the classroom to engage her students.

From these coaching sessions, I feel that I had already gained a lot of experience that I can build upon as I gain more colleagues to coach. I believe that Ms. Nhep was a great teacher to start with since this is my first undertaking as a coach. When Ms. Nhep was hesitant about implementing the strategy, I was a little discouraged as to how these coaching sessions were going to go, but as Knight (2007) mentioned, coaches need to stay detached so that they do not feel personally attacked (p. 198). I used what he mentioned to create meaningful and authentic discussions where I listened to the reasons behind the hesitations and was able to see the root of her issues to gain a better understanding (Knight, 2007, p. 201). Through these sessions, I relied strongly on Knight's (2007) teaching and the Coaching Whitepapers (2011) to lead me in the right direction to create a partnership with Ms. Nhep where she opened up to me. Without the plan of action, I would not have been able to help Ms. Nhep gain confidence and make steps towards implementing the Kahoot into her classroom. My next move is to have her observe me in my classroom and complete the *Technology Coaching Form* and debrief. Ms. Nhep and I will eventually get to her implementing the tool into her classroom. I need to continue to make time and keep the dialogue going to ensure that she has support to encourage her to use more technology in her classroom.

## References

Coaching Whitepaper. (2011). Retrieved November 10, 2016, from

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