Coaching Journal

Gaberielle Miller

Kennesaw State

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**Coaching Session 1:** October 19, 2018

**Strategies**

I started by thanking Mrs. McCormick for giving me the opportunity to build a coaching relationship with her and for giving me the chance to provide her with technology tools that would enhance her professional practice. I then explained the tactic that I would use to coach her, peer coaching. I explained how this approach would give me the opportunity to focus on a specific need, which is to help her design a supportive technology-enriched learning environment (Beglau, et al., 2011).  Next, I shared the results of the Teacher Technology use Assessment that I had administered to her early on. This is the first step to identifying a colleagues’ level of technology usage and instructional needs (Beglau, et al., 2011).  I informed her that I was aware that she wanted to be updated on current digital tools, use technology for student production and use resources such as Plickers, SMART Exchange, and WebQuest. I also mentioned that I was well aware of her desires to have someone to support her. I stressed to her that my goal was to help her.

After reviewing the data, I shared a few directions that we could go. I told Mrs. McCormick that I would be training my grade level on the different ways to use SMART Exchange and that she is more than welcome to join us. I told her that I was aware that she wanted to incorporate WebQuest into her teaching, but I was not sure how far we would get with the time that we had. Consequently, I spoke about another technology idea that I had in mind that would be perfect for her to use, Blendspace. [Blendspace](https://www.tes.com/lessons/HP3CFPIl6ojL5g/edit) is an interactive technology tool that syncs documents, PowerPoints, videos, pictures, and other materials in one space. Using blendspace gives students the opportunity to access technology and learn independently and allows students to access it from different devices (“TES The, “2018). After giving her the chance to decide which direction she wanted to go in, she decided to use Blendspace.

**Skill and Effective Changes**

Before our initial meeting, I had the chance to interview Mrs. McCormick. During the interview, Mrs. McCormick stated, “I do not feel like I am up to date on current tools. I feel like if I had more training on technology tools, I would feel more comfortable” (Megan McCormick, personal communication, September 24, 2018). After the initial meeting, I could tell that Mrs. McCormick was enthusiastic about new technology resources to incorporate into her teaching practice. I think this was due to me offering her many resources and reassuring her that I would support her in any way that I could.

**Reflection on Challenges and Solution**

I chose to get my Specialist in instructional technology to improve my teaching practice and to help prepare digital age learners. I had no idea that I would be coaching collogues. Leadership is something that I never desired, so this entire assignment was a bit overwhelming for me. However, following the guidelines from Technology, Coaching, and Community paper has helped me to become confident in myself and confident in the idea of coaching others.

I have acquired a lot of technology resources since I started graduate school. It was challenging for me to decide which tools to use for Mrs. McCormick. I knew that the first step of peer coaching model was to identify Mrs. McCormick’s level of technology usage and instructional strategies (Beglau et al., 2011). I took that into consideration and realized that it was unrealistic to incorporate every tech tool. Consequently, I made the decision to give her options based on the feedback from the survey. I believe that our first session together was successful, and I actually looked forward to our next session.

**Coaching Session 2:** October 25, 2018

**Strategies**

The second stage in the peer coaching model gives the coach the opportunity to set an attainable goal that is connected to the school’s technology objective (Beglau et al., 2011). In a personal interview, my principal stated, “My vision is for teachers to find ways to engage students through technology (Tammy Watson, personal communication, September 10, 2018). I reassured Mrs. McCormick that Blendspace was a great tool because it supported our principal’s technology vision and it would be a great tool to use based on what she had shared to me about her technology skill and instructional strategies.

During our second meeting, I gave Mrs. McCormick an overview of Blendspace. I first explored the website with her and showed her the logistics: how to sign up, how to access featured lessons, how to create lessons, how to sign students up, and how to assign lessons to students. I explained how Blendspace allows differentiation among the content being presented to students and how it can be used in whole group, small group, center rotations, as a reinforcement tool, or for students’ ability to build something. Furthermore, I communicated that Blendspace can be used to house all the websites, PDFs, or pictures she planned to present in one day. I stressed to her that this using Blendspace is a great way to save on instructional time. Next, I asked Mrs. McCormick what they were learning, and I began to model how to create a Blendspace based off of the information she had given. We talked about what they would be working on in the upcoming week and I explained to her that I would gather resources that she would need (Knight, 2011). We finally set a goal, which was to meet a few times the following week to develop lessons and to decide exactly when we were going to introduce this activity to students collaboratively.

**Skill and Effective Changes**

“I don’t know the new websites for my students, I don’t feel like I’m tech savvy. That’s why I don’t feel comfortable” (Megan McCormick, personal communication, September 24, 2018).

Before our initial meeting, Mrs. McCormick had never heard of Blendspace; however, she was very eager to try it. I honestly believe that giving her an overview of Blendspace and modeling how to create an interactive activity made her feel much more comfortable. I loved how she would jump in and suggest other resources to use such as [Brainpop Jr.](https://jr.brainpop.com/) This reassured me that peer coaching was an excellent choice. By the end of our peer coaching session, Mrs. McCormick was extremely excited about giving her students the opportunity to use this digital tool independently because she felt so supported by me. She even mentioned that using Blendspace would save on instructional time. She could not wait until we met again.

**Reflection on Challenges and Solution**

There were a few challenges during this coaching session. Blendspace was giving me a hard time loading, and although I knew the program fairly well, I was not able to answer all the questions Mrs. McCormick asked. I found myself getting frustrated and I remembered thinking to myself, this is why coaching is not best for me. As soon as I saw the smile on Mrs. McCormick’s face and her level of enthusiasm, I quickly reminded myself that sometimes technology does not work, and I have had this experience numerous of times as a classroom teacher. I took a deep breath and continued to coach Mrs. McCormick. I made a list of her questions so I could answer them in our next session, and we continued to collaborate on the Blendspace.

Although I had a mini breakdown (in my head), I thought that the coaching session went well. Besides not being able to answer the few questions Mrs. McCormick posed during our coaching session, I was still able to show Mrs. McCormick what Blendspace had to offer. It felt good to know that I was able to introduce her to a new tool that can be used soon by her students. Furthermore, I was ecstatic that I was able to help a colleague to feel more comfortable about using technology. I have concluded that I should not be so hard on myself and learn to go with the flow.

**Coaching Session 3:** October 30, 2018

**Strategies**

 The third stage of peer coaching gives the coach and the teacher a chance to collaborate on a lesson and assess the lesson prepared (Beglau et al., 2011). In order to suffice this stage, I met Mrs. McCormick one afternoon for our third coaching session. I started off by answering the questions she posed during our second coaching session. Next, I shared with her some resources we could use to incorporate into our lesson (Knight, 2011). Since her students were going to be learning about sound, I thought it would be a great idea to start with a [KWL chart](file:///Users/gaberiellemiller/Downloads/KWLChart.pdf). I thought that using a KWL chart would be an excellent way to build schema on sound. I also thought it was a great way to measure what students know before they started to learn about sound, what they wanted to know about sound, and what they learned about sound. Mrs. McCormick agreed that this would be a great resource to hook students into our lesson on sound. Next, I reviewed some key elements of Blendspace and collaboratively, we worked together to build a digital unit on sound. Our [Blendspace](https://www.tes.com/lessons/HP3CFPIl6ojL5g/edit) included Brainpop Jr, YouTube videos, information from PebbleGo, and a quiz. I also modeled how to add students, so they could access Blendspace from any device. We then made it our goal to do our lesson in three days.

**Skill and Effective Changes**

I really enjoyed collaborating with Mrs. McCormick. As I mentioned earlier, I started off by giving her suggestions on how we could engage her students on the sound unit. I brought tons of resources and ideas to share, she was so shocked that I went to great lengths to help her. I told her that as a partner, it was my job to help her achieve her goals and preparing materials for her was another way that I could support her in increasing the learning of her students (Knight, 2011). At the end of this coaching session, Mrs. McCormick thanked me for suggesting Blendspace. She also mentioned that she is feeling more confident in her students’ ability to use technology in the classroom other than for XtraMath and MobyMax. I was very pleased to know that Mrs. McCormick’s outlook on the use of technology in her first-grade classroom had started to change.

**Reflection on Challenges and Solution**

  Mrs. McCormick and I ran into one problem when we were uploading media to the Blendspace platform, some of the websites that we used required passwords whenever students clicked on them. Thinking quickly, I used an application on the computer called snippet. The snippet tool takes a snapshot of anything that is on your computer screen. Once I took the picture, I saved it as a JPEG and uploaded onto Blendspace.

This coaching session went a lot better than the last session. Although we did have a technical problem with the program, I did not panic or let my emotions get the best of me. All in all, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to work with someone who had great ideas and who did not mind listening to my suggestions as well as using them. I would say that we have a great partnership, I am starting to think that coaching is not so bad after all.

**Coaching Session 4:** November 2, 2018

**Strategies**

In the fourth stage of peer coaching, the coach models a technology-rich lesson. This lesson can be taught by the coach alone, or it could be co-taught (Beglau et al., 2011). Mrs. McCormick asked if I could take the lead and model the lesson in my classroom, I told her that was perfectly fine. As the students made their way into my classroom, Mrs. McCormick gave each of her students a particular spot on my rug. I introduced myself to the students and told them that their teacher and I developed a fun activity on sound for them. On my Promethean board, I displayed the KWL chart. I explained the chart to them and told them that we were going to fill in the chart together. I asked students what they knew about sound. Some of their responses included the following; it can be loud, it can be soft, it can be noisy, and people can make it. Next, Mrs. McCormick helped me pass out clipboards, pencils, and the KWL chart to each student. Students wrote down what they knew about sound. I had students tell me one thing they wanted to know about sound. After I had a list of questions, I asked the students to write down two questions from the board.

Next, I showed students the Blendspace that we created for them. I taught them how to navigate through the site. Afterward, Mrs. McCormick and I passed out iPads and gave each table group the QR code to access our Blendspace. Sadly, Blendspace did not work on the iPads that day. Although we had checked from our classroom iPads, cell phones, and laptops, Blendspace would not upload. I decided to call students back to the carpet and show them one video that was included on our Blendspace. I promised students that they would have the chance to use Blendspace on Monday, November 5, 2018, in the computer lab. They were excited.

**Skill and Effective Changes**

“I have a hard time giving my students independence, mainly because they are in first grade” (Megan McCormick, personal communication, September 24, 2018).

Although the lesson did not go exactly as planned, I thought the coaching session was very effective in showing Mrs. McCormick how simple it is to incorporate technology into a lesson beyond the use of practice and drill. I met up with Mrs. McCormick that afternoon, so we could complete the final stage of peer coaching, reflecting on our practice (Beglau et al., 2011). We reflected on what went well in the lesson and we talked about what we could do next time to make sure that the technology run smoothly. In the past, Mrs. McCormick mentioned that she limited her students’ ability to use technology because she did not know exactly what six years old were capable. After this session, she could see that her students are more than able to use technology independently.

**Reflection on Challenges and Solution**

Mrs. McCormick and I did our part in making sure that Blendspace worked from many devices; however, when it was time for students to work independently, the program did not work. This was a little upsetting to me. Since we were running low on time, I quickly thought of a solution which was to model for students how to use Blendspace for that day, and schedule a time where students could go into the computer lab to use computers.

This coaching session has made me realize that coaches always need to have a backup plan, just in case something goes wrong. I can definitely tell that I am growing as a coach, I no longer get flustered when a problem occurs. I just remind myself that this is a learning experience for Mrs. McCormick and myself. After all, I am helping to support a technology-enriched learning environment for Mrs. McCormick and her students.

**Coaching Session 5:** November 5, 2018

**Strategies**

For our last coaching session, I decided that we should finish our lesson on sound in the computer lab. Once again, Mrs. McCormick and I taught the lesson together (Beglau et al., 2011). Mrs. McCormick started off by reviewing what we did the last time that we met. I reviewed the KWL chart that worked on together. I also reviewed how to navigate Blendspace.

Next, students were assigned to a computer and were given the opportunity to explore the Blendspace we created. As I walked around, I could see that the students were very engaged in the program. After about 15 minutes, we told students that it was time to show us what they learned. We asked them to write three things they learned about sound on their KWL chart. After everyone was logged off and students were back on the carpet, I had every student turn and talk about what they learned about sound. Next, we picked four students to share aloud to the class, one thing they learned. Before students left to go to lunch, I asked them to give me a thumbs up if they liked Blendspace. 14 out of 15 students raised their thumb. I then asked them to give me a thumbs up if they wanted to do something like this again with Benjamin Franklin, they all raised their thumb.

**Skill and Effective Changes**

Before I began coaching Mrs. McCormick, I would say that she was on a LoTi Level 1 (awareness). In this level, students use technology for content related activities which are monitored and access by Mrs. McCormick. At the end of our coaching sessions, I would say that Mrs. McCormick is on a LoTi Level 3 (Infusion). Meaning learning is student centered, students assume an adult role, the task given had multiple unpredictable outcomes, and students shared their results with their classmates. In order to take Mrs. McCormick’s students to LoTi Level 4 (integration), students would have to create a product using Blendspace and share their product beyond the students in their classroom (“LoTi Framework,” n.d.). All in all, I feel like Mrs. McCormick is much more comfortable with using digital tools and resources in her classroom. She even mentioned that she is willing to work with me in the future, so she can learn how to use technology for production in the classroom.

**Reflection on Challenges and Solution**

The biggest challenge of this coaching experience was getting over my fear of coaching. As I mentioned before, I decided to get a degree in instructional technology to expand my teaching practice; coaching adults was not what I wanted to do at all! However, this coaching experience has helped me grow mentally and professionally. It has helped me to realize that if we stay within our comfort zone, we will never know our potential. I can proudly say that I had the opportunity to coach an amazing colleague. In the process, I not only learned how to collaborate, but I was also able to help a colleague incorporate teaching strategies that ultimately supports a technology-enriched learning environment and prepare 21st-century learners. All things considered, this assignment has helped me to become confident in myself and confident in the idea of coaching others.

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