

Individual Teacher Technology Assessment

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Before engaging in instructional technology coaching, it is important to first understand the feelings and current practices of the teacher partner. In this case, the teacher partner is Mrs. M, a first grade teacher at Findley Oaks Elementary. Mrs. M has had many years of experience in the classroom, and she is one of a handful of teachers still at the school from the time it opened twenty years ago. Despite the fact that she is nearing retirement, Mrs. M seemed interested when approached about entering a technology coaching partnership. Her class includes eighteen students, two of whom receive English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services, and three of whom receive Speech Therapy services. Digital tools in Mrs. M's classroom include five student computers, a teacher laptop, and access to six or more iPads at a time. Interestingly, first grade is the only grade level in the school that does not yet have interactive whiteboard (IWB) technology available in the classroom.

In order to assess Mrs. M's current technology integration practices, this coach asked her to complete the Classroom Technology Integration Self-Assessment, which is based on the Levels of Technology Integration (LoTI) Framework. Participants answered questions based on a five-point scale including Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), No Opinion or Uncertain (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5) in four categories, including Classroom Use, Lesson Planning, Troubleshooting, and Seeking Assistance. Mrs. M's responses ranged from 2 to 5, as indicated below. In the area of Classroom Use, she indicated that she finds computer-based presentation tools to be an effective way to help students understand content (4). She does not assign students to computer-based, higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) assignments on a weekly basis (2). Mrs. M does not design lessons in which students use communication tools (Skype, iChat, Google Hangout, etc.)

to communicate with others and acquire deeper understanding of real-world topics (2). She reported that it is one of her goals this year to become more comfortable to use technology devices in the classroom (4). In the area of Lesson Planning, Mrs. M stated that she did not find that designing lessons in which students use classroom computers for HOTS assignments was a challenge for her (2). She very much believes that the use of instructional technology should involve more than drill-and-practice activities and should also be used to engage students in HOTS (5). However, she did indicate that she does not know or employ a wide variety of methods for integrating technology into instruction, nor does she incorporate technology as often as she would like (2). In the area of Troubleshooting, Mrs. M indicated that she does attempt to fix problems with technology as they arise rather than simply giving up on that learning activity (4). She also tries to practice with a new technology tool to become more familiar with it before implementing it during instruction (4). Lastly, in the area of Seeking Assistance, Mrs. M indicated that she would seek a colleague for help if she could no understand how to resolve an issue that involves technology in the classroom (4).

Based on Mrs. M's responses, she is considered as operating between Level 2: Exploration and Level 3: Infusion within the LoTI Framework (2011). Mrs. M recognizes the importance of incorporating technology for "higher levels of cognitive processing and in-depth treatment of the content using a variety of thinking skill strategies (e.g., problem-solving, decision-making)" (LoTI Framework, 2011) and has some knowledge of how to do so; however, she does not employ these strategies very often, nor is she familiar with a wide variety tools to accomplish this goal. Instead, she more often uses technology for "lower levels of cognitive processing (e.g., Bloom Levels - remembering,

understanding, applying; Webb's Levels – recall & reproduction, working with skills & concepts)" (LoTI Framework, 2011). In order to improve her instruction according to the LoTI Framework, she needs support and guidance to comfortably implement lessons that incorporate technology for HOTS-related learning activities on a more consistent basis. She also needs support in learning a wider variety of technology tools and resources that can help her accomplish this goal.

In order to assess Mrs. M's feelings about the adoption of new technologies, this coach asked her to complete the Technology Adoption Self-Assessment. Again, participants answered questions based on a five-point scale including Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), No Opinion or Uncertain (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5). Mrs. M's responses ranged from 2 to 5, as indicated below. She indicated that she is comfortable with traditional uses of technology, such as word processors and visiting websites (5). She prefers to see how new technologies are used before trying them herself (4). She likes trying new technologies, but she considers her options before deciding which ones to use (4). She neither prefers nor dislikes trying new things and taking risks (3). She sometimes likes to try new technologies before others have tried it before (4). She does see the merit in using new technology rather than keeping things the way they are (2). She strongly agrees that she is usually "ahead of the curve" in adopting new technologies, even if she is not the very first person to try it. She somewhat frequently seeks ways to incorporate new technologies in lessons (4). Finally, she believes that technology is a powerful tool for learning (4).

Based on Mrs. M's responses, she is considered as an "early adopter" according to Roger's (1995) change theory of diffusion, as described by Orr (2003). Whereas

innovators are eager to give any new technology a try, Mrs. M, as an early adopter, prefers to “use the data provided by the innovators’ implementation and confirmation of the innovation to make their own adoption decisions. If [early adopters] observe that the innovation has been effective for the innovators, then they will be encouraged to adopt” (Orr, 2003). Mrs. M is enthusiastic about new technologies, but also prefers to consider her options and is usually not the very first person to try a new technology. This may be an indication that she is a good candidate for technology coaching, because she will be willing to learn about new technologies after seeing some evidence of their effectiveness first. It follows, then, that Mrs. M was in fact interested and enthusiastic when approached about the idea of technology coaching.

Mrs. M has met with this technology coach to begin formulating a coaching plan. Based on Knight’s (2007) coaching recommendations, the coach and teacher will meet once per week after school from mid-October to mid-November, 2013. The coach will also make time for a series of in-class coaching events, such as modeling, team teaching, and observing. The coach and teacher will use a partnership approach, including the principles of equality, choice, voice, dialogue, reflection, praxis, and reciprocity (Knight, 2007, p. 37). The coach will provide information about a variety of technology tools; Mrs. M will choose one or two of these tools on which to direct her focus. After the particular tool or tools have been established, the coach will work with Mrs. M to learn more about the tool, model a lesson using that tool, collaborate on a lesson in which the coach and the teacher team-teach a lesson using that tool, and finally provide notes and support while the teacher implements the tool on her own. A coaching journal has been established to track coaching activities, ideas, needs, and results. Based on her needs

uncovered through the Classroom Technology Integration Self-Assessment, the coaching goal has been established to help Mrs. M become more familiar with a wide variety of tools and resources and feel more comfortable implementing these tools for HOTS-centered learning activities on a more consistent basis in her classroom. In return, Mrs. M will help this coach, who does not teach first grade, learn more about the first grade curriculum content in order to help other teachers in the future.

References

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Appendix A: Classroom Technology Integration Self-Assessment

Assessment:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ZecJJJ3zc4BmACvE4Rz5VpQcGtTNhx2BsQCUFu8H8rg/viewform>

Results:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1pj3-rVGH0tx_eWdKNRggszyxkZaJNAVWbO7WeH0RxjE/edit#gid=715736464

Appendix B: Technology Adoption Self-Assessment

Assessment:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ug1NHHFrh3LK2HID7JILNhwElrJt-aXBfNEXwvueE5M/viewform>

Results:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1tcFQb8gtIwIC7QRpQCPLKp5TauPu2qiV9H_zWQz9eiY/edit#gid=2051682441