

## **Assignment Two: Individual Teacher Technology Assessment**

### **Background to initiation of coaching relationship**

Nancy S is a new, part-time teacher for the Individuals and Societies (Humanities) Department at Atlanta International School (AIS). Specializing in History and originally from the New York borough of Queen's, she moved Georgia with her family three years ago and has been a substitute teacher in the Cobb County Public School System until hire by AIS in August 2012. She has four years total teaching experience since graduating from college in New York.

Nancy S was not on a schedule during her first year that allowed personal collaboration; therefore on consultation with the Director of Technology, it was deemed that she would be a more than suitable candidate for Instructional and Technology Coaching. Nancy S has been placed on a team that will be under the leadership responsibility of the author of this paper in the forthcoming academic year.

### **Background to initiation of coaching relationship**

Nancy S is scheduled to teach some Geography content classes that are very new to her, thus it was an organic choice to reach out to her for not only technology coaching but also for instructional coaching to support content learning and to also assist in her understanding of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Programme (MYP) in terms of teaching and learning. Proximity of home addresses also lends to forging a strong personal coaching relationship, as it is anticipated that should schedules align, carpooling will happen in the next academic year.

As the Headmaster and Principal of AIS were unavailable for permission or interview, I approached the Director of Technology, who is a KSU local course mentor and he granted permission for the coaching process with Nancy S. to begin.

### **Individual Teacher Technology Assessment**

Two tools were used for assessment of this teacher.

1. E-Survey. A Google survey of ten questions was constructed that looked at the type of technology that Nancy S is currently utilizing in her classroom. A copy of this has been included in the Appendix of this paper. The questions for this survey were, in part, collaboration with a PLC of teachers from ITEC 7460 and ideas extracted from Knight. (2007) *Instructional Coaching: A partnership Approach to Improving Instruction [e-reader version]* Chapter 5: Getting Teachers on Board and finding a Starting Point and ideas behind Rogers Change Theory (1995) to ascertain to what extent this teacher has current practice in technology integration in teaching and learning and how receptive to change she may be.
2. Face to face interview. Nancy S agreed to meet one to one and discuss in more detail some of the aspects of her initial questionnaire responses and to look at some of the areas of the curriculum that she feels that she needs assistance with in terms of

both content and in technology advancement. Questions that were used in this interview revolved around ideas that would enable discernment in looking at adopter categories as described by Rogers (1995). In terms of reciprocity, Nancy S has agreed to assist with some of the aspects of History that are perceived to be difficult in a team that has a high number of non-specialist teachers instructing History across four language areas. The questions used in this informal conversation were derived from the results of the questionnaire.

### **Analysis of E-Survey with further conversation at face-to-face interview**

Nancy S demonstrated a wide use of technology across the gamut of suggested items in the introductory question. Clearly, there was high use of organizational and productivity tools and less in the way of student collaborative tools both internal and external to the classroom. This was identified subsequently as one of the coaching goals. As AIS moves to become a Google Apps school, Nancy S was keen to move forward in both use and proficiency of these tools in her classroom for teaching and learning.

In questions one and two, the conversation led to her confidence in using technology in the classroom on a daily basis and would seem that she was not, as Orr (2003) described “on average risk-averse” (p. 213). The discussion that followed these questions pursued the International Baccalaureate Learner Profile, IBO. (2008). *The Learner Profile*

Retrieved from

<http://www.ibo.org/programmes/profile/documents/Learnerprofileguide.pdf> which models ten learner attributes that are not only desirable in the student but in the teacher modeling practices as well. “Risk-taker” is one of these attributes and it would seem that initial thoughts concerning this teacher’s experience and classroom practice were open-minded and willing to embrace new knowledge and become a thinker in using new and unknown instructional technologies.

In questions three and four, Nancy S clearly articulated her connection to her students and using technology and different approaches to learning in order to engage higher thinking skills. At one point she did iterate that she accidentally came across good ideas that she pursued – especially when picking up a rubric or information from the collaborative group photocopier and printer. Therefore, this was placed into the goals for coaching - a support that would be more structured for her in terms of getting concurrent and collaborative ideas and to feel supported in her efforts as part of the Individuals and Societies team.

In question five, Nancy S talked about how she felt better now than ever about asking the students to help her in class. Recognizing that all of her students are “birthers” to technology and she was the “adopter”, there was no hesitation to ask for assistance from the class should there be a technical difficulty. However, she did talk about how that dependence had changed her style of teaching; “You can’t stand at the front – you need to circulate. The kids love World of MineCraft and will go off task easily if their screens are not well monitored” (N Sainvil, personal communication, June 25, 2013).

Discussion in question six and seven lead to looking at how Nancy S applies this learning to real world context revealed that she already does engage in a high level of learning using technology. However, it was explicit that she does not use these movies to discuss beyond the classroom so this kind of collaborative outreach was set as a goal as well.

Question eight revealed another coaching area in terms of looking to opportunities to further integrate what IB calls “International Mindedness” or Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP). Nancy S articulated that there is simply not time to do this – a clear goal for instructional coaching and a direct connection to the use of current practices and activities that might be able to reach beyond the classroom in a collaborative sense. Nancy S felt that this was essential to her further integration into the AIS environment. AIS is implementing “Project 3C” (Creativity, Curriculum, Collaboration) where the school is phasing in one to one laptops for all students 6 – 12. Nancy S was an instructor in one class that was using these new technologies (school leased MacBook Pro) and talked about how this had affected some of the projects that she engaged in with her 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Class. She is excited by this technology and mindful of the potential. She was one of the first teachers to sign up for the new mail application transfer from Outlook to Gmail and was very keen to be coached in technology when approached for the purposes of this course. However, she did have her frustrations – a shared issue across the school as higher levels of technology use are woven into the daily fabric is the wireless provision. In an older building such as AIS, this has been often unreliable and insufficient for the creative earlier adopters that have embraced the new technologies available in traditional classroom settings. Therefore, there have been frustrations for Nancy S, resulting in her use of back up planning when things did not function correctly technically. This is an issue that is well known to the IT Department in the school and is currently being addressed. There was assurance on this issue for Nancy S and her voice is most certainly valid and heard in this context.

It is clear that Nancy S certainly falls into the category of an early adopter of technology and needed little persuasion to participate in the coaching process.

### **Needs Statement**

Therefore, through these methods, the following goals have been identified:

1. Further training (through the one hour workshop and ongoing) on the use of Google Docs as a collaborative tool and exploration of current units in the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade team where this might be fully integrated as a technology tool for teaching and learning
2. Coaching on embedding CRP through the IB Framework of International Mindedness into classes
3. Taking existing classroom unit of work using iMovie and moving beyond the four walls in terms of student publishing, peer review and sharing opportunities through coaching support when this unit is being taught.

Nancy S will be on vacation from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 to July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013 and un-contactable. However, as the school year restarts on the 7<sup>th</sup> August, plans have been put into place in during this pre-planning period to work on the three goals articulated above.