Coaching During This Time of Remote Learning

By Gina Fugnitto | Categories: Implementation, Remote Learning

By Gina Fugnitto + Collaborative Classroom Facebook Community page

All our years of preparing, planning, teaching, and coaching did not prepare us for this! Here we are, grappling with how to coach teachers during this time of remote learning. Recently, Kelly Ferrie posted on our Collaborative Classroom Facebook Community page, asking:

“I’m curious, due to only having coached teachers in a brick-and-mortar school: what are some ways that instructional coaches are still supporting teachers? I am learning along with teachers about technology and sharing resources, and I am helping them plan. However, when instruction starts to happen virtually next week, what are virtual ways to coach that you recommend or have seen implemented that are effective? Any good webinars or professional development offerings that would assist me?”

In this blog, we feature recommendations and considerations shared by coaches on our Community page. Click here to read the entire conversation.

Here is a list of recommendations:

- Engage in regularly scheduled PLCs via your virtual platform, and focus on the following questions:
  - How have you been connecting with families? How do you want to connect with families over time?
  - How are you staying present and accessible for your students?
  - If holding virtual classes: How are you supporting students in your whole-class sessions? What norms have you established? How might you connect with students in small groups or individually?
- Engage in planning sessions with teams or groups of teachers.
- Ask to be invited as a co-teacher or co-host during an online class to allow for collaboration and support during remote learning.
- “Share the load”
  - Record some of the lessons (Making Meaning, small-group, etc.).
  - Record read-alouds of upcoming lessons or favorite books. (See the Copyright and Sharing section of our Guidance for Remote Learning webpage).
- Coordinate with the classroom teacher to:
  - Conference with readers/writers.
  - Listen to students read 1:1.
  - Field student questions or support assignments.
- Be a “guest”:
  - Read a book.
  - Teach a favorite lesson.
Share about...
- Provide feedback on remote-learning plans. Pose questions such as:
  - *How might you give students feedback?*
  - *How might you help students find resources?*
  - *How will you provide students with practice opportunities that allow them to continue progressing with skills that have already been introduced?*
- Offer “virtual office hours” for anyone who wants to connect.
- Consider ways you might be a “listening ear.”
- Check in with teachers by phone or text to provide encouragement.
  - *How are things going for you and your families?*
  - *How can we care for each other during this period of time?*
- Monitor student online activity.
- Offer tech support as appropriate.
  - Provide a K–6 literacy guidance document with ideas for teachers who are feeling stuck or overwhelmed with technology.
- Generate a teacher “wellness” PowerPoint presentation that includes recommendations for online resources and other considerations.
  - Our Teacher Wellness Practices can be accessed here.
- Extend your considerations for coaching during this time by accessing Diana Sweeney’s blog, Moving Student-Centered Coaching Online and Bright Morning’s blog, Coaching During COVID-19.

Here are a few quotes from teachers in our Facebook Community:

“I joined the teachers on Zoom to help them plan. It was effective, fun, and gave us all some practice with using Zoom on each other before delivering instruction to students.”

“Our next step is to have some vertical conversations about prerequisite skills and essential content moving forward if our closure is to extend. We plan to look at priority standards and state correlation guides and create a pacing calendar for the remainder of the closure to ensure equity and consistency across grade levels.”

“We are reminding teachers to ‘go slow to go fast,’ just as we do in the beginning of the year. This is new to all of us and we need opportunities to reconnect with families and build routines in this online environment.”

Here is an important message from a classroom teacher:

“Hi! Classroom teacher here! I’d just like to chime in as to how we (at least my circle, but I’m sure most would agree) would feel most supported.

“Please do not add another Zoom meeting to our plates. We are overwhelmed with Zooms for IEP meetings, admin meetings, counselor meetings, in addition to virtual conferences with our students. And most of us are also parents with kids at home that we also need time to support. At first I thought I’d have ample time for them. Oh no! Very little, in fact. We do most of our learning in the evening because it’s when I have time to help.”
“The way we would feel most supported is by asking us where we are in the Collaborative Classroom curriculum and offering to prepare/teach one lesson a week for us, freeing our time just a bit. [It would also be helpful for you to] conference with students, listen to students read.

“Thank you for all you do, and I know you all are trying to help. So I just wanted to let you know what we are really desiring help with right now during this challenging time.”

Center for the Collaborative Classroom would like to thank all of those who contributed to the robust conversation focused on coaching during COVID-19:

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