Individual Teacher Technology Assessment Narrative

Sarah Barnett

Kennesaw State University

Dr. Julia Fuller

Professional Learning & Technology Innovation (ITEC 7460)

March 14, 2013

An English teacher at Woodland High School answered two questionnaires designed to assess her level of technology use and her attitude toward adopting technology and other new innovations in the classroom. Mrs. B is a veteran teacher, with teaching experience at the college and high school level in both the United States and abroad. Though she has mastered classroom management and other teaching strategies, she struggles to integrate technology in the classroom simply because she personally is not familiar with new technologies. Although she attends professional learning sessions related to technology and tries to participate, she admits she seldom implements what has been taught into her classroom because she needs additional training on the technology and because she has already completed tasks in a comfortable and familiar way for numerous years.

Mrs. B was identified by the principal as a teacher receptive to new ideas but who struggles with follow-through or implementation because of personal unfamiliarity with technology. Throughout the day, she teaches approximately 180 students in grades 10 and 12; these students are divided into six sessions so she teaches approximately 30 students each period. Several of her classes are co-taught so about one quarter of her students have identified learning disabilities. Mrs. B has numerous digital tools in her classroom including a teacher laptop, LCD projector, document camera, and one student computer. Additionally, she has access to several laptop carts in the school, and students are allowed to use personal electronic devices (cell phones or tablets) in her classroom with teacher permission because of the school's "Bring Your Own Technology" initiative.

Mrs. B answered questions on the LoTi Assessment Survey, which is designed to measure a teacher's ranking on the Level of Technology Integration Frameworks [LoTi]. Her responses can be found in Figure A in the Appendix. She ranked each statement on a scale of 1

to 5; each question related to use of technology in her classroom. A score of 1 indicated never, a score of 2 indicated once/twice a year, a score of 3 indicated once a month, a score of 4 indicated once a week, and a score of 5 indicated daily. Based on her answers, Mrs. B is attempting to use technology in her classroom for some simple activities with which she is familiar, such as research or test preparation software. However, she is less certain about using technology for collaboration, solving real-world problems, or higher-order critical thinking. What is most promising about Mrs. B's responses is that students are using technology in her class weekly; she is allowing students to use technology tools to complete certain activities. Yet, her understanding of technology is limited so she doubts her ability to do anything more extensive than having students read texts online, search for information, or watch online videos.

Based on these answers, Mrs. B is at a LoTi level of 2-Exploration (LoTi ® Framework, 2011). She has moved beyond using technology simply for direct instruction, as is characteristic of a LoTi Level 1-Awareness; Mrs. B does allow students to use technology to achieve understanding and demonstrate mastery of the standards. However, most student technology use focuses on lower-level thinking skills, such as identification and explanation, and students use technology as extension and enrichment activities or simply for information gathering. In order to move up to a LoTi Level 3-Infusion or even a LoTi Level 4-Integration, she needs additional training that exposes her to the numerous activities students can complete using technology and allows her to becomes familiar with new forms of technology so that she is comfortable implementing these tools in the classroom. She is eager to try, but lacks the technology background to teach herself how to use some of these tools.

To further understand Mrs. B's attitude toward adopting new technologies or responding to change, she completed a second survey entitled "Adopter Level Survey." Her responses can

be found in Figure B in the Appendix. She indicated that she had a positive disposition toward technology, but that she was often slow to implement because of uncertainty and unfamiliarity with other modes of learning. She is eager to try new technology, but she needs to watch others implement it first, would like to receive more sufficient training, and needs to know that it will improve student learning. Much of her hesitation to use technology also comes from discomfort troubleshooting problems so she tends to only use technology with which she is extremely familiar.

According to Everett Rodgers' "Diffusions of Innovations" model, Mrs. B seems to fall into the Late Majority category, a subsection of educators who follow the lead of "opinion leaders" even though they themselves are "cautious" with innovation (Orr, 2003). Furthermore, Mrs. B, though a veteran teacher, understands she must remain relevant with her students, so her decision to adopt technology comes from a feeling of "necessity" (Orr, 2003). Mrs. B realizes she may not be a technology leader in the school, but she has expressed willingness to learn from teachers who are more technologically-proficient, even if they have fewer years of experience teaching than she does. She understands that all teachers bring different skills to the classroom and that collaboration can benefit teachers of any experience level.

Using this data, a coaching plan has been designed that will allow Mrs. B to have more sufficient training on the technology she has already been introduced to this year through professional learning sessions. The peer coaching model (ISTE, 2011) will be implemented and the focus will be on collaboration. Peer Coaching places a great emphasis on collaboration and allows the precise needs of the teacher to shape collaboration related to technology integration (ISTE, 2011). This method employs a five-step process, which includes assessing a teacher's technology integration, setting specific goals, preparing, implementing activities, and reflecting

upon practice (ISTE, 2011). The coach will demonstrate for Mrs. B how a new technology can work both in theory as well as in the classroom. Mrs. B will then be given the opportunity to practice using this new technology with the coach and with her students; the coach will be present on occasion to observe and to help troubleshoot potential problems.

During the first coaching session, the coach used the Clustering (n.d.) diagram to allow Mrs. B to identify some of her goals for technology integration. Mrs. B had previously expressed an interest in revisiting many of the tools presented at various technology-related professional development sessions held this year; she said she did not want to see anything new quite yet, but wanted to start by learning how to use the techniques and tools she had already been exposed to during professional learning. Therefore, during a pre-coaching session, the coach inserted the titles of various professional development sessions conducted this year and Mrs. B indicated the tools in which she had an interest or could remember considering using in her classroom. Coaching sessions will probably consist of the coach modeling a new technology tool with Mrs. B acting as the student, allowing Mrs. B to practice the tool with the coach acting as the student, Mrs. B observing the coach using the tool in her classroom, and then Mrs. B implementing the tool in her own classroom as the coach observes. After Mrs. B practices and implements new technology in the classroom, she will use an After Action report (University of Kansas, n.d.) as a tangible means of reflecting and asserting her voice in the coaching process. Coaching will take place once each week, typically on Monday, with observation in Mrs. B's classroom tentatively scheduled for Thursday.

The goal for the coaching partnership is that Mrs. B not only gains fluency with specific tools and implement them in a manner that engages students and leads to increased learning, but

also that she gains confidence to try tools on her own or to seek out assistance from other teachers when she is interested in learning new technology tools.

References

Clustering.(n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.instructionalcoach.org/images/downloads/forms/cluster.pdf

ISTE (2011) *Technology, Coaching and Community, Power Partners for Improved Professional Development in Primary and Secondary Education*. Retrieved from http://www.instructionalcoach.org/images/downloads/ISTE_Whitepaper_June_Final_Edits.pdf

LoTi ® Framework (2013). *LoTi ® Framework*. Retrieved from http://loticonnection.cachefly.net/global_documents/LoTi_Framework_Sniff_Test.pdf

Orr, G. (2003). Diffusion of innovations, by Everett Rodgers, (1995). Retrieved from http://www.stanford.edu/class/symbsys205/Diffusion%20of%20Innovations.htm

The University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning. (n.d.). After action report. Retrieved from http://www.instructionalcoach.org/images/downloads/forms/afterAction.pdf