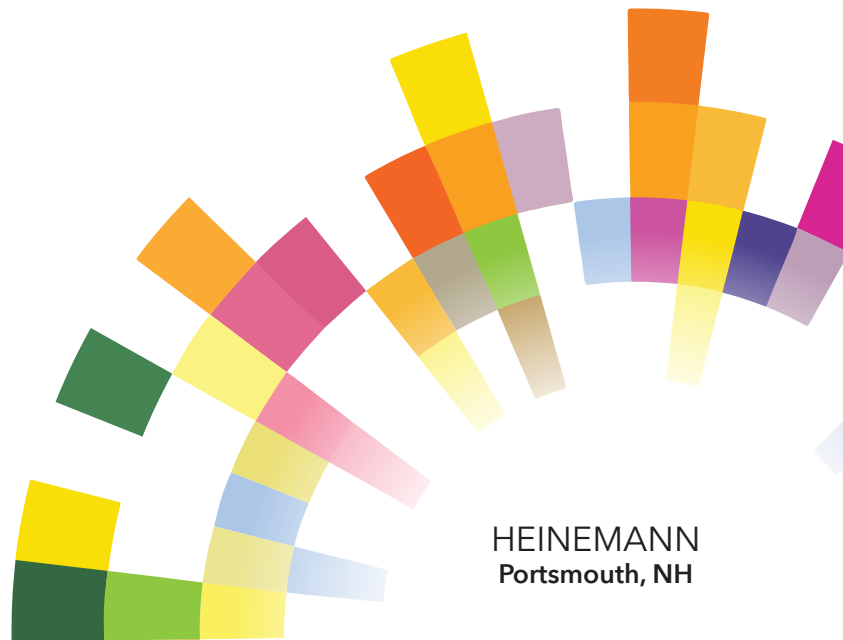


Literacy Coaching

Transforming Teaching and
Learning with Digital Tools
and Technology



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*To my husband, Joe, and my children, Hunter, Miranda, and Justice:
Thank you for believing in me before I believed in myself.*



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Transform Literacy Coaching

CHAPTER 1

If you are reading this, I imagine that, like me, you have been on a journey. A journey that led you to literacy coaching and leadership and one that continues with celebrations, challenges, and plenty of bends in the road. My literacy coaching journey is built on stories: stories of success and stories of mistakes, peppered with varied stories of the many teachers and students I work with. Each story leaves a lasting impression on my work as a coach and paves the way for new learning. Recently, I hosted a series of professional development sessions for teachers who wanted to explore authentic reading response within their classroom. In those sessions, we returned to our roots as readers, carefully examined our practices, and set goals to renew reading instruction in our classrooms. We read books together, engaged in reading response, and added new digital tools to our instructional repertoire. Each session, we shared our attempts to transfer our learning to the classrooms. A few weeks after our sessions ended, Mary, one of the teachers, pulled me aside to share a heartfelt thank-you for our learning together. She explained our work together gave her the courage to let go of some old practices she was hanging onto in her classroom, giving our new ideas a chance to thrive. She told me about a student who was struggling greatly; after a few weeks of changed reading instruction, not only did this student's reading skills improve, but her motivation and willingness to engage was transformed. She now believed she was a reader. As Mary shared this story and credited our work together for this student's success, tears came to my eyes, and I was reminded just how important our work is not only to teachers but to students.

Not all our stories as literacy coaches are successes. Although my work as a coach had a clear and measurable effect on the students in Mary's classroom, this does not always happen as readily or as easily. I remember working with a kindergarten teacher to help strengthen her small-group reading instruction. I gave her information about what her guided reading lessons could look like, provided her with lesson templates and organizers (with a pretty font and icon that I knew she would appreciate!), modeled a lesson with students in her classroom, and talked about what her next steps might be. I was exhausted, but she was enthusiastic about our work and I looked forward to seeing the changes she would make. Imagine my disappointment when I visited her room a few weeks later to see her teaching her groups in the same way she always had, my resources pushed to the side of her kidney-shaped reading table. In that moment, I was reminded of what a challenging job coaching is, matching the right mix of support to teachers who might not be ready to change . . . yet.

I strongly believe that everything happens for a reason, good or bad, and each story has played a purposeful role in my professional journey. One particular story of mistakes set me on an unexpected but very eventful journey. A few years ago, I taught an online class designed to support teachers as they provided literacy instruction to students experiencing difficulty learning literacy. I was particularly proud of the online experiences I had designed for my courses: a carefully planned sequence of content, updated and powerful journal articles and professional readings, and ample opportunities for teachers to discuss their learning with peers. Yet the jarring, brutally honest feedback from a student stopped me in my tracks. I'll spare you the actual comments, but they went something like "very traditional online course," "need more face-to-face elements," "not in the twenty-first century," and a few more. I'll admit, this was a hard pill to swallow and I choked a bit on the comments. How could something so carefully constructed impact a learner in such a negative way? I could have passed it off as feedback from just one disgruntled student, but that is not in my nature, and I imagine many of you readers can relate. I realized that this student was not personally attacking me, but pushing me to reconsider what is possible for teaching and learning through technology. So, I began to reflect on my practices as a coach and online instructor (with a glass of red wine). I devoured literature on using technology to support teacher learning. I spent countless hours stumbling to learn new digital tools not simply to represent learning, but to transform it. I was on my own learning journey. It is this journey that I hope to share with you as you work to strengthen and transform your own coaching experiences supported through technology.

Powerful Literacy Coaching Practices

The International Literacy Association (2015) defines a literacy coach as a specialized literacy professional who primarily works with teachers and facilitates efforts to improve school literacy programs. Although seemingly a straightforward position, coaching is anything but linear. We are known by many names, work with both teachers and students, and juggle multiple responsibilities to improve classroom literacy practices and lead school reform efforts. On any given day, we might work with students, coach alongside teachers in their classrooms, analyze assessment data, and lead professional development sessions. We might also cover classrooms, tread through mounds of paperwork, shuttle through meetings, and juggle other obligations. What does your coaching position look like? Draw a quick sketch of what your role as a literacy coach looks like in your school. Based on Kaback's (2008) informal "draw-a-reader" assessment, drawing our practices gives us compelling insight into our work as literacy coaches. Don't worry about your drawing skills here, just give it a try. Figure 1.1 shows my own drawing and the drawing of one of the literacy coaches I work with.

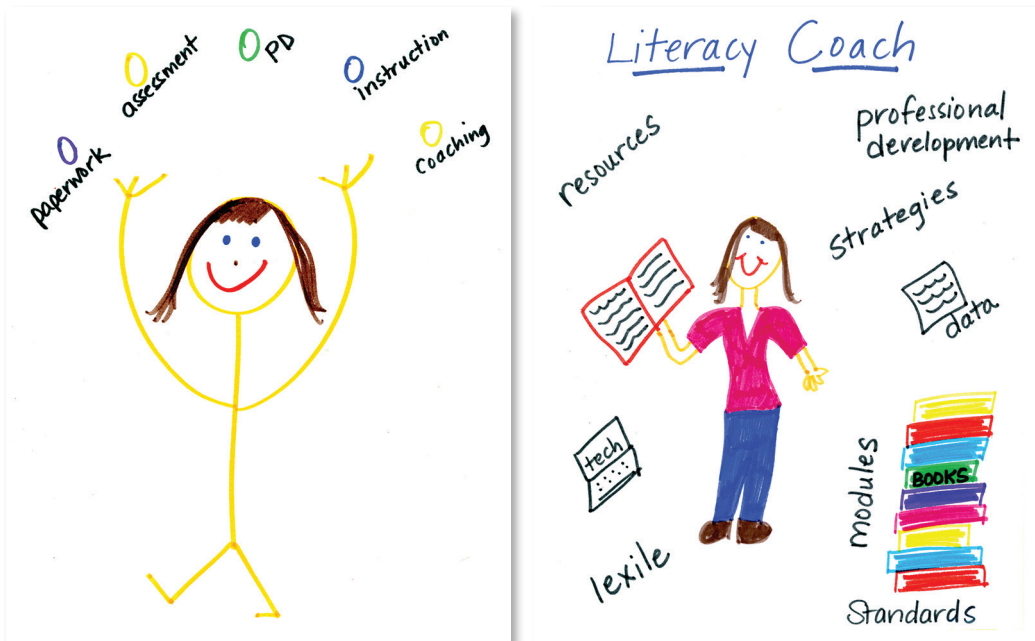


Figure 1.1: Draw-a-Literacy-Coach images from literacy coaches

As you might expect, each of our drawings is different, representing the complex and varied roles we enact in our individual schools and districts. Yet, however unique, common threads bind us together in our efforts to support literacy teaching and learning. Typically, we work with teachers, although many of us also work with students to improve teaching practice. We lead school efforts to improve literacy instruction and student learning. Whether you are a literacy specialist who primarily works with students, a literacy coach who spends most of her time collaborating with teachers, or an administrator who oversees literacy curriculum and assessment in a district, we share a common bond of leading literacy. Some days might be balanced, some not. Some days might feel productive, some not. Each day, we are faced with decisions about how to spend our time as a literacy coach. How do we make these decisions? Some are personal choices based on our visions for the position. Some are mandated based on standards, curriculum and policy. Some are in response to teachers and their students' strengths and needs. Articulating our coaching philosophies—the what, how, and why of the work we do—is essential in leading the learning of others. Just as teaching philosophies and learning histories influence instructional actions within the classroom (Cole and Knowles 2000), our coaching philosophies guide our coaching actions as well (Dozier 2006). Based on my research and practice as a literacy coach and teacher educator, I have developed core beliefs about what literacy coaching is and how it transforms teacher learning.

Focus on Teaching and Learning

Literacy coaching relies on the assumption that coaching practices lead to changes in teacher knowledge and practice, which ultimately result in positive changes in student performance (Lockwood, McCombs, and Marsh 2010; Casey 2006; Dole 2004; International Reading Association [IRA] 2004; Lyons and Pinnell 2001; Moran 2007; Rodgers and Rodgers 2007; Toll 2005; Walpole and McKenna 2008). Literacy coaches cultivate the expertise of literacy teachers in multiple ways. The International Literacy Association's (2015) framework of coaching activities documents the ways we might work with teachers depending on the intensity of our coaching positions (see Figure 1.2).

Our coaching activities might range from building relationships with teachers to analyzing and changing teaching practice. Although any coaching activity has the potential to transform teaching and learning, the more intense collaborations with teachers are better apt to produce the greatest results. Yet, as coaches, we know all too well that higher levels of coaching and teacher engagement can be hard to reach for a variety of reasons. Here are some concrete steps you can take to ensure that your coaching continues moving teachers' instructional practices forward.

Image suppressed due to copyright restrictions.

1. Start with yourself. Take a moment to look at the chart and think about your coaching activities. What level do your coaching activities primarily fit into? Is one level more pronounced than the other? Are there places where your coaching could use a boost of intensity? Keep in mind that lower-level coaching activities are essential to build relationships with teachers that lead to more focused coaching work later on. If you are new to coaching or new to your building, it is essential that you focus on these level 1 activities to build a strong foundation for coaching.
2. Name a goal. Where do you want to make a change in your coaching to strengthen teaching and learning in your school? Do you want to better lead student data meetings and shift the culture from problem admiring to problem solving? Or do you want to carve out more time for modeling and coteaching lessons in the classroom? Make your goal concrete and post it in a place where you can refer to it often.

3. Identify challenges. What challenges might interfere with your more intense coaching work? Whose challenges are they? They might be your own unconscious discomfort or lack of confidence in working with teachers on such intense practices. Or, they might be organizational and school factors that hinder your coaching, such as scheduling issues or the inability to secure substitutes for coaching conferences and professional development.
4. Seek solutions. I once had an administrator say that we should never come to her with a problem unless we already had a possible solution. It changed the culture of the building and helped teachers think out of the box. Match every challenge you identified with a possible solution. Connect with other coaches to share and problem solve coaching challenges.
5. Take a risk. We often talk about literacy coaching in terms of the teachers' experiences—that it can be intimidating and even risky to put yourself out there and work with a coach to better your own teaching practices. But we never seem to talk about how risky that can feel as a coach as well. We might doubt our own abilities, feel insecure working with particular personalities, and choose lower-level coaching activities because they are simply more comfortable. But if we never take a risk, we never know what could have been and how many student lives we could have impacted if we had only given it a try. Start small, with interested teachers ready for more intense coaching, to build your confidence in a new coaching practice. Then slowly shift your coaching to higher levels of intensity with other teachers, based on your new coaching experiences and their readiness to engage.
6. Repeat. Over time, your own coaching skills grow in parallel with your teachers' instruction. Be sure to set new goals for yourself, and your teachers, as you gain newfound skills and confidence.

Be Responsive to Teachers and Students

To be effective, literacy coaches must be responsive to the needs of schools, teachers, and students (Dozier 2006; Ippolito 2008; Killion 2008; Rainville and Jones 2008; Smith 2009; Toll 2005) and cultivate a shared sense of inquiry into literacy instruction: “Responsive coaching is about learning—learning together, collaborating with colleagues, reflecting and creating spaces for

inquiry” (Dozier 2006, 139). Coaches observe student engagement and response to instruction, collaborate to teach lessons and try new instructional techniques with teachers, and ensure that our support is varied and relevant for each teacher we work with. Literacy coaches help teachers become more analytical about their work, support teachers’ application of knowledge, develop skills, polish technique, and deepen teachers’ understanding (Lyons and Pinnell 2001). A literacy coach should not be viewed as an expert, but as someone quite knowledgeable about literacy instruction who grows alongside of the teachers she coaches. A few years back in a professional development session, a teacher posed a question to our group. Before other teachers could respond, one teacher interrupted and said, “Let the expert answer.” I quickly discouraged this thinking and reminded teachers that although I may have had specialized literacy knowledge to share, they were experts on their students, not me, and that makes us learners on an equal playing field. Coaches and teachers must work alongside each other in pursuit of increased knowledge, strengthened instruction, and high levels of student performance.

As coaches, we must be flexible and respond to teachers and students in ways that meet their strengths, needs, and personal goals. We may have broad coaching goals, but the individual goals and activities we engage in with teachers are quite unique. For example, your school might be focusing on elevating small-group reading instruction as a building literacy goal. To support this work, you might provide whole-faculty professional development on small-group instruction, but your individual work with teachers will be varied. One teacher might focus on elevating her classroom management to allow for working with small groups of students, another might need to focus on using assessment results to guide his groupings, and yet another might be ready to create reading toolkits and demonstration notebooks. As coaches, we put our own assumptions aside and instead meet teachers where they are in their learning, even if it’s not the starting place we would have hoped for or originally envisioned. As teachers grow and change, we alter our coaching plans and goals accordingly.

Engage in Mindful and Intentional Practice

Just as children learn something from our actions in the classroom, intentional or not, teachers also learn from our actions as literacy coaches. The professional development presentations, assessment meetings, coaching conversations, and every interaction in between send a message to teachers about literacy teaching, learning, and assessment. Therefore, each and every one of our actions needs to be a mindful, intentional model for the teachers we work with and must match the kinds of pedagogy we are advocating for in the classroom. We can’t possibly expect teachers

to implement a workshop model in their classroom by providing a brief, one-shot lecture-style session describing what a workshop classroom looks, feels, and sounds like. If we want teachers to act as facilitators for personalized learning, we have to engage them in an actual workshop approach: modeling minilessons, conferences, and share time; and giving teachers time to explore, ask questions, and collaborate with others.

Our literacy coaching practices must be clear and consistent models for literacy instruction. But our work cannot stop at modeling alone. In the classroom, we don't simply model what students should do without any additional guidance, scaffolding, or feedback. They need an explicit connection and an invitation to engage. We notice and name the specific strategies they are using as readers and writers and provide a concrete reminder of the ways they can help themselves as learners long after we leave. Teachers need and deserve the same care and attention. In your work with teachers:

1. Ensure that your coaching practices align with the pedagogy that you expect your teachers to transfer to their own classrooms. Are you encouraging teachers to take a workshop approach in their classroom? Ensure your professional development includes a whole-faculty lesson with explicit modeling, with time for teachers to engage in independent reflection and collaboration with others, and ends with a whole-faculty sharing. Are you sharing close reading practices to try in the classroom? Ensure that your session includes plenty of opportunities for teachers to read, annotate, and reflect together.
2. Notice and name the instructional moves you made as a coach as a model for your teachers. Did you survey teachers before beginning your session to drive your planning or session activities? Did you ask teachers to share their thinking and questions during the session using a virtual bulletin board or back channel? Specifically name the moves you made as a coach to facilitate teacher learning and talk about how those choices matter for teachers' learning as well as for their students' learning.
3. Extend an invitation for teachers to apply their own learning to their classrooms and back up the invitation with support. Move beyond the "You could try this in your classroom" comment at the end of a session and instead explicitly ask

teachers to have a go and connect to their classrooms. Offer coaching and resources along the way and follow up with personalized feedback.

4. When teachers try something new in their classrooms based on your work together, celebrate and share. Together, build a culture of learning that permeates classroom walls and celebrates continued learning.

Coach in Response to Changing Literacies

Literacy today looks different than it did twenty years ago. In fact, literacy today looks different than it did one year ago! Education within the twenty-first century requires that we continually reimagine our definition of literacy and literacy instruction in the classroom. Literacy in today's times:

- * changes our habits as readers (Bass and Sibberson 2015) and how readers share, discuss, and analyze text (Serafini and Youngs 2013; Serafini 2015)
- * requires we participate in new mind-sets, identities, and practices (Vasquez 2010) and new social practices, skills, strategies, and dispositions (IRA 2009)
- * is multitextual, multimodal, and multifaceted (IRA 2009)
- * demands we use text, technology, and media critically and strategically for reading, composing, and learning (Muhtaris and Ziemke 2015).

Our classroom literacy instruction must shift and change in response to these new mind-sets and dispositions. The National Council for Teachers of English provides guidance on the kinds of teaching a twenty-first-century, global society demands. Today's classrooms must:

- * Develop proficiency and fluency with the tools of technology;
- * Build intentional cross-cultural connections and relationships with others so [as] to pose and solve problems collaboratively and strengthen independent thought;
- * Design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes;
- * Manage, analyze, and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information;

- * Create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multimedia texts;
- * Attend to the ethical responsibilities required by these complex environments.
(National Council for Teachers of English 2015)

Literacy teachers around the world are called on to amplify their instruction (Muhtaris and Ziemke 2015) with digital tools and other forms of technology to ensure students authentically create, communicate, collaborate, and learn together. We are asked to open our classroom doors, connect with other teachers and classrooms, and use technology in new, academic ways to strengthen creativity, learning, and motivation. We must provide new avenues for reading, writing, and discussing learning; provide access and ownership for all students; and build a community of learners that introduces students to worlds beyond their classroom walls, giving an authentic and connected audience for their literate work (Muhtaris and Ziemke 2015). Before teachers can imagine the ways technology can transform classroom instruction, they must first see the power and possibilities for such work in their own professional learning communities. To truly transform teacher learning, we must develop new practices that make use of the very tools and resources teachers might use in their own twenty-first-century classrooms. Literacy coaching offers particular promise for embedding these tools into our work.

Transform Literacy Coaching with Digital Tools

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2017) defines the word *transform* as “to change in composition or structure; to change the outward form or appearance of; to change in character or condition.” Although the word might conjure up a grand vision of completely reimagining ourselves as literacy coaches, in reality, we transform our coaching all the time on different levels: in response to literacy policy and curriculum mandates, in response to new research and professional ideas, in response to teachers and students, and even in response to our own selves. Sometimes these transformations are welcomed, sometimes they are required, but each one has the potential to positively shift our practices. So why transform our literacy coaching with technology and digital tools? Technology has the ability to expand what is possible for coaching to make teacher learning more meaningful, relevant, and authentic. It can create global connections and expose teachers to worlds outside of their immediate classrooms. It has the potential to strengthen practice and teacher expertise through multimodal tools to help teachers become part of something larger than themselves.

We transform teacher learning through technology so teachers can integrate strengthened literacy practices into their classrooms. Through technology, teachers can collaborate, communicate, and learn in new ways they may not have yet experienced, meeting The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)'s (2016) standard of “tapping into technology’s potential to amplify human capacity for collaboration, creativity and communication.” You might think this work sounds like what a technology coach might do, but I am less focused on helping teachers implement digital tools into their classrooms and more focused on helping them use those tools to transform learning and professional practice. For example, fourth-grade teachers in upstate New York wanted to rethink the role reading logs play in their classrooms. During my time with them, I facilitated a session that began with a discussion about our current practices with reading logs and student responses. I shared compelling blog posts, graphics, and tweets to enrich the conversation. Using the name of the most recent book they had read, I asked teachers to fill out a traditional book log and add a digital Padlet tile to our Padlet wall: “Share a Book, Steal a Book” for comparison. Figure 1.3 outlines the session agenda.

My intent was to expand teachers’ ideas of reading accountability in the classroom, and I used technology to help me accomplish that goal. My focus was on pedagogy made possible through multiple means of technology. My ultimate goal was not to have teachers use digital reading logs in the classroom, but to rethink their practices and make connections to their own classrooms.

The Role of Reading Logs

Whole Group Discussion:

- What role do reading logs currently play in our classrooms?
- How are students responding to them?

Try It:

- Complete a reading log entry on the most recent book you have read.
- Add a tile to our Padlet Wall: Steal A Book, Share A Book.

Whole Group Discussion:

- How were the two logs different in form, function and authenticity?
- What purpose did each serve?
- How do they support, or hinder, our identities as readers?

Individual Reading and Small Group Discussion:

- Blog post from LitCoachLady: Should we replace reading logs?
- Tweet from NCTE: 10 Ways to Ditch That Reading Log

Whole Group Sharing:

- What will you consider or rethink? What could you share?

Tweet:

Carol Jago @CarolJago · 10 Apr 2016
 Have you ever picked up a book and said to yourself, "I think I'll practice my reading skills"? Me neither.
 1 109 131

Figure 1.3: Agenda for “The Role of Reading Logs” professional development session

Literacy coaching with digital tools is not just coaching *with* digital tools, but coaching *through* digital tools, a critical distinction.

Tools for Literacy Coaching

Teaching tools help guide our teaching and our students' learning (Roberts and Beattie Roberts 2016). They help make our teaching clear, bring ideas and goals to life, and help learning stick. Literacy coaches have their own set of varied coaching tools to guide their coaching and learning. Think about all the coaching tools you use daily. Take a quick inventory and see what you discover. Just because technology is changing the way we work, learn, and play does not mean that the traditional coaching tools we rely on are obsolete. They still have an important role in our coaching. Here are some common, traditional literacy coaching tools:

- * large pieces of chart paper or sticky notes
- * notebooks and notepaper
- * copies of needed papers and handouts
- * in-person discussion
- * printed books, lessons, and teaching artifacts.

Now, let's link them to the purpose that they serve in our coaching. Large pieces of chart paper or sticky notes encourage collaboration and represent the shared thinking of a group. Notebooks and note papers act as individual reflection tools to write down compelling thoughts and save important information for later use. Copies of handouts and papers, along with printed books, lessons, and teaching artifacts, ground the conversation in actual teaching and learning. Finally, in-person conversation is the medium in which we learn.

Fueled by interactions with others, we deepen our understanding, question our practices, and search for answers to our own questions. Even as the world around us becomes more and more advanced, we still rely on these old-fashioned, traditional coaching tools because our purpose of using them has remained the same. We still collaborate, we still grapple with big ideas, and we carefully analyze our teaching and assessment practices, yet technology has provided us with greater options for accomplishing these tasks. Options that can increase motivation and make teaching and learning more relevant, authentic, and immediate can transform our work. Let's look at how our traditional tools might expand and change into digital possibilities. Figure 1.4 offers a few ideas.

TRADITIONAL TOOL	DIGITAL TOOL
Large pieces of chart paper or sticky notes	Digital walls and bulletin boards
Notebooks and notepaper	Google Docs or other digital note-taking
Copies of needed papers and handouts	Digital curation of materials
In-person discussion	Digital and virtual conversations, tweets, and posts
Printed books, lessons, and teaching artifacts	Digital books, lessons, and teaching artifacts

Figure 1.4: *Traditional literacy coaching tools and digital transformations*

As we reimagine our coaching tools, we reimagine our coaching practices, which can shift, change, and expand through technology. Figure 1.5 provides a few examples to spark your thinking.

Literacy Coaching WITHOUT TECHNOLOGY	Literacy Coaching WITH/THROUGH TECHNOLOGY
Oral conversations with teachers throughout the school across the school day	Digital conversations with teachers across schools, days, and time zones
Create curriculum and lessons during after-school meetings and on curriculum days	Collaboratively create curriculum and lessons anytime and anywhere using collaborative documents
Meet to discuss a professional text in a book study	Participate in a digital community or use social media to discuss a professional text
Copy and share documents and lesson materials with other teachers	Curate documents and other materials digitally using digital bulletin boards
Discuss student learning in data meetings	Document and analyze student learning using digital tools and portfolios
Meet to discuss teaching interests and areas for inquiry into practice	Connect digitally and virtually to discuss teaching and practice
Create professional development sessions on a common topic	Create on-demand resources and tutorials for teachers to personalize their own learning

Figure 1.5: *Literacy coaching activities with and without technology*

As you can see, we do not abandon what we know works with our coaching in pursuit of using technology. Instead, we rely on what we know to be good coaching to connect with our teachers and cultivate their teaching expertise. We provide individual teachers with the tools they need to transform their own learning and develop in their own teaching journey. We must ensure that each tool we use has a specific purpose and has the potential to impact teacher learning. To truly transform our work, we must transform teachers' experiences, their minds, and their own mind-sets for learning. At times, more traditional tools will be more effective and at other times, digital tools may make the most impact.

Privilege Pedagogy Over Technology

As Muhtaris and Ziemke (2015) remind us, technology amplifies instruction. I would add that it amplifies instruction regardless of the quality of it. If you add technology to effective teaching, such as using digital devices in a well-established reading workshop, you end up with amplified effective teaching that changes students' ideas and perceptions of what reading is and could be. If you add technology to ineffective teaching, you end up with amplified ineffective teaching that simply reinforces students' single stories about themselves (Hale 2015). In her ISTE speech, Katharine Hale warns of the dangers of using technology in ways that do not expand students' ideas of what is possible for themselves, offering a powerful message for teachers.

Hale cautions against using apps that require students to answer questions in a quiz or game show fashion. In a traditional quiz setting, only the smartest, fastest kids get the answer first. With the technology, the activity might look more appealing and seem more effective, but essentially, the smartest and fastest students are still getting the answers first and the students

who need more processing time and/or practice are still lagging behind. But now, results are showcased for all to see on a large screen. As Serafini (2015) reminds us, "If it doesn't help children as readers, it doesn't matter how shiny the new object is" (7). This same thinking applies

to our work with teachers. If the tool does not support teacher learning, then why use it? We cannot add technology to our teaching and coaching just for the sake of adding technology to our teaching and coaching. If the tool does not provide any benefit to teachers' own learning and teaching, then don't use it. If the tool only provides a shinier object for teachers to teach in the

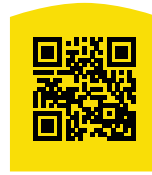


Scan the QR (Quick Response) code to view Katharine Hale's ISTE speech.
<http://bit.ly/2BcBZ3Z>

same old way, then abandon it. As literacy coaches, we must model careful, intentional, strategic, and authentic use of technology to help teachers imagine a classroom where technology is used to reimagine ourselves.

The ultimate validation for me as coach is to see the content and practices I share with teachers come to life in the classroom. I love receiving emails from teachers about something they tried, getting a text from a colleague celebrating a new practice, or seeing evidence of that work on social media or teacher community sites. It reminds me of the power we have as literacy leaders to impact teaching and learning on a larger scale. Our work with teachers changes their practice to impact students. Paired with digital tools, not only can we model literacy content and instructional practices to strengthen literacy instruction, but we can model intentional, authentic, and connected work with technology for students as well.

Once you have an idea of what you might hope to see in your teachers' classrooms, you can use that information to help shape the choices you make as a coach. If you know you need to shift the culture of student reading in the classroom and envision students using digital reading logs, you might start by creating opportunities for your teachers to experience the benefits in your coaching first. If you know you want to encourage teachers to differentiate instruction and allow for greater student choice, you might model how to do so with Google Forms and Surveys in your professional development. If you are interested in additional guidance to support technology innovations in the classroom, be sure to explore ISTE standards.



Scan the QR code to view the
ISTE Standards for Educators.
<http://bit.ly/2u8tRtL>

Authenticity, Intentionality, and Connectedness

In their work on creating engaged classrooms through the lens of digital reading, Bass and Sibberson (2015) offer three anchors to guide teachers' classroom instruction both with and without technology:

- * Authenticity: keep reading a meaningful experience that extends beyond the classroom.
- * Intentionality: make meaningful choices as readers.
- * Connectedness: find and create connections between texts, readers, and experiences.

Although these anchors were originally intended to guide classroom literacy instruction, they can and should guide our literacy coaching as well, and they have been particularly powerful anchors for my own work. Here is how I make the parallel connection:

- * **Authenticity:** keep teacher learning a meaningful experience that impacts and extends beyond the classroom. Digital tools can personalize teacher learning and help us own our teaching practices, reflect on our instruction, and learn through technology.
- * **Intentionality:** make meaningful choices as teachers and instructional leaders. Provide teachers with choices in their own learning and the digital tools they use to meet their learning needs. We cannot make intentional decisions about our own teaching and learning unless we have multiple opportunities, contexts, and tools to choose among.
- * **Connectedness:** find and create connections between texts, teachers, classrooms, and experiences. Digital tools can harness the power of sharing and community. They can engage and connect teachers across previously existing boundaries and bring us together as a community of learners both inside and outside our school walls.

Just as we privilege pedagogy in the classroom, we must do so as coaches. All too often, I have seen the focus placed on the tool over the learning. We have “appy-hours,” “speed-apping” sessions, and more. Although they might seem appealing and introduce us to new digital tools, simply learning about and gaining fluency with digital tools is not enough. We must use them to strengthen teaching and learning. This starts with our coaching.

How This Book Is Organized

This first chapter introduced you to literacy coaching with digital tools and provided a framework for using technology to support teacher learning. In the remaining chapters, we explore the varied ways you can use technology to support teacher learning based on the common roles we take on as literacy coaches: building teacher learning communities, creating professional development experiences, and engaging in intentional classroom coaching.

Chapter 2: Innovate Teacher Learning Communities

In Chapter 2, I share how you might use technology to transform the learning community within your school. You will learn how to cultivate teachers' reading lives, create spaces for teacher learning, and cultivate your personal learning network alongside your teachers.

Chapter 3: Redesign Professional Development

In this chapter, I tackle professional development and offer numerous suggestions on how to use technology to differentiate your sessions, better engage teachers in their own learning, and curate useful instructional resources. You will learn about “flipped coaching” and imagine the possibilities for your own work.

Chapter 4: Collaborate with Teachers to Impact Student Learning

Intentional classroom coaching is at the heart of our work. In this chapter, you will reflect on your own coaching experiences and the decisions that drive your work in classrooms. I will share digital ways to plan, organize, and conference with teachers to elevate the level of literacy instruction in classrooms.

Chapter 5: Find Inspiration

In the final chapter of the book, I urge you to find inspiration for your continued journey. Inspiration can come in many forms: seeking out others, fueling your own professional learning, and staying connected. You will learn how to organize yourself for the journey ahead and take care of your professional digital footprint.



One of the teachers I work with has a coffee trivet that says “Life begins at the end of your comfort zone.” As you read the chapters ahead, you might find that you feel a bit out of your comfort zone. Pause, take a deep breath, and realize this is actually a sign that you are ready to envision new possibilities for yourself, your teachers and their students. Throughout the chapters, you will find strategic “Launching Points” designed to help you pause, reflect, and identify a starting point for your work with technology. I have woven my stories of successes and mistakes throughout each chapter in the hope they will help you on your own journey to transform teacher learning as we coach in an ever-changing society. I also introduce you to the literacy coaches I work closely

with to showcase their efforts and spark inspiration. You'll meet Shelley Fenton, Kristen Abrams, Krista Senatore, and other literacy coaches from New York kind enough to share their practices with you. Challenge yourself to learn something new, infuse your coaching with digital tools and technology, and empower teacher learning through innovative practices that inspire authentic change for the classroom as well.