



READY FOR
THE WORLD

From rocks to roots

A transformative coaching journey

AISACT Literacy and Numeracy Coaching Academy

Presenter: Julia Davies-Duff
e: Julia.davies-duff@cgs.act.edu.au



Original long term goals

Extend collaborative relationships to support students with additional needs

Develop communities of practice to raise outcomes for students with additional needs



- Our department – Learning Development - supports students with additional needs.
- We wanted to start building capacity within staff to support students with additional needs independently
- We wanted to build understanding of the (often unseen) challenges students with needs face
- We wanted to begin to change attitudes and dispositions of staff, but also to equip them with skills to benefit *all* students
- We wanted to start building inclusion and a growth mindset towards students with additional needs

Recap: misshapen mossy rocks that won't roll

Last year's journey:

- Rock rolling attempts
- Picking square rocks
- Chipping off corners
- Mossy rocks
- r...o...l...l...i...n...g.....stop



- We had a difficult journey last year.
- Although our goals were clear we encountered many obstacles we had not considered.
- We had to change our 'path' many times and reassess our focus while still aligning with our goals
- The changes resulted in us having a clear idea of the strengths of our department and how we could use them to ameliorate the weaknesses of its small size
- We realised the focus of the coaching relationship was on the coaching process itself, using numeracy as a vehicle; not numeracy coaching specifically
- Once we realised this we felt quite empowered and realised how we could adapt the work we had done so far to reach other departments

From rocks to roots

Slow permeation through the school year

Term 1 to Term 3 increase in interest

Static 'rock' allowed development of strong roots



- I started to re-kindle the relationship with the Year 1 coachee at the beginning of this year, but due to staffing changes – both in their department and mine, this meant we could not meet as much as possible
- I realised that a coaching relationship was not what they wanted and I needed to change my approach
- I put out 'expressions of interest' to staff from all departments about the type of support they wanted from our department
- Term 1 – 0 Responses;
- Term 2 – 1 response – but after repeated options to meet up, the relationship did not materialise
- Term 3 – 3 responses
- I felt the effort we had put in last year to raise the profile of our department through the coaching process had reached more staff than I realised
- Meetings were made with the 3 members of staff and were based on the request for support they asked for
- Individual short term goals were formed and formalised and observations scheduled
- I adapted the 'attitudes and dispositions' questionnaire originally designed for numeracy, to other subject areas and asked them to complete it – the answers

then formed the basis for further 'informal' and non-threatening conversation.

- Observations were conducted and specific feedback given – verbally and in written form, based on the original goals.

Deep roots forming

Possible support for inclusion in school's Professional Appreciation Cycle and Probation

Coaching tools established, usable and can be generalised to any department

Moving towards a more authentic culture



- Time spent establishing questionnaire format and defining processes to support staff meant I had the confidence to approach the coordinator of the schools 'Professional Appreciation Cycle' and 'Probation' process for new staff. This was well-received and is being considered.
- Referral/request form has worked well and I will present this to all staff at the beginning of each new term
- I decided to initially offer support as a 'one-off/short-term' coaching session with the option to continue if the coachee wanted.
- I felt the initial coaching process outline was putting potential coachees off, and being such a large school it was very difficult to manage time to meet and commit
- The questionnaire was easy to complete, evoked some reflection on current strengths and gaps in understanding, and enabled progress to be measured
- The questionnaire easily transferred to all departments and therefore can be generalised to include all members of staff if needed
- I feel that we are moving positively towards a more authentic culture of understanding of students with additional needs, and have some tools to help embed 'seeds' of understanding that will continue to grow and develop over time
- The roots will grow slowly, but they have the potential to be stable and far-reaching

Successes and challenges

3 'coachees'; 3 different outcomes...so far

1st - 'block' after observation and feedback

2nd – used feedback, but currently not interested in follow-up

3rd – actively sought feedback, acted on feedback, self-monitored progress and a collaborative relationship developed



- With the 3 coaches I worked with to-date, I have had 3 different outcome:
- 1st coachee – did not seek any follow-up and did not respond to the feedback I gave relating to the goal identified. I have asked if they want to discuss their answers on the questionnaire and to have an informal 'coffee catch-up' rather than a formal follow-up. I have received no response and will not pursue it, although I will ask for feedback on my role to help with further interactions with other staff.
- 2nd coachee – was very happy with the verbal feedback I gave regarding their lesson and although they did not want to formally follow up anything, nor discuss the questionnaire answers, a quick 'check-in' suggests that they have been using some of the strategies suggested and have seen some improvements in their class
- 3rd coachee – found the questionnaire fascinating and even before the observation wanted to discuss elements of relevance. They readily accepted some suggestions and although sceptical of some suggestions as they went against what they thought was the right strategy for some of the students, they implemented them with trust. They were very surprised at the success of these. We made time to have an informal chat and I was able to explain some underlying difficulties that contribute to the difficulties some students with additional needs face in order to deepen understanding of the strategies I suggested.
- The 3rd coachee gave me invaluable feedback on the way I provided feedback to

them

- We were both transformed through the coaching relationship

Evidence of increased student outcomes

- 13/24 recordings of improved understanding of strategies to support additional needs
- 8 of these 13 are +2 score jumps
- 1 'avoider' and defiant student has chosen the subject as an elective next year
- 2nd coachee – deeper understanding of function of student behaviour – benefitting all students



- Comparison between the 'baseline' and 'post-support' questionnaire shows a very positive improvement in understanding of key strategies and terminology that support students with additional needs.
- 13 out of the 24 questions showed an improvement on the 5 point likert scale; 8 of these 13 were 2 or more scale jumps
- Increased understanding of key elements shared with us on the numeracy coaching days: gradual release of responsibility, direct instruction, pre-testing and progress-monitoring; as well as key terminology used in special educational needs
- 1 of the students, who is well known as a school avoider and has difficulty attending has shown big improvements in effort and has actually chosen the subject as an elective next year. He will still need considerable support, but feels he is succeeding. Although still early and too tentative to make a direct link, there have been reports of his increased engagement in some other subjects.
- An increased understanding of the function of problematic students' behaviour has enabled the 2nd coachee to better manage the students. The class is starting to run more smoothly and this will benefit the other students, and hopefully the teachers new students next year

Transformative effects on me as coach

- Increased confidence
- Fulfillment
- Embedded principles
- New understanding from the ISQ Professional Development courses



- The 2 year process has had a **transformative** effect on me.
- It has given me a tool to deliver support and build understanding of an area I am passionate about – special educational needs – in a format that is generalisable and beneficial to all parties who engage in the process.
- It has given me confidence to interact with many different personalities and collaborate with staff across different departments
- Many of the coaching process tools have been very fulfilling and have become an intrinsic and embedded part of the way I interact with others – both on a professional and personal level
- I have utilised many of the tools learnt on the ISQ Professional Development courses during the 2-year cycle:
 - Differentiation – Kathleen Kryza – I have planned and will be conducting CPLs to staff to share the information
 - Making thinking visible – Mark Church – conversational input on considering viewpoints and simple ways of working with diverse learners
 - Deepening the coaching process – Jim Knight – partnership principles, such as equality and voice. This has been the most useful and again, I use what I have learnt on a professional and personal level.

....and the numeracy aspect?

Good relationship with the Head of Maths

Increased appreciation of the role our department can have in Maths teaching

Use of the Maths Scope & Sequence and Numeracy Learning Continuum as a resource to aid differentiation

Hoping to build the relationship further



- Although the original numeracy coaching relationship did not survive, it facilitated an access point into the maths department and enabled me to show that our department can work collaboratively and successfully together with theirs.
- It facilitated increased communication with the Head of Maths and this positive relationship has opened up opportunities to collaborate with other HODs.
- The improved relationship has had far-reaching implications for collaborative opportunities to support students who are potentially gifted
- Through the numeracy coaching days I gained a deeper understanding of the Numeracy Continuum and was required to attend more to the Mathematics Scope and Sequence. As official documents, presenting them as a framework to identify where students may lie and how to differentiate for them effectively has given gravitas to any suggestions I make. Last year, one of our hurdles was the resistance to being told how to teach maths to a maths teacher by a special education teacher. These documents allow a level playing field.
- I have since used corresponding documents in my interactions with other departments to similar effect.

- I am keen to continue to build relationships with the Maths department and also bring more numeracy understanding into other subject areas who rely on numerical understanding, e.g. science and geography

Summary

- Goals are being accomplished
- Collaboration is happening
- Attitudes and dispositions towards students with additional needs are changing slowly
- Evidence of improvements in some student outcomes
- Coaching is on the way to becoming an embedded practice in our department, and the school

Conclusion

It seems my original rock was really an acorn!

- Deep roots
- Growth, not movement
- Little topsoil between goals and emerging strength .

Small successes = possible transformative process for others (who want to come on the journey)



It seems my difficult 'rock' journey from last year was all because my mossy, difficult to move metaphorical 'rock' was really an acorn and the coaching process needed its refusal to be moved to develop into something stronger, and much more permeating through the school.

As the roots are going deeper and deeper, there is much growth and very little topsoil between my goals and emerging strength.

I hope I can continue to have successes with those who want to come on the journey with me; and also hope that the evidence of the small successes in student outcomes encourages staff to approach me or seek guidance.

From little things big things grow!

READY FOR
THE WORLD

THANK YOU

Any questions/clarifications?