

**Where**

University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Who

Dr. Marcia Rock, Associate Professor

What

Bug-in-ear (BIE) coaching supports both inservice and preservice general and special educators with immediate and direct feedback for improving the effectiveness of their instruction.

Purpose

Drawing on the research on the relationship between immediate feedback and effective instruction, BIE coaching provides candidates with real-time support in improving instruction and behavior management strategies during the act of teaching.

Description

The flexibility of BIE coaching makes it useful for a wide variety of educators. Dr. Rock has used this approach with preservice teachers, beginning within the first year of their careers, and with established teachers who have as many as 20 years of teaching experience.

BIE coaching delivers specific, descriptive commentary directly into the ears of teacher candidates while they are engaged in the act of teaching. The coach observes a candidate virtually through video streaming and provides in-time feedback and support through Bluetooth technology. This approach can be used by teacher educators to support candidates in improving their instruction in specific content areas as well in positive behavior management. Because the BIE coaching sessions are cognitively intense, Dr. Rock has found that 20 to 30 minutes of BIE support is sufficient. The frequency and duration of observations and BIE coaching sessions can be adjusted by the teacher educator based on individual candidates' learning needs and the goals of their teacher preparation program.

In Dr. Rock's experiences, many candidates initially feel nervous about juggling delivery of complex instruction and classroom management while receiving continuous feedback from a coach. Within 3 to 5 minutes of the teaching session, however, most candidates are able to adjust to the auditory stimuli and to teach and respond to the coaching prompts. In fact, many teachers grow to appreciate the in-time support as well as the "extra eyes and ears" that the coach provides in the classroom.

The typical BIE coaching experience at the preservice level begins with the coach greeting the candidate, cooperative teacher, and students virtually through Skype and reminding the candidate of the instructional goals toward which he or she is working.

When Dr. Rock delivers in-time support to teachers, she embraces a running dialogue with her candidates that she describes as “4:1.” That is, she provides candidates with four specific, positive comments for every one constructive comment aimed at improvement. During the coaching session, Dr. Rock also takes prolific field notes. At the end of the coaching session, Dr. Rock briefly meets with each candidate and provides him or her with a summary of the effective practices that she observed, along with feedback on one or two areas where the candidate has room for improvement. Candidates are expected to adjust their instruction based on feedback and to self-monitor progress toward achieving their goals. Typically, Dr. Rock meets with teacher candidates once each month to follow up on their progress monitoring efforts and the evidence that they have documented toward meeting their goals. She describes this experience as empowering for the candidates; it teaches them to embrace a growth mind-set and supports them in developing resiliency.

Impact

Through her experience, Dr. Rock has observed that BIE coaching stimulates candidates to engage in reflective practice while they are teaching in the classroom. “My voice becomes their voice over time,” she reflects. As candidates listen to Dr. Rock’s supportive comments while they are teaching, they begin to develop their own internal dialogue, which fosters a more analytical perspective on their instruction.