

**ENCOURAGING EST TEACHER
TO USE ICT EQUIPMENT IN TEACHING
THROUGH PEER COACHING**

By

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Abstract

This action research was done to find out whether EST teachers can be encouraged to use ICT equipment in teaching through peer coaching. This paper presents how the research was carried out with an EST teacher in SMK St. Luke, Sri Aman and the findings obtained from the research. Only one EST teacher in the school was involved. The technique of peer coaching provided opportunities for the teacher to learn research skills and design PowerPoint slides before carrying out lessons using presentation in class. Data was collected through observations, interviews and journal writing. I discovered that the teacher finds this technique more effective and interesting for herself and her students. The students in her class like this technique of teaching.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

English for Science and Technology (EST) was introduced as an elective paper for upper secondary school students in this country five years ago. The syllabus was written in line with globalization and advancement in information and communications technology (ICT). It is geared towards preparing students for this new era by training them to gain knowledge and use it for advancement in various fields, especially in science and technology, and studies at tertiary level. The main aim of this syllabus is to provide students with the language basis to access and understand materials on science and technology and to express ideas and concepts in English (Syllabus Specification for EST).

My school is located about 2 kilometres from Sri Aman town. There are about 1,100 students in my school. About 60 percent (%) of the students are Bumiputra, 30% Chinese and 10% Malay. The classes are from Remove Class to Form 5. There are six classes in Form 5; two in Science stream (one class pure Science and the other one semi Science) and four in the Arts Stream. Generally, the students in this school are from the average income group. Not many of them are exposed to the ICT skills except those

who have access to the internet at home. Many students visit the cyber cafe for games and not so much to find information.

In my school, it is compulsory for all the students in the Science stream to take EST. In 2006, I taught two Form 5 classes the EST subject. The students in the first class (pure Science class) were generally more responsive if compared to the second class (semi Science class). I noticed that many of them regarded this subject as an examination subject. They studied EST for the sake of passing the examination. This is totally in contrary to the basic aim of studying EST as specified earlier. Very often, I found myself being influenced by the students; or might be the other way round. So, in order to break away from this exam-oriented mentality, I carried out an action research in 2006 to help students break away from the exam-oriented mentality through presentations (Lucy, 2006). Besides, the research was done to find out whether students could master the basic skills of doing presentation in class using PowerPoint slides.

As a whole, students in that class like doing presentations and they admitted that this technique is interesting and could really help them when they further their studies later. They were given opportunity to practice their presentation skills, do PowerPoint slides and enhance their skills in doing research. In addition, they managed to gain more knowledge from the topics presented by their friends. As for myself, I would say that doing presentations in class not only captured the students' interests and attention. It also helps students to practice other skills like doing research, taking notes, designing slides, communicating with others publicly and answering questions spontaneously. I used to share my findings with my colleagues who are teaching EST. The responses I received from many of them were that this technique is too time consuming. They said that preparing the students to score well in the examination is their primary and only concern. Moreover, most of them said that they are not good in handling the ICT equipment.

In this study, I managed to encourage through peer coaching one of my colleagues, the head of the English panel, to use this technique of teaching and learning in her class.

MY RESEARCH PARTNER, MY COLLEAGUE AND I

I am a teacher based in SMK St. Luke, Sri Aman. I taught English Language in lower forms since 1992 after getting my Certificate in Teaching TESL from Batu Lintang Teachers' College. I usually found teaching English a tough job because not many students are interested in learning this language (even now!). I faced lots of disappointments and frustrations. Of course there were a handful of those who were enthusiastic and they became my source of

consolation when they got good grades in the examinations. After obtaining my degree from University of Malaya in 2000, I started to teach the upper forms. I faced the same situations, same disappointments and same frustrations!

When EST was introduced in 2004, I was rather skeptical about it. My initial thought was that it would be a wasted effort of the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) to introduce this subject especially to the Science stream students. In my opinion, English Language is already a big problem for them to master and why would the authority concerned make lives more difficult for English teachers and also the students? It is an elective subject but many schools including my school make it compulsory for Science stream students to take this subject.

I was asked to teach the subject but I was not very keen indeed. Thus, I did not study the Curriculum Specification (CS) in detail. I thought it was just another subject for students to pass in the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM). I had lots of dissatisfactions and complaints! I taught the subject as an exam-oriented subject. I used 'chalk-and-talk' technique most of the time though I tried my best to find interesting topics and reading materials for my students. I do not know how much agony or damage I have brought and caused to my students then!

In 2005, I was recommended by my then principal to go for an action research workshop conducted by the lecturers from Batu Lintang Teachers' College. I went though I knew very little about action research at that time. During the workshop, we were asked to reflect on our teaching and tried to identify a problem that we were facing. Then, I realized that my teaching technique for EST was not very suitable and I wanted to find a better one, at least one that would make the students enjoy the lessons more. Only then I started to study the CS for EST in detail. As I studied the CS, I found out that the main aim in studying EST is not to pass the SPM examination but more to that. Since then, I have managed to complete two action research on improving my teaching techniques for EST and to make EST more fun to learn. I am happy to say that both the research were successfully carried out and my students gained lots of benefits from them.

My research partner for this action research is the English Language Coordinator in the Education Department in my area, a role he has undertaken since September 2004. Based in the Divisional Education Office, his role is to support the policy of the MOE in raising the standards of English in rural areas. Most of his work involves developing and delivering short courses and workshops for teachers in order to upgrade their English and update their teaching skills. He also visits schools to motivate teachers and support them in the classroom. He is also responsible for developing

resources and activities for classroom use and teaching classes in order to pilot these. Other than that, he motivates students.

He is a native English speaker from the United Kingdom and has been involved in education for 19 years. He was originally a primary school teacher in his native Scotland, possesses a B.Ed. degree specializing in English Language. He undertook his first overseas assignment in 1997 as a teacher and trainer working with teacher trainees of English in Guizhou Province, China. After completing a Certificate in ELT, he then moved on to Brunei in 2000 as a resource teacher of English in government primary schools and in 2002, he went to Indonesia as a senior teacher in developing language foundation courses for young learners. During his time in Brunei and Indonesia, he studied part time for his Master in Education in International Education, focusing on education provision in developing countries in South East Asia and the Pacific. He is particularly interested in how English is perceived by those from non-English speaking backgrounds and how a syllabus can be made relevant and motivating for such students in preparation for future opportunities in the real world.

My research partner is well-liked by many teachers and students in this area. He is very friendly, creative, motivated, committed and most importantly, he has a good sense of humor. I like to talk with him because every time we talked, I learnt lots of things from him. He is particularly good in sharing with others and in giving constructive opinions. Maybe that is why he is regarded as a very good trainer and teacher. I invited him to be my research partner because of that too!

My colleague is the head of the English Department in my school. She started teaching in 1989 at a primary school in Lubok Antu. Before that, she was in Rajang Teachers' Training College. She obtained her degree from UNIMAS and later was posted to my school. She is teaching English and EST. She loves to tell jokes in class and she is a very good 'actress' in class. The students like her teaching because she is open-minded and humorous. She told me she enjoys teaching and loves children very much. Initially, she was not confident in handling modern equipment such as laptop and LCD. Then, after the lesson, she changed her perception totally – she has a new perspective towards the use of modern technology in her class. She feels that with this equipment, her lessons are more effective and interesting compared to the traditional method. Not only the students enjoyed her lessons, she is also motivated and happy with the outcome. She feels that motivation and guidance from friends and colleagues are important in upgrading her performance in teaching. She really hopes that this type of 'peer coaching' programs could be continued not only involving teachers in the English Department but also all teachers in the school.

My concern

When I started to teach EST three years ago, I did not study the CS in detail. I regarded EST as an examination subject and I taught the students in such a way that they would score well in their examination. But when I started to do action research in 2005, I realized that I faced many problems in my class and many of my students were not interested in studying the subject. The students were not enthusiastic in studying the subject and many of them found it boring! I then started to study the CS in detail and reflected on my teaching techniques. I must admit that I did not diversify my teaching techniques and my students gained very little from me. I asked myself, *'Am I teaching my students in accordance with the CS? What are the things that the students need to learn to prepare them for higher learning later on?'* Many other questions kept bothering me at that time. So, I decided to try other techniques. In 2005, I tried the 'Think-pair-share' technique to encourage passive students become active learners. The research was successful whereby the students like the technique very much and wanted me to use it more often in class (Lucy, 2005).

In 2006, I taught the same class and students basic presentation skills and the how of doing proper PowerPoint slides. Likewise, I used PowerPoint slides in my teaching. I divided them into groups of four and asked them to prepare slides on a theme given which were to be presented few weeks later. I was so delighted when they managed to do what I wanted them to do. Many of those who never spoke publicly in class were given the chance to speak on the topic they have prepared. Most of them told me that they have really learned something which would be very useful for them in future. I used to think that it was a waste of time and energy to set up all the equipment like laptop and LCD projector but now my perception is different. From the satisfaction that my students and I obtained after the lessons, I think it is really worthwhile to use the equipment. As a teacher, I usually thought that I was doing my best for the benefit of my students. My initial main aim was to help them score well in examinations. But after looking at their dull and dissatisfied faces, I realized that I was not catering to their needs. I am glad that I managed to find a way to rectify it. I am happy that I was able to make my students enjoyed learning EST and helped them to acquire some basic skills that they need to use in future.

This year, I thought of continuing my efforts in making EST an interesting subject, both for the teacher and the students. And for me, the best way to do it is to encourage EST teachers to use modern equipment in their teaching. In this study, I managed to encourage, through peer coaching, one of my colleagues to practice this teaching technique with her students.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main aim of the study was to encourage an EST teacher to use ICT equipment in her lessons through peer coaching.

RESEARCH QUESTION

How does peer coaching helps to encourage an EST teacher to use ICT equipment in her teaching?

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the article “The Evolution of Peer Coaching”, Showers and Joyce (1996) examined the history of coaching. Peer coaching began in the early 1980s as a strategy to improve the degree of implementation of new curriculum and instructional techniques. Showers and Joyce wrote that early research showed that,

“teachers who had a coaching relationship – that is, who shared aspects of teaching, planned together, and pooled their experiences – practiced new skills and strategies more frequently and applied them more appropriately than did their counterparts who worked alone to expand their repertoires (14).

Peer coaching has typically operated as a process of collaborative planning, observation, and feedback, rather than serving as a formal evaluation or review, in order to increase the level of implementation of instructional techniques and curriculum (Ackland, 1991; Odell, 1990; Perkins, 1998; Showers & Joyce, 1996). *‘Teachers should use one another for professional development’*, said Alberino, a researcher at the University of Pennsylvania’s Graduate School of Education and a former New York City teacher.

In the website by Microsoft under the heading ‘Peer Coaching’, it is stated that peer coaching program is designed to help schools implement a professional development model that can enhance standards-based instruction by assisting teachers to offer students engaging, technology-rich, learning activities. The Peer Coaching program is to train teacher leaders to serve as peer coaches for colleagues. As coaches, these teachers will assist their peers in identifying ways that technology can strengthen classroom curriculum and enhance their students’ academic achievement. They will also help their colleagues to develop the necessary technology skills and instructional strategies needed to integrate technology into teaching and learning.

Anna Cavanaugh, the Executive Director for Student Learning Support at Longview Public Schools, Longview, Washington said,

“The Peer Coaching Program embraces and applies the most recent and effective knowledge about adult learning. Daily, I am amazed by the power and the gentle ripple effective of this project – teachers working together, designing lessons together, strategizing how to enhance student learning. It has become self-perpetuating. Veteran staff is reenergized and have made ‘subtle shifts’ in instructional practice that they have used for 30 years.”

In the article “How Professional Support for Teachers can be provided for and given by colleagues” by ‘NUT on the Web’, the writer highlighted that peer coaching offers a means by which teachers can deepen their awareness and understanding of what goes on in their classrooms; their effectiveness as teachers and their own and their pupils’ learning. It puts teachers in control of their own professional development, allowing them to ‘start from where they are’. Peer coaching can be used by teachers throughout their careers and applied to any teaching and learning situations. Many of those teachers who have tried it have found it adds to their job satisfaction and can renew their enthusiasm for teaching. Research suggests that teachers learn most from a combination of support from their peers and specialist support. Peer coaching encourages professional communication and helps teachers to develop a ‘shared language’ about teaching and learning.

According to Stephanie Hirsh, Deputy Executive Director of the National Staff Development Council, research compiled by the National Commission for Teaching and America’s Future indicate teachers leave teaching due to the lack of support and opportunities for collaboration which they had expected to experience. Schedules, hectic classrooms and the physical layout of many schools discourage quality conversations among colleagues, and much of the expertise in individual classrooms is kept in isolation. Peer coaching is known to increase retention in the teaching profession by reducing the feeling of isolation while strengthening collaboration with colleagues.

John Dewey, an education researcher said that quite often problems arise when teachers attempt new strategies and realize it isn’t as easy as they thought it would be. Frustration builds as questions go unanswered and progress becomes stalled. Peer coaching encourages reflection on teaching practices with a professional equal willing to collaborate to further develop instructional skills. The peer coaching relationship offers support, guidance or ‘coaching’ to ensure that professional development is truly what it should be – growing and learning as a professional.

Jean M. Becker, in her article 'Peer Coaching for Improvement of Teaching and Learning', states that peer coaching is a model of professional development that can be used to improve students' learning by improving teaching. Peer coaching has the potential to improve existing, as well as new, teaching practices. To improve professional practices and consequently to improve students' learning, teachers need accessible opportunities and models for collaboration, sharing of ideas, feedback and assistance with their practice so that students may have the most optimal situations for learning, achievement, and success in schools. According to her, statistical support for peer coaching comes from many sources. The most easily understood data is as follows:

- 5 % of learners will transfer a new skill into their practice as a result of theory
- 10% will transfer a new skill into their practice with theory and demonstration
- 20% will transfer a new skill into their practice with theory and demonstration, and practice within the training
- 25 % will transfer a new skill into their practice with theory and demonstration, and practice within the training, and feedback
- 90% will transfer a new skill into their practice with theory and demonstration, and practice within the training, feedback, and coaching

Purposes which have been indicated to reinforce use of peer coaching include:

- Increase of student learning
- Facilitate and increase discussion between and among colleagues of professional topics or research
- Sharing of successful practices through collaboration
- Encouragement of and provisions for reflective practice
- Use as a problem-solving vehicles
- Reduce isolation among teachers
- Promote teacher as researcher
- Create a forum for addressing instructional problems
- Support and assist new and beginning teachers in their practice
- Build collaborative norms to enable teachers to give and receive ideas and receive assistance

A participant in Staff Training Assistance and Review Program (STAR) in Seattle, Washington offered the following statement related to peer coaching.

"It has been a great relief and a great help to me to have time ... to discuss my problems and to have observations on my classes and my teaching ... I

feel much stronger now that I did ... and am looking forward to further improvements.”

Some American Federation of Teachers provide a variety of peer coaching programs for their members from Toledo, Minneapolis, Cincinnati and Boston. The State Board of Education in Vermont provides standards for teachers that include peer coaching. Below are some of the feedbacks from teachers.

- *“The level of trust we developed throughout the year made it possible for us to support and listen to one another and to adapt our instruction based on individual needs.”*
- *“Having other teachers observe my classes gives me feedback on my strengths and weaknesses without having to be evaluated by an administrator.”*
- *“The feedback has also given me insight into what is actually taking place in my classroom through another set of eyes. I feel that my effectiveness has been greatly increased through the peer coaching process.”*
- *“It brought to life a lot of things I know I should do and had tried, but had not continued. It gave me an impetus, having a colleague I respect critique my teaching.”*

Some of the benefits reported by professionals who have been involved in peer coaching are:

- Improved student achievement
- Enhanced student progress
- Enhanced sense of professional skill
- Increased ability to analyze their own lessons
- Better understanding of what we know about best practices in teaching and learning
- Wider repertoire of instructional strategies and resources
- Deeper sense of efficacy
- Stronger professional ties with colleagues
- Improved teaching performance
- A better articulated curriculum
- More cohesive school culture
- Positive school climate.

According to Gerard O’Brien, the new Network Medical Education Officer, who writes articles related to postgraduate medical education for each quarterly “*SHCN Postgraduate Bulletin*” stated that in the mid-1960s, Knowles first used the term “andragogy” to describe adult learning. It relates to the art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles, 1970). Knowles was the first to clearly theorise how adults learn and describe adult learning as a process of self-directed inquiry. Knowles argued that:

1. Adults have a need to know why they should learn something. The adult has to consider it important to acquire the new skill knowledge or attitude.
2. Adults have a need to be self-directing and decide for themselves what they want to learn.
3. Adults have a far greater volume and different quality of experiences than young people so that connecting learning experiences to past experiences can make the learning experience more meaningful and assist the learner to acquire the new knowledge.
4. Adults become ready to learn when they experience a life situation where they need to know.
5. Adults enter into the learning process with a task centered orientation to learning.
6. Adults are motivated to learn by both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

An educator can provide real or simulated experiences through which the learner can experience the positive benefits of knowing and the negatives of not knowing. Teaching should be commenced by creating a climate of mutual trust and clarification of mutual expectations with the learner - in other words, a cooperative learning climate. Allow for as much choice as possible in making decisions during the learning experience. The instructor needs to create a mechanism for mutual planning to help adults diagnose their needs. The objectives and the learning activities can be designed specifically to suit their needs. Encourage learners to recount work place experiences and try to link new learning activities to previous experiences of learners.

In his book "Freedom to Learn", Carl Rogers (1969), another educational pioneer, stated that the adult learning process is facilitated when the learner participates completely in the learning process and has control over its nature and direction. The role of the instructor is to facilitate learning which includes setting a positive climate for learning; clarifying the purposes of the learners; organizing and making available learning resources; balancing intellectual and emotional components of learning, and sharing feelings and thoughts with learners but not dominating.

According to Robbins (2000), peer coaching is a confidential process through which two or more professional colleagues work together to reflect on current practices; expand, refine and build new skills; share ideas, teach one another; conduct classroom research; or solve problems in the workplace. There is generally a pre-conference, an observation and a post-conference.

Peer coaching is one of the varieties of approaches to teacher observation support professional growth and student achievement. In this non-evaluative professional development strategy, educators work together to discuss and share teaching practices, observe each other's classrooms, provide mutual support and in the end, enhance teaching to enrich student learning.

According to Kenneth Wong and Anna Nicotera (2003) in the article "Enhancing Teacher Quality : Peer Coaching as a Professional development Strategy – A preliminary Synthesis of the Literature", variations of the term *peer coaching* appear in the literature, such as *technical coaching*, *team coaching*, *collegial coaching*, *cognitive coaching* and *challenge coaching*. Research suggests that the terms can be grouped into three general categories based on the professional development strategies used. Technical coaching and team coaching focus on incorporating new curriculum and instructional techniques into teachers' routines. Collegial coaching and cognitive coaching seek to improve existing teacher practices by refining techniques, developing collegiality, increasing professional dialogue, and assisting teachers to reflect on their teaching (Ackland, 1991; Becker, 1996; Showers & Joyce, 1996). The third type of coaching, challenge coaching, concentrates on identifying and treating a specific problem and can be used in a larger context than the classroom such as a school or grade level (Ackland, 1991; Becker, 1996). The peer coaching strategies differ among these categories, but all of the programs use peers to achieve the goal of improving the teaching and learning process.

The Peer Coaching Program is designed to help schools implement a professional development model that can enhance standards-based instruction by assisting teachers to offer students engaging, technology rich learning activities. This program will train teacher leaders to serve as peer coaches for colleagues. As coaches, these teachers will assist their peers in identifying ways that technology can strengthen classroom curriculum and enhance their students' academic achievement. They will also help their colleagues to develop the necessary technology skills and instructional strategies needed to integrate technology into teaching and learning. Elements of peer coaching include:

- Hands-on creation of curricular projects and evaluation tools that address state and district curricular and technology standards and develop technology skills
- Development of coaching skills and strategies through hands-on activities
- Ongoing support through the use of a series of powerful online tools designed to assist coaches and participating teachers
- Connecting coaches and teachers to community resources by matching them with corporate volunteers.

METHODOLOGY

There are three methods that I have used in collecting data in this study, namely observation, journal writing and interviews.

Observations

During the peer coaching session, observation was done by my research partner. It was carried out in my school counseling room where there is internet access. It was carried out on 23rd March 2007. I gave my research partner an observation sheet with the statements and questions below as a guide.

1. The attitudes and reactions of the teacher during the session.
2. The attitudes of your collaborator (the researcher) during the session.
3. Is/Are the coaching technique(s) used by the researcher appropriate and effective? Why do you say so?
4. Your personal view(s) on what you have gone through.

Journal Writing

For this method, both my colleague and I wrote our journal. Anyway, as for my colleague, I gave her some statements and questions for guidance. They are as follows.

1. My attitudes and reactions during the session.
2. The attitudes of the researcher during the session.
3. Is/Are the coaching technique(s) used by the researcher appropriate and effective? Why do you say so?
4. Your personal view(s) on what you have gone through.

As for myself, I started typing my journal in my laptop even before I have decided on the research topic.

Interviews

I carried out interview sessions with my research partner, my colleague and also a few students after my colleague carried out the lesson with the slides she had prepared during and after the coaching session.

Significance and limitation of the study

In accordance with the Syllabus Specification for EST, it is very important for EST teachers to familiarize themselves with the use of ICT equipment and use it in their teaching. They should keep in mind that the syllabus was written in line with globalization and advancement in ICT. It is geared towards preparing students for this new era by training them to gain knowledge and use it for advancement in various fields, especially in science and technology, and studies at tertiary level. Thus, I feel that it is equally important for students to master the skills in ICT and know how to do a good presentation because they need those skills when they go to higher

learning institutions later. EST teachers play a very important role in setting a good example by using the ICT equipment in class and also giving the students opportunities to use it too. My colleague admitted that teaching with the use of ICT equipment is more effective and interesting and she likes this technique of teaching. The students in her class liked the lesson that she did with them using PowerPoint slides. They hope that she would use this technique more often.

This study is only applicable to my colleague at St. Luke's Secondary School in Sri Aman during that period of time when the study was carried out. It may not be applicable to other teachers in other schools at some other time. It may not be even applicable to the same group of students at another time.

THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

The coaching session was done on 23rd March 2008 starting at 2.30 pm. I explained to my colleague what I would do during the session and I did all the necessary preparation before we started, such as getting ready some of the articles on the topic. I invited my research partner to observe the session.

I started the session with a very brief explanation on what I would do with my colleague so that my research partner would know what would be going on. I have chosen the topic 'Transportation in Malaysia' as the topic for our search for that day. We started by logging on to the internet and used Google search engine to look for the topic we wanted. Then, we scanned through some of the articles before we started to highlight and print the relevant ones. My research partner was impressed with the way I taught my colleague on how to print directly from the articles on the net without having to highlight, copy and paste into a document in Microsoft Word. He said that was the first very useful thing that he learnt on that day. I also taught my colleague how to print certain paragraphs of the article by highlighting those paragraphs, then clicking 'selection' on the 'print' dialogue box.

After printing a few articles, my colleague seemed to have mastered the different skills I have taught her so far and she asked, "Can we go on?" My research partner and I found that question rather humorous and we all laughed. Later, my research partner said that showed the coaching session was not only monopolized by the coach. My colleague could also decide on the pace she wished to move. That is one of the characteristics in peer coaching.

Next, we moved on to do the PowerPoint slides. My colleague told me she knew how to create slides but because of lack of practice, she has forgotten some of the details. I started off by asking her to choose the background

and then decide on the statements she wished to type on the slides. I taught her how to paste some of the lines from the document in Microsoft Word onto the slides. This would save time and energy. Then, my colleague was given time to practice doing slides on her own while my research partner and I watched her doing it.

After creating a few slides, my colleague asked, “*Can I do this as homework?*” Again we all laughed. The coaching session ended with our laughter. We then continued with the discussion on what happened in that almost one hour coaching session.

INTERPRETATION OF DATA

During the discussion on the coaching session, my research partner made a few remarks and most of these were written in the observation sheet he has been given and which I have typed.

From the observation sheet I collected from my research partner, for the first statement about the attitudes and reactions of my colleague, he wrote,

“Positive attitude – willing to ‘have a go’. Responsive to coaching but able to contribute own ideas/opinions/previous skills. Willing to ask or check with the coach. She is ‘quietly confident’. She knows what to do because she said ‘lesson over’, ‘can I do this for homework?’, ‘...choose slide background later.’

From the remarks above, it was obvious that my colleague displayed many of the characteristics of an adult learner, whereby she decided on her own learning pace; self-directing and decided for herself what she wanted to learn. To me, my colleague is very humble and has a very positive attitude towards learning from a peer. She is willing to admit to the things she does not know and she seems to enjoy the process very much. It was really fun to share skills and knowledge with a colleague like her. To be frank, I have learnt something very valuable from her during the process – to let others lead you and to contribute during appropriate times. Not many adults (may be including me too) are willing to be led by others especially when the one who is leading is younger in age.

As for the attitude of the coach, below was what my research partner wrote.

“... patient, supportive, sensitive – checking on how to print information from web page. Well prepared – checked and printed information in advance. Directly into hands-on, no introduction or background, perhaps assumed that the teacher had some perception of task as you.”

Actually, I have briefed my colleague what I would do during the session before the arrival of my research partner. To me, the coaching process was well-facilitated and my colleague participated completely in the process and has certain control over its nature and direction. My main role as the instructor was to facilitate learning, share feelings and thoughts with my colleague but not dominating. Actually, I was a bit nervous in the beginning. It was because I am not very good in giving instructions to adults especially someone who is older and more experience than me. Another thing that was bothering me at that time was the standard and expectation of my research partner. Since he is a trainer for English teachers, I was worried that I might not be able to perform well enough to meet his expectation. Luckily, I know him to be very positive, supportive, encouraging and motivating. I was able to be at ease after a while because the atmosphere was very easy going, with laughter and small talks.

For the effectiveness and appropriateness of the coaching techniques used, my research partner commented,

“hands-on – learning by doing, good. supportive guidance without being too domineering. Perhaps needed step by step instructions to help guide or remind – also good for students who have never done this before.”

Teaching someone research skills especially looking for materials on the internet, hands-on is the best technique. My colleague could learn very fast with some practices. That is the way students should be taught but unfortunately there is no computer laboratory whereby every student has a computer to practice on in my school. So, all I can do is to demonstrate using laptop and allow a few students to do hands-on after that. For me, I strongly feel that even with this constraint, students should not be deprived of their chances to learn using hands-on technique especially for EST. They should be given as many opportunities as possible to use ICT equipment to be in line with what was written in the syllabus specification for EST.

My research partner gave the view that this session was an interesting observation of transfer of skill from one professional to another. He learnt new techniques and skills for using computer and making power-point slides during the session. Anyway, he would like to see information gathered from more than one source because this is a very important research skill to develop in students too; help them to develop critical analysis skill, not just copy and accept, but to choose and select information which is most relevant and important.

As I have mentioned earlier about the lack of ICT facilities in my school, I think teachers should not use that as an excuse not to use ICT equipment in teaching. Without the ICT equipment, EST lessons would be just like other

lessons for English Language whereby teachers do the explanation and students do the written exercises. It would be wise for EST teachers to study the syllabus specification in great details before they start teaching the subject so that their students will gain as much from them as possible. As for those who feel that setting up the equipment takes up much of their time and thus they are reluctant to use the equipment, they can always find ways to overcome the time problem. They may consider asking the school authority to fix the equipment in the classroom so that it can be used just by switching it on. There may be those who think that looking for materials on the internet and creating PowerPoint slides consume lots of their time. They could solve the problem easily by sharing their teaching materials with their colleagues in the school or even with the EST teachers in other schools. As long as the teacher is willing to use ICT equipment, other problems could be solved if they really want to.

For my colleague, she wrote the following comments and feelings in her journal,

"In the initial stage, I felt uneasy because I was observed by a foreigner (the researcher's research partner). However, during the session, I felt normal because both of them (the researcher and her partner) were very friendly and cooperative. Besides, after the briefing given by the researcher, I knew exactly my role in this research. Other than that, the session did not make me tense. The researcher is very supportive, helpful and positive. She guided me all the way, (sic) however I was free to give my opinions. The technique used is one to one coaching. We could expand ideas and knowledge regarding preparation of the lesson using PowerPoint slides. Besides, I could also refresh my knowledge on using PowerPoint. Furthermore, I was taught using hands-on method. It was an interesting, encouraging and knowledgeable experience for me. We can share and combine ideas to produce a better lesson."

My colleague is very open-minded and she likes the idea of peer-coaching. She told me that she cannot afford to use this technique of teaching often because to her, it is very time consuming. Besides, she has to concentrate on teaching the students how to score in their examination later. If she can gather all the EST teachers in the school and divide the topics among them, what she was worried about earlier on would not be a problem anymore. Unfortunately, not all the teachers are ready and willing to take up this challenge! They still prefer the 'chalk-and-talk' and 'explanation-and-exercises' technique. How sad!

During the interviews with some of the students after the lesson, all of them loved the 'special' (it was special to them because the teacher has never use ICT equipment in their class before) lesson and many of them were

eager to experience it again. Some of them even asked whether it was possible to let them try using the equipment. I told them they have to discuss that with their teacher.

One of my students who was in my EST class before told me this one day when he was back in school.

“Teacher, though I did not get an A for my EST, I learned how to use the ICT equipment which is very useful for me now in my studies in the college. We have to do presentations using PowerPoint slides every week.”

Since my colleague likes the idea of peer coaching and using ICT equipment in teaching EST, I really hope that she will help to promote the idea among the EST teachers in the school. It is my sincere hope that not only EST teachers in my school will start using the ICT equipment. Others in other schools will do the same too.

CONCLUSION

In this research, I have managed to encourage my colleague, who is one of the many EST teachers in my school, to realize the importance of using ICT equipment in teaching. Though the responses I gathered from all those involved are very encouraging and positive, I still do not dare to say that this research is really successful. What I want to see is my colleague and other EST teachers in the school start using ICT equipment in their teaching. Whether that will happen or not, it is still too early to tell.

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