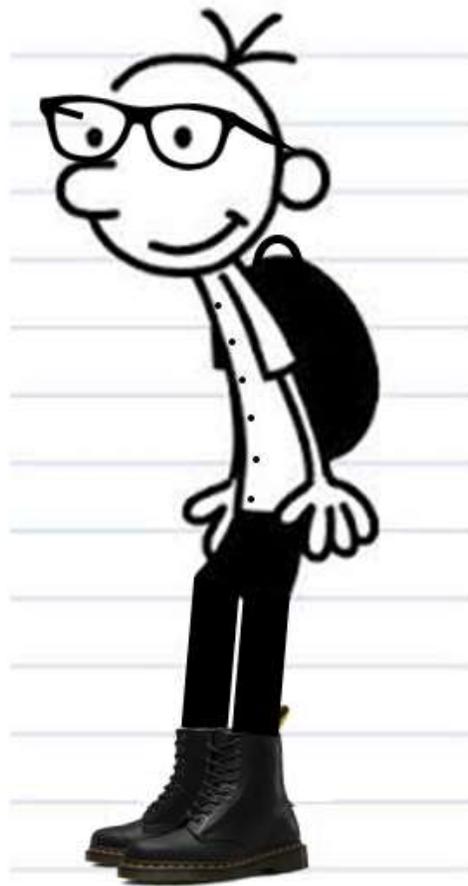


DIARY OF A **NOT SO** WIMPY COACH



BY: DAMON **R.** GOAR

4:17 A.M.: "Wrrrr! Wrrrr!" As my cell phone vibrates me awake, I roll over and squint at the screen. **TEXT: NEW MESSAGE.** I think (barely), "Go back to sleep, this can wait until morning." Wait...is it morning? Unplugging my phone from its charger, I elect to see what has happened now? It turns out to be a teacher, and not just any teacher. It is the department chair, Mr. Bunche, at the school I serve as the UCLA math instructional coach.

Going for that run we talked about...were you asleep? You said to text you, and I quote, "at any time". Get up VATO...let's go for a run. Or we could just talk later at school. 😊

4:17 AM



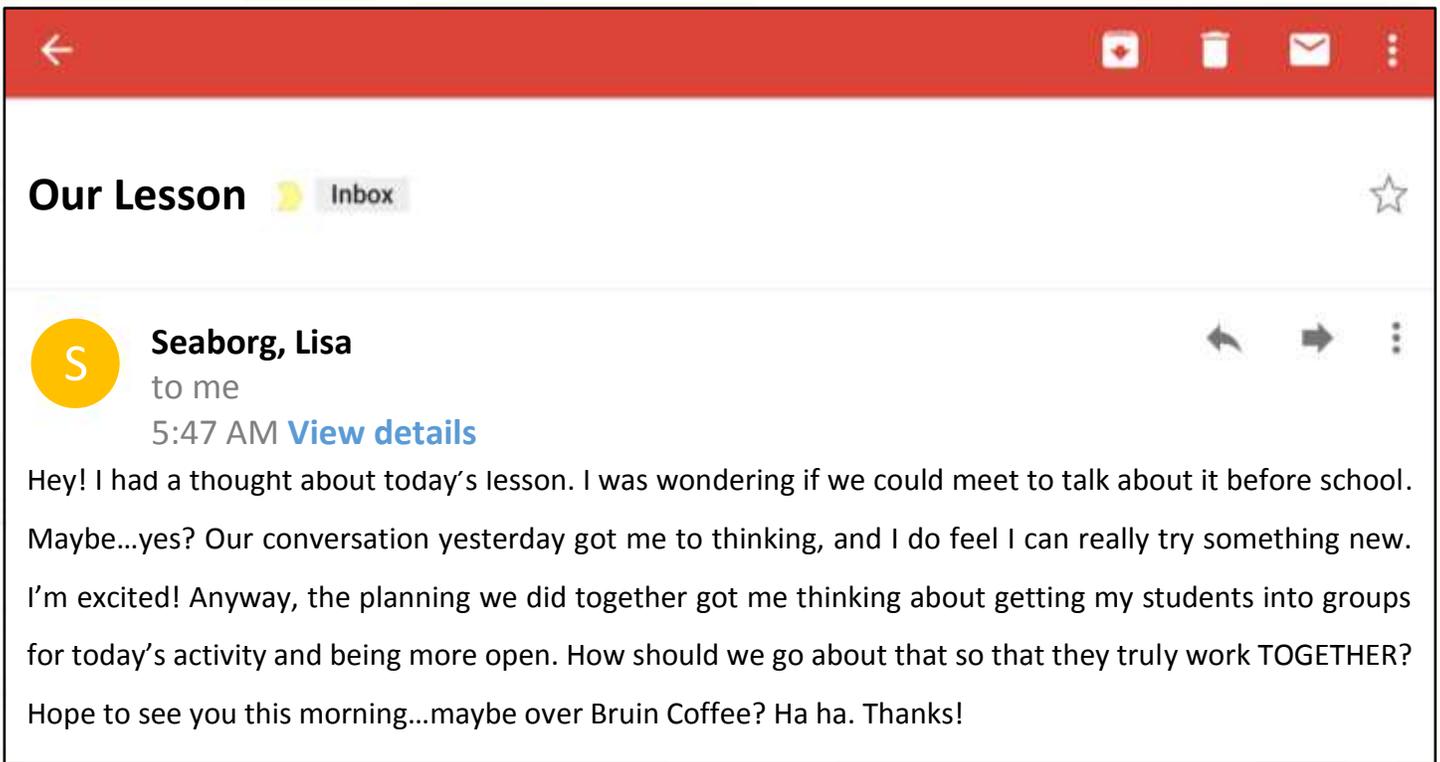
Sounds...WONDERFUL. I was asleep, but I did say to text me anytime. VATO? You're one to talk...ha ha. I would LOVE to go for a run...at 4:17 PM...AFTERSCHOOL! We can talk at school...absolutely...see you in 3 hours assuming you don't decide to just make it a marathon. 😊

4:19 AM

5:47 A.M.: where is my phone? Did I miss my alarm? The Doors, "Break On Through (To The Other Side)" was supposed to wake me up. Why isn't it charging! I can't seem to find...oh, yeah. I was texting with it last night. Or was it this morning? There it is. **MAIL: NEW MESSAGE.** Do I really NEED to read it, now? Yes. But first, wake up The Offspring, but unlike Dexter...My Kids Are Alright. That is until I try to interrupt their dreams of sugar-plums dancing in their heads...



5:52 A.M.: After waking up the Princess and the Pea, I manage to poke my Bruin Bear awake from his hibernating slumber. Success! Although, my 8 year old daughter is half awake, and my 11 year old bear cub of a son significantly less so, I hear water running in both bathrooms. "And the sounds of silence..."are gone! MUST read email...

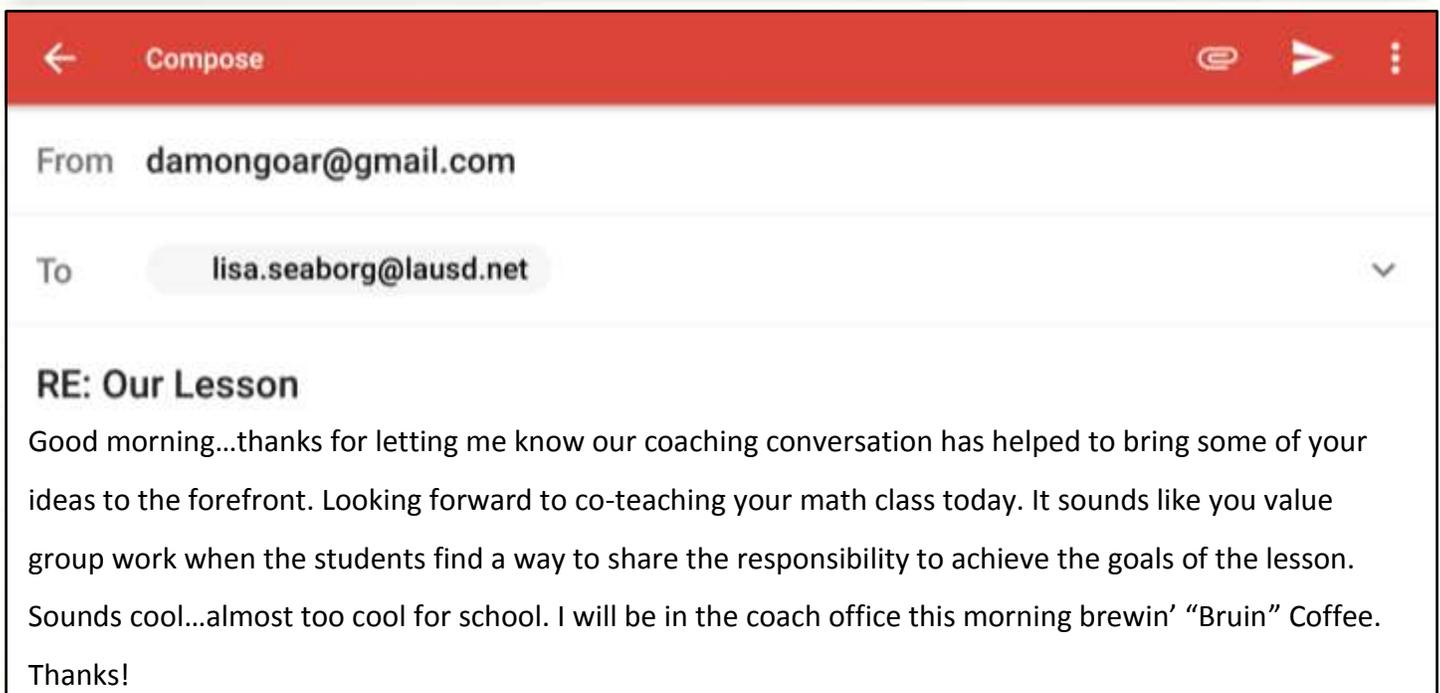


5:57 A.M.: This morning! Before school? And don't forget the liquid currency. Check. Check! Check?

Do we still have coffee I can make in the UCLA Coach Office? I certainly hope so. Coffee beans truly are Magic Beans in the teaching realm. Jack had the right idea, **INITIALLY**. Perhaps he could have done without the beanstalk though...and especially that Giant.

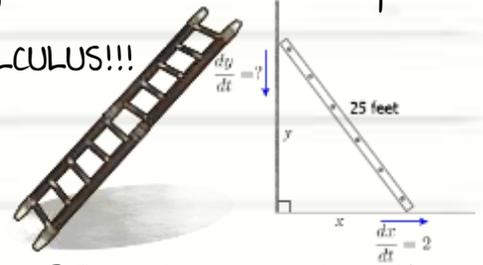


5:59 A.M.:



6:14 A.M.: why does the shower plug make me think I am forgetting something? Fog has set in.

Hmmm...slows the water down while capturing the long hair from the ladies of the house, the aforementioned princess and my better half. Still foggy. BUT...what am I forgetting? Fog lifting. The rate at which the water flows down the drain. That's it! I almost forgot that I am demo teaching a lesson in AP Calculus today on related rates. I can't wait to blow their minds with the power of the CALCULUS!!!



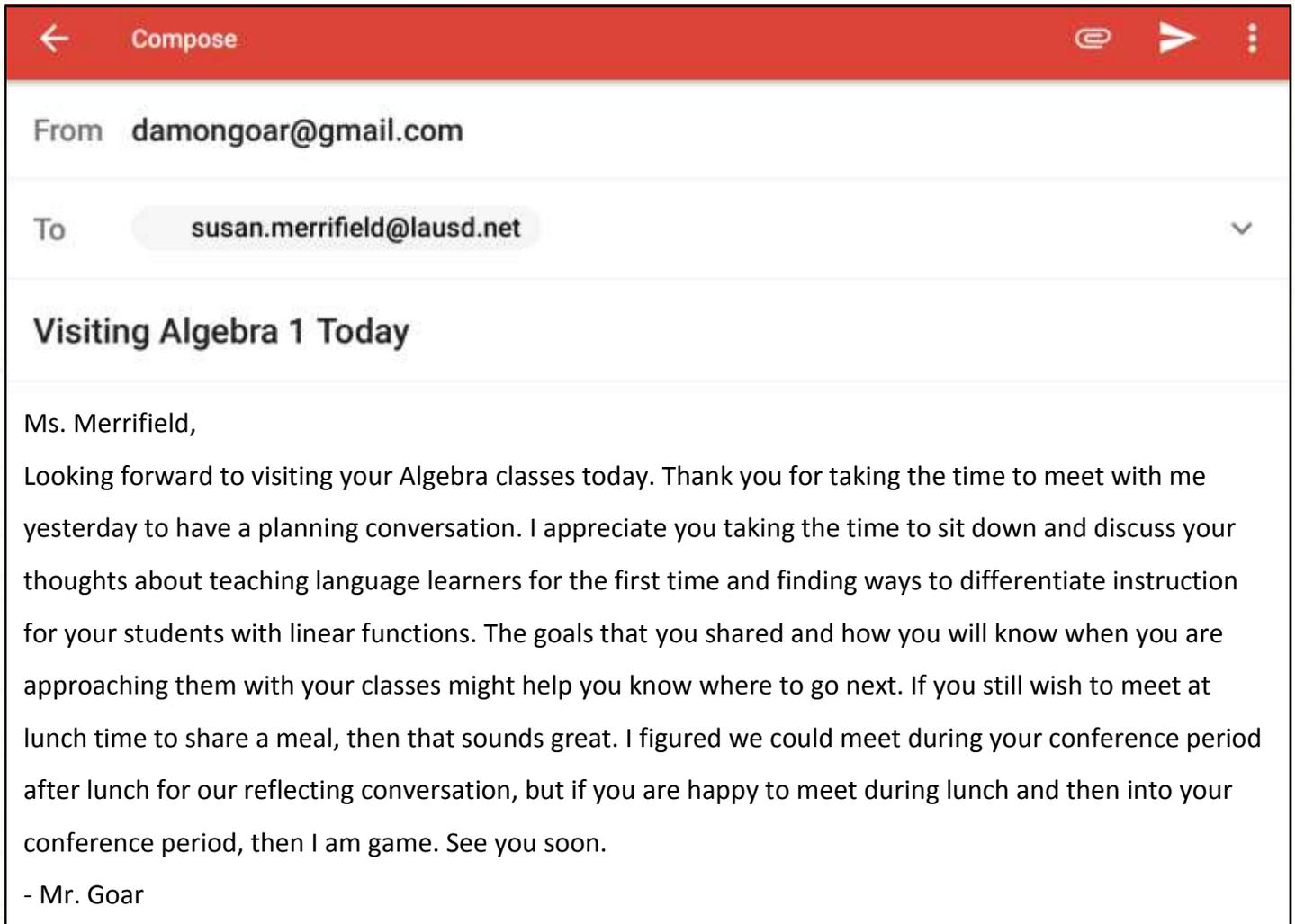
6:31 A.M.: It is awfully quiet down the hall. Where is my princess? There she is...but, oh no! Here come the water works. "Papi (sniff, sniff)...Ashlyn said that I have big feet and I don't want to wear these shoes today." "Oh, yikes! That sounds rough baby girl. So what you're saying is that you value your friend's opinion, but want to be accepted by her nonetheless." As I wait for a sign off...I wonder...does anyone ever call social services on a parent who uses their children to practice paraphrasing during problem resolving conversations? I certainly hope not. Guilty as charged.



6:34 A.M.: As I enter the kitchen, I literally hear the growl of my son's stomach. Time to feed the beast! Silver dollar pancakes it is. I can't seem to beat the mixture fast enough...and then, the sweet smell of batter hitting the melted butter calms his nerves. How many tiny circles can I get onto the browning griddle? 10? 15? Or should I go for my all-time record of 22? As I watch the bubbles increasingly rise to the surface of an ever growing population of round buttery sponges, it hits me! It's like there is a classroom on my stovetop! The minds of students with all of their thoughts and ideas, floating around inside their heads. That reminds me...I am supposed to visit an Algebra class today! I remember how weird that seemed last year. First, find the time to meet with a teacher to have a planning conversation. Second, observe one or more of their classes. And then finally, meet after the observation for a reflecting conversation. Who has the time? Well...we all do, and it can be amazing! "Dad...me need food!" Right...10 or 15 pancakes it is.



7:02 A.M.:



7:16 A.M.: "Wrrrr! Wrrrr!" **TEXT: NEW MESSAGE.** Ms. Seaborg is looking for little ol' me.

Mr. Goar, are you around? I came by 210 and you were not there...AND I could not smell any Bruin Coffee...yet! ☹️ Let me know when we can check in about our lesson. Thanks.

7:16 AM

Just getting my kids off to school...they are so eager...not. I am on my way and should be in the office by the bottom of the hour. I will swing by your room after I put a pot of coffee on if you like.

7:17 AM

7:18 A.M.: "Wrrrr! Wrrrr!" **TEXT: NEW MESSAGE.**



7:18 AM



7:29 A.M.: Time for some fresh brew. The smell of coffee grounds begins to fill the coach office, soon to be followed by the wonderful aroma of what amounts to liquid gold. And yet...I have never had a Cup of Joe...in my ENTIRE life. Don't touch the stuff, except to make it. Don't ever tell coffee heads that, or they don't quite see you the same way anymore. Trust and rapport are THE cornerstones of the cognitive coaching world. Without them, your five states of mind: consciousness, craftsmanship, efficacy, flexibility, and interdependence, no matter how high will not amount to a hill of beans. Speaking of which...I guess the word is out...YES, I am a closet non-drinker. And although I do not fully understand this amazing fascination for teachers everywhere for cupped lightning, I am smart enough to know that it is very serious business for educators to start their days in order to be around the youth of America. First important question of the day: How many scoops? 4? 6? I'll go with 10 just to be sure. It IS late October after all, the only school month WITHOUT a holiday break all year (you learn to notice school holidays as a teacher very quickly). So yeah, coffee will be very necessary. Our 40th President vowed, "I never drink coffee at lunch. I find it keeps me awake for the afternoon." Well, teachers are the exact opposite, as they drink it early and often. And now I've got MY finger on the button: BREW NOW.

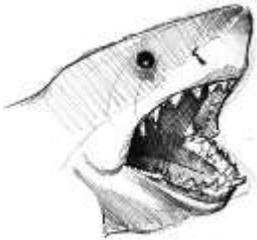


7:35 A.M.: Just as Ms. Seaborg bolts into the coach office, I am preparing her a cup of coffee. It's difficult to believe THIS is what she is like BEFORE she gets her shot of caffeine. As she cuts in, I see the wind she brought with her, continues down the school hallway looking for its leader. Is it me, or did I just see Frida Kahlo's mural hair blowing from the wake that is Ms. Seaborg. I am very fortunate to be able to work with her, as she is only in her second year of teaching. She has challenged me to provide the various four support functions as a math instructional coach: cognitive coaching, collaborating, consulting, and evaluating. With Ms. Seaborg, I always remember "the mission of Cognitive Coaching is to produce self-directed persons with the cognitive capacity for excellence both independently and as members of a community." As with any coaching conversation, I pose questions, pause, and paraphrase. Repeat! As our impromptu planning conversation comes to an end, we agree to meet in her classroom for first period for co-teaching solving systems of linear equations. Together we are developing a Project Based Learning series that involves city planning and the streets within our community. I firmly believe that with coffee, Ms. Seaborg is indeed a force of nature.



7:42 A.M.: Time for a little revenge on Mr. Bunche...or so I think.

"VATO...I am surprised you haven't been by...coffee is a brewing and you are nowhere to be found! What happened to the bloodhound that, and I quote, "Can smell a drop of coffee in the water like a shark from a mile away." END QUOTE. I guess your skills are..."



7:43 AM

7:43 A.M.: "Sunny sides up, Mr. Goar!" And with that, my faith is restored in the world, as Mr.

Bunche strolls into the coach office and deftly maneuvers the pot of coffee and then its contents into a mug out of thin air that reads, " $\sqrt{-1} 2^3 \sum \pi$ and it was delicious!" This is why I have come to openly refer to Mr.

Bunche as Jaws almost since we first met, as he knows when and where coffee is or has been made on our campus for almost a quarter of a century. We quickly check in and agree to meet afterschool to possibly have a problem resolving conversation surrounding the math department and refining our focus for the year. And with that "Jaws" glides into the hallway waters in search of his next school of fish. "Don't forget your running shoes Vato! You said you would run in the PM. If you want to help resolve anything, you'll have to catch me first. See you after today's melee." Deep breath. In. Out. In...co-teach!

7:50 A.M.: As the tardy bell rings for Period 1, I feel that same rush I always get from standing in front of a classroom of students. I. Feel. Giddy. Why would a guy (after two decades of teaching math and honestly LIVING for it) pull the plug on teaching to move into coaching? Precisely for this opportunity. I take my place at the front of the classroom adjacent to Ms. Seaborg. As a second year teacher, she (in her own words) "have definitely grown since my first days of chaos...utter chaos...but I want to have more opportunities to work with someone who can support me through my further development as an educator. Feedback. Coaching. Thinking!"



7:52 A.M.: Class begins by showing pictures of various images taken of cities throughout the United States. Bend, Oregon. Tulsa, Oklahoma. Greensboro, North Carolina. Sugar Land, Texas. Miami, Florida. Paris, Maine. Coldfoot, Alaska. Chicago, Illinois. Zzyzx, California. Thanks to the internet, we can travel the world! Students are asked to journal some thoughts about the images they have seen, and then to get into groups of their choosing based on which of the places they find most curious. Then, together Ms. Seaborg and I share our experiences of growing up in two very different communities as kids. Ms. Seaborg talks about growing up in a small town outside of Fresno, California. How the town was all arranged around Main Street, which had the only traffic signal for miles. I know you are thinking it, so I might as well say it: Insert vision of a tumbleweed here. Everyone knew everyone else, and the town grew about as fast as a cactus. I, on the other hand, was born in Hollywood, California. The only tumbleweeds you see here are on movie sets making films about Main Street. Everyone ignores everyone else, and if you blink...you might not recognize the same street today as it looks tomorrow.

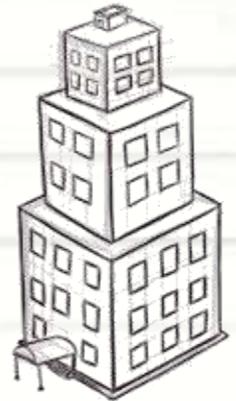


8:02 A.M.: We each thoroughly share about our lives growing up in very different communities. Then, OF COURSE...we have to answer the gazillion questions that come whenever you show that you are actually human, and NOT a robot that gets plugged into the wall closet at the end of each day for recharging. We knew it was coming. We planned on it. We relished it! Together. Both of us feel it absolutely necessary and an imperative to create a social justice environment. One in which students are valued for who they are, what they can contribute, and that everyone is respected. Teacher power! Needless to say, the lesson moved smoothly into urban planning and how cities are designed. Look out! Here comes another PBL! Bet you didn't think we could make solving linear systems of equations...INTERESTING! Well, we did. I think I hear Queen somewhere performing... "We are the champions...we are the champions...no time for losers, 'Cause we are the champions...of the World!" Thank you, Mr. Freddie Mercury.



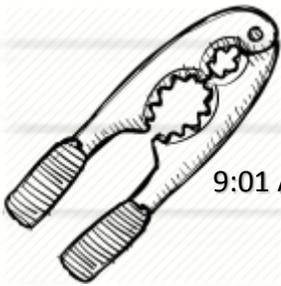
8:59 A.M.: "Wrrrr! Wrrrr!" **TEXT: NEW MESSAGE.** Ms. Seaborg decides to brighten my day!

Wow! That couldn't have been teaching, because that was too much FUN! The students really seemed engaged and interested in getting started with the PBL for Urban Planning. They worked in groups and each person seemed to be participating really well. Who knew systems of linear equations could be taught in such a meaningful and relevant way. Thanks for encouraging me to do something I wanted to do, but just needed to hear myself say it. Was it me or did you hear "I Gotta Feeling" by the Black Eyed Peas playing in your head? Hopefully we can catch up later...



8:59 AM

Ha! It was fun, wasn't it? I am glad we have planned out what appears to be a solid PBL for your students. It is definitely something that they should be able to relate to as our community is in need of changes and modernization for the health and safety of its inhabitants. Making student presentations to the city council will truly be an excellent culminating activity. I look forward to supporting you in the process. And as for music in my head, I guess I had the Generation X version of your Generation Y rock anthem. But something tells me that Freddie Mercury and will.i.am would have gotten along just fine. Catch ya later.



9:01 AM

9:03 A.M.: As I stroll down the hallway coming down from Cloud $\sqrt{81}$, I stroll into Mr. Sharpe's classroom for our weekly check-in and planning conversation. He is now in his thirteenth year on the job. Just my luck, number 13, not that I suffer from triskaidekaphobia or anything...although I am thinking about picking up the affliction as a result. There is no denying (at least privately in my diary) that Mr. Sharpe has indeed been a tough nut to crack. "Crackers" had initially told me that, "I will not be needing your services this year, as I don't have time for you." Dooooookay. I remember being a caught a bit off guard. I instantly had flashed back to my interview question from the school principal, Mr. Ostrom, "So...what will you do when

there is a teacher that gives you the brush off, and tells you in not so many words, 'No, thank you'?" I had answered by saying that with patience and persistence, but mostly by getting to know someone on a more personal level, I could be helpful and supportive to any and all teachers given time. As far as cheesy answers go, that was right up there with limburger...STINKY! However, no matter how smelly, I firmly believe that is true. And, in Mr. Sharpe's case, nothing could have been truer. It had been years since anyone had really taken him seriously, or even listened to any of his ideas at staff meetings. It turns out that Mr. Sharpe just wanted someone to listen to his ideas, share his thoughts, and run stuff by. Of all the teachers I work with, he easily has become the most interested in cognitive coaching and how it works. He even made up a funny way to remember the planning conversation map which he called "CSAER" pronounced "Caesar". "Can't Sit Around Eying Romans! You need to plan or they'll just wind up stabbing you in the back!" The first few times I would visit him to go through a planning conversation he always wanted to know what was on my coaching mat "cheat sheet". So...I showed him. Clarify Goals. Specify Success Indicators. Anticipate Approaches. Establish Personal Learning Focus. Reflect on Coaching. And honestly, Mr. Sharpe and I developed such great rapport and trust, because he knew I wasn't the expert coming in to tell him what to do and how to do it. "As it turns out, Mr. Goar, you aren't my Brutus after all."



9:55 A.M.: The bell rings for morning break as I get back to the coach office, and I am relieved to know that there is still caffeine in liquid form being dispensed by our quintessential Mr. Coffee. Want to improve education? Put one of these in every classroom in America. Common Core? How about common coffee?

9:55:17 A.M.: Out of nowhere, teachers seem to come from every corner of the universe that is our office to refuel their engines with thickening tar watered down with sugars and sweeteners. Although I don't immediately recognize even half of the people that come in to get a jolt, I know well enough to join the flight pattern and serve as "Bomber Barista". Teachers drop by to unload their payload from the past few hours in an explosion of cacophony, calamity, and what still mildly resembles coffee. I am reminded of Maverick from Top Gun, "Tower, this is Ghost rider requesting a flyby." Air Boss Johnson, "That's a negative Ghost rider, the patter is FULL!"



10:05 A.M.: Do you ever wonder why the ominous tardy bell sounds like it is yard time in a state penitentiary? Well, that sound also signals the start of our next class. I couldn't quite hear it over the hammering of my heart. Our school's AP Calculus teacher, Ms. Heck, greets her class, "Good morning everyone. You all know Mr. Goar, our *esteemed* UCLA math coach. Today he will whisk us away to a happier place that is known as Related Rates." Was that a collective sigh of disappointment from each and every student present, or did they just let the air out of every single tire on the planet? Ah, yes, the demonstration lesson. A chance to show them what you are made of. I really DO know what I am talking about. I didn't just take this job to escape the classroom you know. Repeat after me: You are not a substitute teacher. You are NOT a substitute teacher. You. Are. NOT. A. Substitute. Teacher! Be good. Dazzle them with your knowledge of The Calculus. No. Be GREAT! But wait! Don't be so awesome that they want you to be their new robot. They already have a perfectly good robot that recharges every night. Find that imperceptible niche in which your demo lesson is indeed very good, but at the same time you don't make the person who does the job daily look any less for it. Model for the teacher new strategies she might try, show how to pose mediative questions with her students, and be courageous with the curriculum. Above all else, don't be a replacement. Just a darn good placement.



11:02 A.M.: Must complete logs. I must...I must. I must complete my logs. The never ending spreadsheets of who, what, when, where, and why! I am ~~not~~ going to lie, I live for these things. As a coach, I have to keep track of EVERYTHING I do during the day so people know what I did in case anyone wants to know. Well, not everything I do...it turns out that as an adult professional, I am allowed to use the restroom whenever necessary and I do not need to report it. That particular COACHING ACTIVITY does NOT count as facilitation, reflection, logistics, or even "other". Okay...this can NEVER be made public or I am history. It turns out that coaching logs are a great way to foster transparency, realize what type of services you have been providing and to who, and feel pretty good about the work that you are doing. Yes, along with being a closet non-drinker I am also a closet pro-logger. However, I will continue to pretend they are the bane of my existence in public...or my fellow coaches might decide to drown me in coffee.



11:05 A.M.: And there it is...pretty much each and every time I sit down to do my logs for UCLA, it is an all call to the universe that I am free and available. "Wrrrr! Wrrrr!" **TEXT: NEW MESSAGE.**

Are you on campus? When can you stop by my office?

11:05 AM

11:06 AM

Yes...I still work here, unless THAT is what we are meeting about? Of course I can stop by anytime. I am on my way as I type.

11:07 A.M.: And with that I make the trek to the principal's office to meet with Mr. Ostrom.

Although it used to feel like "being sent to the principal's office", I have come to realize it is an opportunity to have coaching conversations with the leadership of the school. As a teacher, these conversations seemed too often to be contentious, frustrating, and part of some long running game of poker. There was always too much bluffing and things felt like a gamble. As an instructional coach focused on social justice, getting the chance to help the administration with the growth, development, and evolution of a school can be an enjoyable and integral part of the game of life. We can all live out our dream job, help make the decisions necessary for success, and go on one fun adventure after another all the while serving our community.



11:57 A.M.: I know you THINK you have, but a person truly has not visited the dangers of the wild animal kingdom until you have walked down the hallway of a public middle school in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Even if said person has gone on an African safari, visited the Amazon jungle, or attempted to summit Mount Everest, he or she has not been a part of a real life hormonal "Survivor". How does a person get from one place to another on a middle school campus...WHEN IT IS A PASSING PERIOD! Somewhere I hear Rod Serling saying, "You're traveling through another dimension, a dimension not only of sight and sound but of mind. A journey into a wondrous land whose boundaries are that of imagination. That's the signpost up ahead – your next stop, the Twilight Zone!" So THIS is what salmon feels like when swimming up river. In what should be a simple linear stroll down the cavernous hallways turns into a meandering steep chase through a sea of teenagers none of which seem to know exactly where they are going. If only there was a way I could rise above the carnage. Note to self...get bit by radioactive spider.



12:00 P.M.: Time for my Algebra I ~~observation~~ visitation with Ms. Merrifield. That was the very first thing I made sure of...don't call IT an "observation". Ever been to the doctor? Isn't it wonderful when they say, "You know...everything looks fine, BUT...we are going to have to hold you for observation for precautionary reasons." Translation: you probably are okay, but just in case you aren't and bottom out, I want to be there in case you crash and burn. THAT is what administrators do, right? They happen to catch you at YOUR WORST. It NEVER fails. The kid that has ditched my class 37 days in a row (yes, 37!) decides to show up TODAY for my formal evaluation. Really?!? Observations are judgmental and critical. They can induce fear and stress even in the best of us on our very best days. On the other hand, people love to visit the Magic Kingdom, we often times get to visit foreign countries, and on the rare occasion we can even have the fortune to visit the Promised Land. Now THAT sounds like something I want to be a part of or at least associated with whenever possible. Visitation is definitely the zone an instructional coach needs to be in. Visits are non-threatening and rewarding. A friendly visitation can create joy and comfort in the worst of us even on our very worst days. RECAP: Observation...thumbs down. Visitation...thumbs way up!



1:03 P.M.: Is there anything of substance in the coach office I can consume for energy that does not come from a coffee bean? Check my desk drawer on the left side...calculators, teacher stamps, and markers. Strike one. Check drawers on the right side...math t-shirts, Frisbees, and empty cereal bowls. Strike two. Perhaps something in our mini-fridge that hasn't come alive via spontaneous generation? Pay dirt! (Which reminds me to login and complete my hours for this month so I get paid!) Well if it isn't leftovers I didn't have time to eat yesterday. If I really hurry...I mean REALLY, I can eat, login to the UCLA website to be sure I get paid next month, and reply to emails from this morning. **TEXT: NEW MESSAGE.** Incoming! You people like me...you really really don't hate me. It's an invitation from a certain Ms. Merrifield.

I am in my room having lunch, and you are welcome to join me. If not, see you next period. Thank you, Mr. Goar.

1:05 PM

Getting paid isn't all it's cracked up to be anyways. Maybe next month...



1:12 P.M.: I have really tried to avoid taking up the lunch time of teachers especially as an instructional coach. I have always thought that at the very least lunch should be a sacrosanct time in each teacher's day. And although I never offer to do so, many if not most of the teachers here are happy to have me join them for lunch. We should teach students the classic geometry conditional statement using: if an instructional coach gets invited to lunch with a teacher, then that instructional coach will go. Likened to cinema, if the Godfather had been the teacher, then inviting you to lunch would essentially be, "I'm gonna make him an offer he can't refuse." Remember, teachers do not get a lot of down time, and next to coffee, food is the next best thing. Teachers will do almost anything...yes, ANYTHING...for food, particularly chocolate. If you ever have a professional development, training, or seminar, and you provide chocolate candies after lunch...you INSTANTLY become Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Nelson Mandela all rolled up into one. If there ever was a Nobel Prize for Education, then it would be awarded to the person who invented bringing the after lunch chocolate candies for such things. Hey listen...YOU lock yourself in a room with different groups of thirty-nine 13 year olds on an hourly basis for years on end, and you WILL understand or you SHALL perish from this earth. Wisdom forthcoming. Food leads to talking. Talking leads to communication. Communication leads to rapport. Rapport leads to trust. Trust leads to cognitive coaching. In case you weren't watching...I just dropped the mic.



1:29 P.M.: I forgot how good food and even better conversation can really get the brain going. Neurotransmitters...don't fail me now! As a coach you have to allow the individual being coached to go where they want to go but at the same time be able to get them to where they need to be. Seriously, were we just talking about our funniest parenting moments?!? Masterfully (for once) I have casually yet purposely redirected us into a reflecting conversation. There is pausing, paraphrasing, pausing, followed by posing of questions. Yes, I said that right, and I didn't stutter. I know what you are thinking, but it is absolutely critical to put it on pause people! How else are we supposed to think? Give it time. Benjamin Franklin once said, "Take time for all things, great haste makes great waste." Benny didn't wind up on the \$100 bill for nothing. And just like Mr. C-Note felt that famous stormy night, there is electricity in the air. Today, I seem



to be firing on all cylinders as I barely need to sneak a peek at my memory mat devoted to reflecting conversations: Summarize Impressions, "How do you think it went?" Analyze Causal Factors, "What effect did your decisions have on the results you achieved?" Construct New Meaning, "What do you want to stay mindful of from now on?" Commit to Application, "So how might you apply your new learning?" Reflect on Coaching. "As you reflect on this conversation, how has it supported your learning?" And by barely, I mean like when I "barely" graded papers as a classroom teacher.



2:46 P.M.: And now onto maybe the coolest part of my day...wait for it...WAIT. FOR. IT. Yes, getting to hang with the cool kids. This never happened in middle school...too shy. This never happened in high school...too nerdy. This never happened in college...too tired, or was it too broke? But now, I get to participate in yes, you guessed it...co-planning with math teachers. This is not a joke. I don't joke about planning. My students used to think that I planned every funny story and tangential conversation from each and every one of my math lessons. On the record, I will say that just isn't true. Come on, give me a break. Please! Off the record...one might say I was like Planned Parenthood but only for a math lesson. Is this heaven? I don't see a bright light or anything. All I see are math teachers planning math lessons...cool. Joe Cool.



4:17 P.M.: Shorts...check. T-Shirt...check. Running shoes...check. Youthful exuberance...check? Nothing like a little running time to problem-resolve with the school's math department chair Mr. Bunche, aka "Jaws". First goal...don't trip on anything and hurt yourself. Second goal...don't suck TOO much wind and embarrass yourself. Third and final goal...keep pace physically while keeping PACE mentally! Unlike earlier, it isn't so easy to hide a coaching cheat sheet on a desk in front of me, since...you know...it would be too difficult to run while holding a desk in front of me! But I remember to PACE = Express Empathy, Reflect Content, State the Goal, and Presuppose Readiness to Find a Pathway. I totally got this, or at least I think I do. "Hey Vato...you made it! Now all you have to do is try and keep up...no shame in saying you forgot about needing to be somewhere ELSE. It's not too late to flake out before you pass out." Couldn't we just shoot some baskets? THAT I could do. Maybe distract him with a cup of coffee?



Don't NORMAL people just go to a coffee house and I don't know...sit while (re)solving the world's problems?!? "I did say in the PM, and I am a man of my word. Besides, I do have medical insurance just in case, and my will IS up to date. So...I know I am going to regret saying this...BUT...catch me if you can!" And with that, I take off running or what at least will feel like running tomorrow morning as I attempt to get out of bed. Quite quickly, Jaws reels me in and I can tell almost immediately that he has done this many times before. He is a runner. BUT at the same time, I am a math coach. We spend the next 45 minutes running laps (Will this ever end?) talking about the math department, and how to go from where they are (the existing state) to where they want to go (the desired state) and what resources there are to get them there. It turns out to be a terrific way to end the day...if not to end my life. I actually survive, and I hate to admit it, but the physical exertion and outdoors allows the conversation to thrive. "Vato...don't look now, but you are seriously...SERIOUSLY red in the face! But...you managed to keep up, which is more than I can say for the last guy who tried. He's buried somewhere over there (as he motions towards the field). Now we just have to see how you do the rest of the year. Same time next week?" And with that...I bid Jaws good afternoon. "Yeah...same time next week Vato! But first we shoot hoops tomorrow and get onto my turf." And with that, after feeling like I have been playing catchup all year...I finally realize that I am exactly where I need to be.

5:16 P.M.: I won't bore you with the outlook on the rest of my evening. Somethings should EVENTUALLY be considered private even between me and my diary. This ought to sum it up nicely: Calls and texts and emails oh my! Sometimes when things get busy and overwhelming...and THEY do...I wish I had my own pair of ruby slippers. Dorothy was lucky that she could just click her heals together three times...

"There's no place like home. There's no place like home. There's no place like home."

Don't be surprised if you see me trying to pull off the same trick with my Dr. Martens. Black...worn...but definitely NOT wimpy.

