By IU PIIC Mentors Rob McKenzie and Melissa Petrilak

OMG! FYI, If you don't know how to Livestream, Snapchat, Tweet, Tag, or post an Instagram story, you may be #Irrelevant to this generation of students. Why? This student population has grown up entirely with technology, as the average teenager spends one-third of their day using digital media. Affectionately known digital natives, the brains of today's students are hardwired for technology, as it has become an integral part of their everyday lives. Growing up in a digital age provides both challenges and opportunities for the field of education.

The challenges lie in a population of teachers, those between the ages of 30-60, who fall into the demographic of digital immigrants. These teachers may resist the integration of technology due to feeling anxious or overwhelmed. However, this is a disservice to students by not equipping them with 21st century skills to be productive members of a global society. At the same token, one should not simply "use technology" for the sake of "using technology". A key component to remember when integrating technology into the classroom is that *the idea comes* ***before*** *the tools*. Always start with a solid instructional idea, and then look for ways to enhance with technology. Meaningful technology integration should engage students, enhance relevancy and build capacity for the 4Cs - collaboration, communication, critical thinking and creativity.

The opportunities lie in the effective use of instructional coaching. Coaches help teachers focus on how to make technology integration seamless, engaging, and relevant for students. They also support teachers in selecting the best technological applications and devices to enhance the overall structure of the lesson. Through the use of the BDA cycle, the instructional coach brings innovative ideas, resources and support to the table. In the before meeting, the coach gathers information from the teacher, and shares ideas for accomplishing the goal of the lesson using meaningful technology. During the lesson, the coach may co-teach, model, or demonstrate how to use the specific type of technology. After implementation, the coach will follow-up with the teacher, allowing for reflection and refinement of the lesson.

Coaches can be the conduit of both best practices and technology integration. They can become the vehicle to bridging the gap between digital immigrants and digital natives. Sounds like a #WinWin for everyone!