

THE INNOVATORS GUIDE

VIRTUAL COACHING THROUGH EARBUDS

Top tips from Kathleen Artman Meeker, assistant professor in the UW College of Education and Nancy Rosenberg, director of the Applied Behavior Analysis Program in the UW College of Education

1 Sharpen your coaching skills

Just as a football coach should never yell instructions at his quarterback as he steps back to throw a pass, a long-distance educator coach should know when and how best to offer feedback through an earbud. “Timing is really important. When to prompt a child for an answer or how much to push is a very delicate balance. When you’re watching a teacher interact with a student, you need to know when to offer a suggestion and when to hold back,” Meeker says.

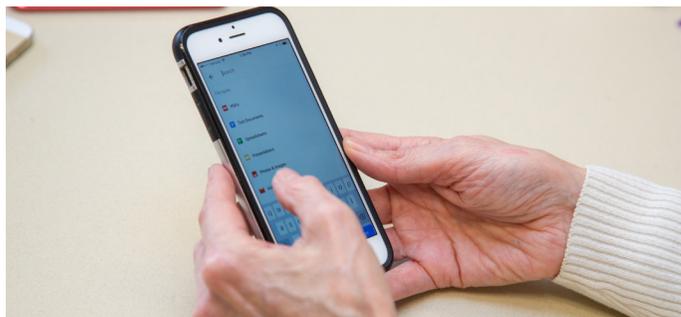
As part of this process, it is important for the coach and the student to agree to ground rules, such as drawing the line between too much or not enough coaching.

2 Debrief after each session

“If you’re going to be in someone’s ear, you have to establish trust,” Rosenberg says. The best way to do that is to communicate early and often. Establish ground rules with the student before that earbud is turned on. “Some students want a lot of feedback. Others expect less. A student may say, ‘Tell me what to do now! Don’t let me flail!’ You have to be ready for that, and ready to have an appropriate answer,” Rosenberg says.

3 Use tech tools that are easy to use and maintain

“It is great if people want to use their own phones,” Meeker says. “Today, technology makes remote communications much easier and there’s plenty to choose from — as long as you can establish a stable connection.” Meeker and Rosenberg are currently testing a camera on a swivel that follows the educator.



“[With earbuds] we were virtual guests in our students’ classrooms. We saw what they saw.”

— Kathleen Artman Meeker

[Learn more about how Meeker and Rosenberg provide virtual coaching to distance learners](#)