

Cultivating a Culture of Coaching to Support Powerful Use of Technology: Results from the Challenge-based Coaching Model Pilot in Puerto Rico

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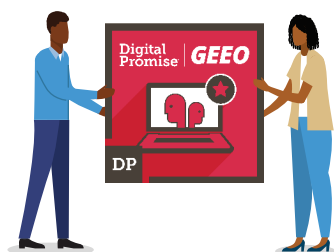
Introduction



When it comes to collaboration and support, teachers in Puerto Rico have already set the standard, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The growing need for technology integration in a remote academic setting pushed educators to rely on each other and adjust their practice to support students in meaningful ways. But these efforts have been largely informal island-wide as the Puerto Rico Department of Education does not have a formalized coaching structure in place.

Digital Promise and Global Education Exchange Opportunities

(GEEO) established a partnership in May 2020 to support and expand educator professional learning and use of technology in Puerto Rico through coaching and micro-credentials. Together, the organizations identified an opportunity to address the gaps in coaching structures and pilot a coaching model to support the powerful use of technology in schools. Digital Promise and GEEO are committed to shaping educator professional development in ways that empower educators and positively impact students.



As part of the pilot, school leaders, coaches, and teachers engaged with micro-credentials to support their professional learning journey around systems change, coaching, and technology. Micro-credentials are digital certifications that verify an individual's competence in a specific skill or set of skills. They are competency-based, researched-backed, on-demand, personalized, and shareable.

From January-June 2021, GEEO, with the support of Digital Promise, launched a **6-month coaching pilot with 10 schools across Puerto Rico**. The pilot was based on the Challenge-based Coaching Model which was developed through Digital Promise's work on the Dynamic Learning Project.¹ The objective of the pilot was to help coaches work with teachers to enhance their technology use and tackle instructional and professional challenges using innovative strategies.



9 schools were located in rural areas



1 school was located in an urban area

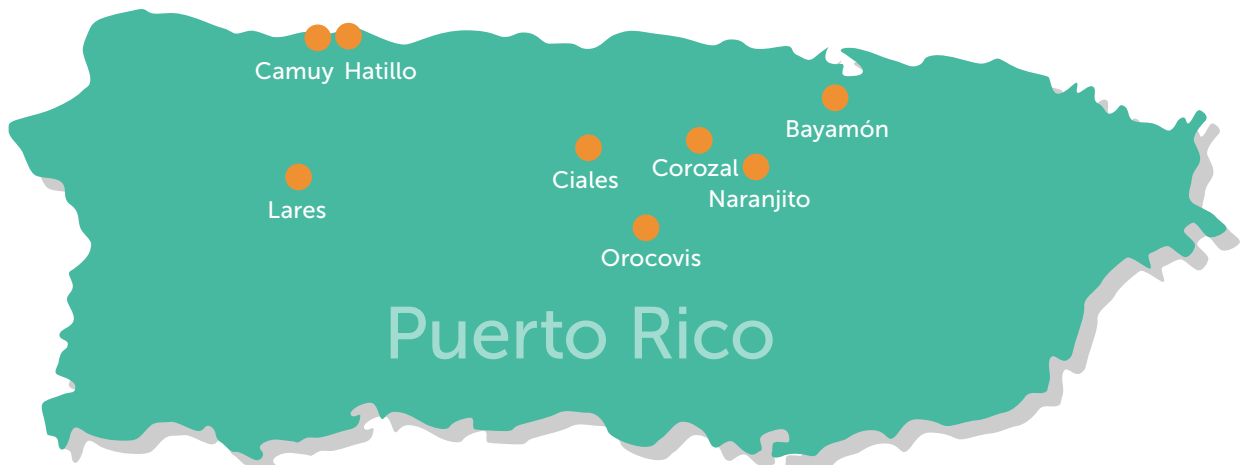


8 coaches had a Bachelor's Degree



2 coaches had a Master's Degree

¹ The Dynamic Learning Project is a classroom-based coaching program in which participating teachers are coached to use technology to support student engagement and promote the development of agency, as well as skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. Digital Promise launched the Dynamic Learning Project pilot (DLP) in 2017 with the goal to increase educational equity and impactful use of technology through instructional coaching.



Town	Region	School name	Level
Camuy	ORE de Arecibo	S. U. Joaquin Vazquez Cruz	Elementary and Middle School
Ciales	ORE de Arecibo	Juan Antonio Corretjer	High School
Lares	ORE de Arecibo	S. U. Angelica Delgado (S.U. America)	Elementary and Middle School
Hatillo	ORE de Arecibo	Padre Anibal Reyes Belen	High School
Camuy	ORE de Arecibo	Juan A Corretjer	Elementary and Middle school
Naranjito	Ore de Bayamón	Francisco Morales	High School
Corozal	Ore de Bayamón	Vocacional Nueva De Corozal	High School
Orocovis	Ore de Bayamón	Superior Alberto Meléndez Torres	High School
Corozal	Ore de Bayamón	Emilio R. Delgado	High School
Bayamón	Ore de Bayamón	Luis Pales Matos	Middle and High School

Methods

Methods



1. **Content Creation:** Digital Promise adapted and developed coaching materials to support the pilot. This included a Coaching Implementation Guide, a Coaching Facilitator Guide that aligned with the Google Certified Coach curriculum², and Challenge-based Coaching Model graphics.



2. **Collaboration:** Digital Promise collaborated with GEE0 in the implementation of the coaching pilot by facilitating coaching kickoff meetings, coaching workshops, and bi-weekly planning and support meetings with GEE0. During these meetings, the Digital Promise and GEE0 teams discussed modules from the Google Certified Coach curriculum and designed engaging activities to support coaches.



3. **Selection:** GEE0 identified 10 schools to participate in the coaching pilot. The school selection was based on the following criteria:

- Must be a high school or secondary school
- Must have “Maestros Recurso Uso de la Computadora” (MRUC) or Technology Resource Teachers already in place.

Once the schools were selected, GEE0 contacted the school principals to introduce the pilot and explain what the process entailed. A meeting was then facilitated with principals, MRUCs, and teachers.

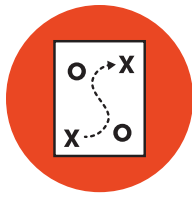


4. **School Supports:** GEE0 facilitated workshops with principals and MRUCs where they discussed the competencies needed to ensure the successful implementation of the pilot, the importance of ongoing professional learning with micro-credentials combined with the coaching model, the use of Microsoft Teams and TIM tools to document the coaching progress, and a timeline of activities.



5. **Coach Supports:** GEE0 established a professional learning community with the 10 coaches from the pilot schools. GEE0 staff used the implementation and facilitator guide to support the cohort through the Google Certified Coach curriculum. GEE0 led weekly asynchronous activities using Microsoft Teams space and TIM tools, 1-2 hour synchronous meetings, and office hours that provided unstructured time to discuss progress and coaching materials while they worked with educators.

² The Google Certified Coach curriculum provides instructional coaches with tools and strategies that support their 1:1 interactions with educators. The curriculum is tailored to coaches and designed to be completed sequentially.

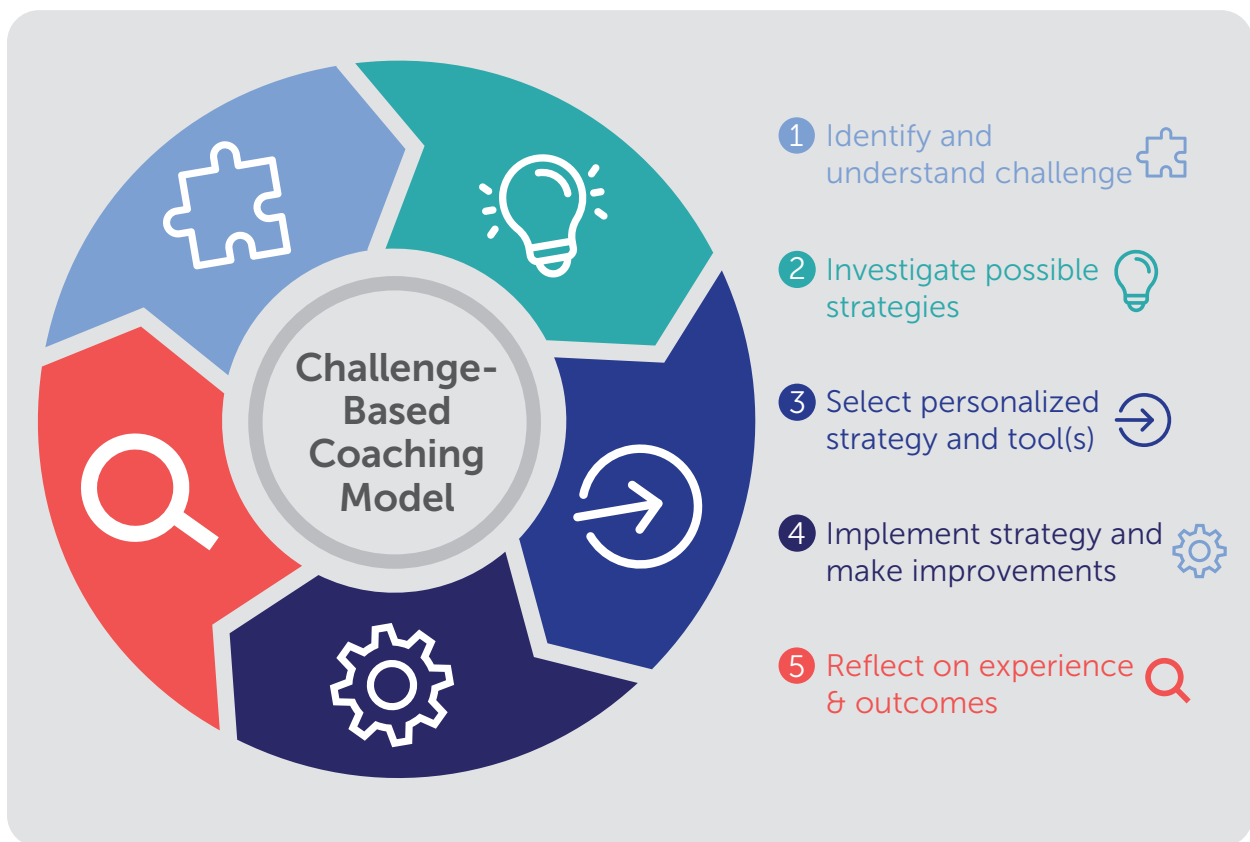


6. Challenge-based Coaching Model Implementation: Each coach worked with two teachers to establish goals, identify challenges, create strategies, reflect on the results, and support the teachers in earning micro-credential aligned with the challenges and strategies they were working on. Throughout the pilot, coaches set up meetings with teachers every 1-2 weeks and frequently communicated via email, phone calls, and/or texts for additional support.



7. Evaluation: Digital Promise developed evaluation tools including surveys, and focus group protocols to gather information about the coaching pilot from coaches, teachers, and leaders. Digital Promise administered a coach and teacher survey and facilitated focus group discussions with coaches and leaders separately at the end of the coaching pilot. The purpose of the evaluation efforts is to learn about the experience from coaches, educators, and leaders engaging with the pilot and improve the coaching materials

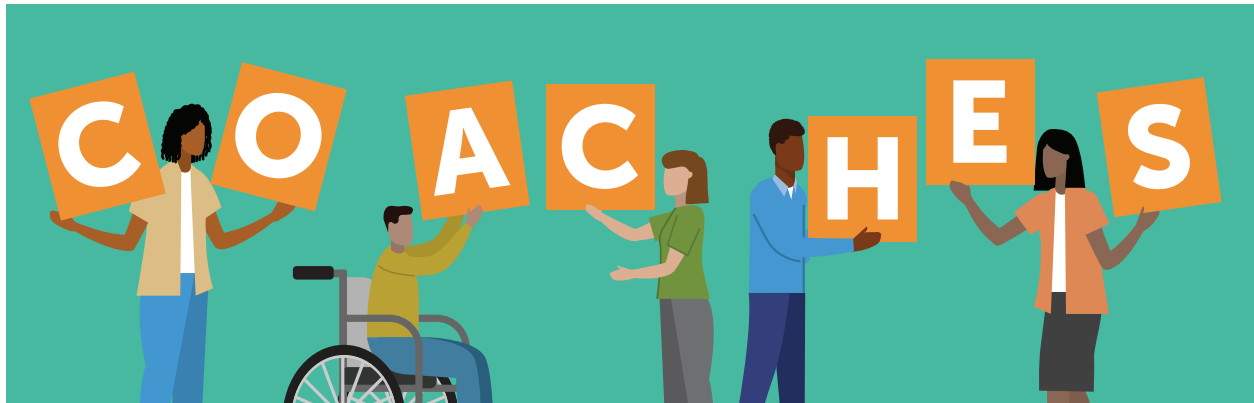
and process. The results and feedback were shared with GEE0 and this report with school leaders in Puerto Rico who may be interested in engaging with the coaching model in the future.



Outcomes

Outcomes

Coaches



88.89%

of coaches felt confident to continue to implement the Challenge-based Coaching model in their practice beyond the GEE0 and Digital Promise supported pilot.

77.78%

of coaches were satisfied with the coaching pilot experience.

100%

of coaches felt supported by GEE0 and the professional learning community.

Conditions that supported successful coaching implementation:

- Fewer classes assigned to the coach
- Commitment from school leaders to the coaching work
- Enthusiasm from teachers about the coaching work

All of us who are computer teachers want our peers to integrate technology in their practice better. It is our duty, and always our motivation.
- Coach

In the future, my idea is to work with educators to identify their needs and find better ways to support students, mainly in core subjects.
- Coach

Teachers

100%

of teachers supported by coaches in the pilot agreed or strongly agreed that:

- My experience working with my coach was simple and clear.
- My experience working with my coach was rewarding.
- Questions about my teaching practices were answered quickly by my coach.
- The work with my coach has improved my teaching practices.

85.72%

of the teachers were confident with their ability to continue to implement the learnings from your coach in their own teaching practice.

71.43%

of teachers were enthusiastic to a great extent about the coaching model compared to other forms of coaching.

100%

of teachers expressed their belief that it is valuable for teachers to engage with coaches in virtual learning environments, such as hybrid learning and remote learning.

Teachers noted the most impactful activities with their coach included:

- Collaborative work
- Being introduced to new tools to improve their classroom practice
- Being introduced to new strategies and games
- Engaging with micro-credentials

My coach was excellent. Even though time availability was difficult, every effort was made to move the project forward with calmness and joy.

- Teacher



Micro-credentials

Micro-credentials



of the coaches earned a micro-credential.

Of those,



reported that the micro-credential was useful to their coaching practice.

The micro-credentials that coaches earned were:



Creating Digital Citizens

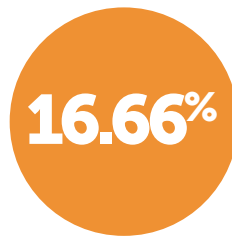


Visionary Leadership for Technology



Technology as a Tool for Professional Learning

The micro-credentials that teachers earned were:



of the teachers earned a micro-credential.



Technology as a Tool for Professional Learning



Directing Digital Media

I am very happy with micro credentials. I think they are a great strategy for increasing the professional development of teachers in my school. I also intend to use them as a guide with small groups to awaken the interest of others.

- School Leader

The leadership micro-credential was excellent. It was used to create a technology integration plan in the school.

- Coach

Impact

Impact

Relationships

- **To foster effective coach-teacher collaboration**, coaches developed strong relationships by helping teachers feel comfortable about reaching out to them, even if it was after school hours.
- **The coaching pilot was instrumental in strengthening the school leaders' relationships with the coaches.** One school director shared that this project opened a strong Director/MRUC communication that even led this relationship to transform into a friendship.

The teamwork, not only with the MRUC (coach), but also with the other two teachers, was extremely enriching. The teamwork was excellent. A greater relationship was created; there is more trust.

- Leader

Systems

- School directors believe that the coaching pilot **not only benefited coaches and educators, but also the students and their families.**
- School leaders want to **propose new academic structures to the Department of Education** where pre-selected educators who want to participate in special projects, such as the coaching pilot, would have **fewer classes assigned to them to provide more time for professional development.**
- MRUCs held a traditionally informal coaching role at schools. The coaching pilot allowed them to have **more intention and structure in their work of supporting other teachers, helped them understand the purpose of coaching, and explore ways to become more effective coaches.**
- The pilot encouraged school leaders to advocate for full-time dedicated coaches to scale the coaching model. As a result of the pilot, one school leader worked to **transition a temporary MRUC (coach) to a full-time employee next year and the following years.**

Coaching is extremely important. If we don't have coaching, we won't be able to function because we need that encouragement. The ideas they gave us made us ignite our intellect and be able to work better.

- Leader

My recommendation is that more schools join. It is a project rich in knowledge and technological tools

- Leader

Contact information:



For more information about Digital Promise and micro-credentials contact microcredentials@digitalpromise.org



For more information about GEEO and their work, please contact info@geopr.com