Collaborative Coaching

The practitioner (teacher leader, principal, district administrator) engages in powerful, collaborative, and self-initiated coaching for the purpose of improved teaching and learning.

**Key Method**

The practitioner engages in self-initiated and collaborative coaching with a coach who may be a peer, supervisor, or other colleague/administrator to reflect on evidence of practice and develop a plan for improved practice and performance.

**Method Components**

**What is Collaborative Coaching?**

Coaching, as referred to in this micro-credential, is not the role of instructional coach, but is collegial, partnership coaching in which the coaching is voluntary and is focused on the improvement of professional practice that impacts teaching and learning.

**Components of Collaborative Coaching**

There are four key practices critical to this type of voluntary, collaborative, and self-initiated coaching:

1. Establish trust and maintain equality in a self-initiated collaborative coaching relationship
2. Engage in growth-focused observations and dialogue
3. Provide evidence-based graphic feedback
4. Reflect collaboratively and plan action

**1. Establish trust and maintain equality in a self-initiated collaborative coaching relationship**

Carl Rogers and Richard Farson (2015) posed that effective communication can only take place in a nonthreatening environment: "The climate must foster equality and freedom, trust and understanding, acceptance and warmth. In this climate and in this climate only does the individual feel safe enough to incorporate new experiences and new values into his concept of himself" (p.281). The carrot and stick may, on occasion, prod people to meet minimum standards and expectations, but only high-trust connections can inspire greatness (Tschannen-Moran, 2010). Working relationships between adults work best in adult-to-adult interactions (Knight, 2011). In this key component, the practitioner demonstrates the ability to create a safe and supportive self-initiated collaborative coaching relationship that produces ongoing mutual respect, openness, and trust. The practitioner exhibits behaviors and dispositions that support collegial conversations such as confidentiality, kindness, and respect. Coaches see their colleagues as equals, listen much more than they talk, carefully consider everything the colleague says, and position the colleague as judge and decision maker.

**2. Engage in growth-focused observations and dialogue**

To arrive at decisions and actions that will impact professional practice, the partners in coaching engage in dialogue. Joyce and Showers (2002) stressed the importance of non-evaluative feedback by encouraging coaches to focus their feedback on inquiry rather than evaluation. In this relationship, one party does not
impose, dominate, or control. Both parties engage in conversation about evidence and artifacts and think and learn together. Observation and examination of “artifacts” focus on specific aspects of educator growth and student achievement that provide high leverage for improving professional practice and student learning.

Active listening is an important component of dialogue.

**Tips for Active Listening:**
- Don’t interrupt.
- Test your understanding by paraphrasing or summarizing what you have heard before you respond.
- Reflect what has been said by paraphrasing. “What I’m hearing is...” and “Sounds like you are saying...” are great ways to reflect back.
- Ask questions to clarify certain points or confirm your understanding. “What do you mean when you say...” “Is this what you mean?”
- Summarize the speaker’s comments periodically
- Use silence. Refrain from talking every time there’s a lull in the conversation.

It is important to engage in preplanning dialogue prior to observation to establish the focus of the coaching. Some sample questions might include:
- What do you want to focus on in our observation or dialogue?
- Where are you now in relation to what you need to achieve?
- What is currently happening that you want to change?
- What is the desired end goal?
- What does success look like?
- What are you hoping to achieve? What is the desired impact?

3. **Provide evidence-based graphic feedback**
Evidence comes from two critical sources: direct observation and the examination of artifacts (Danielson, 2007). It is important to establish through dialogue what the coaching focus is prior to gathering evidence or providing feedback. Questions to ask during this focus-setting dialogue might be: “How can I be of help to you?” “What specifically do you wish me to look for?” and “Is there a particular behavior or standard you wish me to look for?”

Feedback in this type of coaching relationship does not include statements such as “you should have...” or “I would never...” Instead, feedback is centered on the pre-identified area of focus and the coach is another set of eyes to capture evidence and data related to current practice.

**Areas to Consider:**
- Avoid evaluative language that provides a value judgment:
  - “Your lesson/presentation seemed a bit boring since your students/participants were not engaged”
- Avoid giving advice and calling it feedback:
  - “I think you should use some essential questions when setting up your lesson activity or presentation to ensure students/participants are clear on the important concepts.”
  - “I would not have scored the teacher’s lesson as exemplary.”
- Descriptive language creates clarity:
  - “Here are some research-based strategies I saw you use today...”
  - “Here is something I learned from you today...”
  - “I saw you...”
Evidence-based graphic feedback should always be written. This ensures accuracy and clarity. Some ways to gather evidence-based graphic feedback include:
- verbal flow (map the conversation) or selective verbatim (record word-for-word what is said about an area of focus)
- event count (record the number of specific occurrences of a tracked action)
- duration (record how much time is spent on a particular activity)
- physical map (drawing of where things are located and the activities that happen there)
- time sample (record of what occurs at specific intervals of time, e.g., what is happening every five minutes)

4. Reflect and plan action
Focus energy and actions on collaboratively identifying specific, research-based professional learning and practices that will facilitate growth and effectiveness in professional practice and improve teaching and learning. In this coaching model, there is not one practitioner acting as expert and the other as a novice or apprentice practitioner. Both practitioners are equals who are collaboratively working to improve their professional practice. Collegial coaches help each other reflect on their own practices without passing judgment or making evaluations about their observations. Use reflection-driven questions, such as:
- What did you learn from...?
- What does the students'/teachers' work tell you about....?
- What was challenging about...?
- What was your favorite part of....?
- What worked for you?
- What will you do differently?

Supporting Research
The following sources support the research on effective collaborative and collegial coaching:


Engage in growth-focused dialogue
Provide evidence-based, graphic feedback


Reflect and plan action


Resources

Establish trust and maintain equality in a self-initiated collaborative coaching relationship


Engage in growth-focused observations and dialogue

- Digital Promise Active Listening Micro-credential https://bloomboard.com/microcredential/view/97f24917-c7ba-4542-ace3-b9fa88566006

Provide evidence-based graphic feedback
Reflected and plan action

Part 1. Overview Questions
With a colleague, engage in the four steps of self-initiated partnership coaching in which each practitioner gives and receives coaching, and provide context for the following questions (250-word minimum for each question):

- How was trust established in the coaching relationship?
- Describe the area(s) of focus the coaching was centered on. From your coaching conversations, share examples of growth-focused observations and dialogue that occurred. Provide direct quotations as well as some reflections about how the conversation was growth-focused.
- How was graphic, evidence-based feedback provided? Share some examples of the specific feedback.
- As a result of the coaching, what was the plan of action that was collaboratively decided upon? Describe how the coaching conversation and reflection led to the plan of action.
  - **Passing**: The practitioner’s response reflects adherence to the four conditions of self-initiated, collaborative coaching. The response is clearly connected to the four conditions of self-initiated, collaborative coaching. The response provides adequate detail through the required length.

Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts
Submit either a 10-minute video or audio file, OR a written transcript (1,000-word minimum) of a self-initiated collegial coaching conversation that reflects the four conditions of self-initiated, collaborative coaching described above.

Provide an annotation to the video or transcript in which you highlight each of the four conditions (500-word minimum).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Yes&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;Almost&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;Not Yet&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The video or written submission includes all required evidence for each of the four skills of self-initiated collaborative coaching.</td>
<td>The video or written submission includes all required evidence for each of the four skills of self-initiated collaborative coaching.</td>
<td>The video or written submission does not include evidence of all four skills of self-initiated, collaborative coaching.</td>
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</tbody>
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Part 3. Reflection
Reflect on your experience engaging in collaborative coaching using the following questions as a guide (500-word minimum):

- How was this practice of self-initiated, collaborative coaching different from other coaching scenarios you have participated in?
- What about your professional practice changed as a result of either coaching or being coached?
- What other reflections do you have about the skills and overall practice of self-initiated collaborative coaching?

- **Passing:** Response provides examples of how this process was different from other coaching methods, identifies at least one example of how the practitioner’s practice changed and provides personal insight regarding the practice of self-initiated collaborative coaching including any goals for improvement in the process either as coach or in receiving coaching.