Coach Formative Assessment Tool (FAST)

High-Quality Coaching in Practice
Coaching Definition
Adapted from NAEYC

Coaching is a collaborative process led by a colleague with specialized knowledge and skills. Coaching is designed to build leader and teacher capacity and is focused on goal setting, next steps, and reflection in order to provide the highest quality learning environment for children.

The Formative Assessment Tool (FAST) outlines five competency areas, adapted from the New York State Coach Competencies:

- Coach establishes and maintains trusting, productive relationships that support teacher practice.
- Coach establishes, develops, and maintains quality coaching strategies.
- Coach uses evidence-based reflection and feedback to support improvements in instructional practice and implementation of the curriculum.
- Coach establishes and maintains strong, trusting relationship with the site leader in service of supporting teacher development and curriculum implementation.
- Coach identifies and leverages opportunities to develop coaching practice and fulfills administrative and professional responsibilities.
High-Quality Coaching in Practice

Just as teachers need to engage in observation, reflection, and planning for action, our coaches also benefit from reflective supervision and other professional supports. In a large-scale coaching engagement at the Bank Street Education Center, we have a team of lead coaches who model that coaching relationship through a parallel process of coaching and reflective supervision with lead coaches.

As a part of this work, the lead coaches regularly observe coaches in action on site. By embedding reflection and inquiry throughout the layers of our organization, we create a culture of learning that drives our work. The team of lead coaches in this project developed this tool as a means of standardizing what good coaching looks like in action and to serve as a reference for coaches and lead coaches alike to ground their reflections. It is not intended to serve as an evaluation instrument, but rather as a base of common understanding about how our values and beliefs show up in practice through our coaching model.
Coach establishes and maintains trusting, productive relationships that support teacher practice.

1.1 The coach demonstrates a productive relationship with teaching team (including AT/Para) that appears to be founded on mutual trust.

- Coach always greets every member of the classroom teaching team by name and provides evidence of connection (asks about something that was planned, discussed, or happened during last visit).
- Coach-teacher interactions are strengths-based and attentive to teachers’ feelings, experiences, and individual needs.
- Coach frequently follows through with promised resources and other supports.
- Teacher seems to know that the coach will be responsive to communication and requests for support.

1.2 The coach develops and sustains a positive rapport with children, as appropriate, to support teacher learning and development.

- Coach-teacher relationship consistently allows for deep reflective conversations and constructive feedback. These habits consistently support significant changes in the teacher’s practice.
- Coach always greets children in a way that is developmentally meaningful, speaking at eye level (when appropriate), and using eye contact, names, and an alert and genuine tone.
- Coach speaks to children with a strengths-based approach and is attentive to their feelings, experiences, and individual needs.
- Coach is sensitive and able to follow the child’s lead as an example to the teacher.
- When modeling a component of the curriculum, the coach demonstrates strong practice (use of voice, composure, setting expectations, and knowledge of class habits) to inform a high level of implementation (uses appropriate objective, accurate setup of materials, procedures, and fidelity to intent of the curriculum).
Coach establishes, develops, and maintains quality coaching strategies.

2.1 The coach uses active listening techniques effectively—nods, inserts encouraging words, paraphrases, summarizes, clarifies meaning—all in order to encourage teacher sharing and direct conversation.

- Coach appears engaged and responsive during all interactions with teachers.
- Coach strives to remove static or distractions in order to be present, and has worked to determine active listening styles that work best for each teaching team.
- Coach follows each period of active listening with a paraphrase, summarization, or clarification.
- Coach communicates nonverbal encouragement through body language and facial expressions.
- The coach ensures that the teacher’s experiences are the focus of the conversation, rather than the coach’s.
- When the coach takes notes, the logistics are discussed and decided upon with the teacher so that it does not interfere with the process of active listening and instead is utilized as a tool.

2.2 The coach prompts inquiry—encourages teaching team to ask questions grounded in low-inference observations and to make connections to other domains and/or areas of the curriculum.

- Coach consistently uses opportunities to model and support teachers’ development in recognizing the importance and use of low-inference observations.
- Coach invites teachers to share low-inference noticings and/or experiences. This may take place when coach is responding to a teacher-led discussion or it may be initiated by a coach.
- Teachers ask questions and share low-inference observations, thoughts, and experiences in connection to other domains and/or areas of the curriculum.
- Coach consistently encourages teachers to expand their ability and interest in making these connections (by sharing low-inference observations, resources, and suggestions, as appropriate). Coach consistently uses opportunities to help teachers set goals around integration.
Coach establishes, develops, and maintains quality coaching strategies.

2.3 The coach models reflective practice by asking thoughtful, probing, or clarifying questions responsive to teacher experiences and grounded in low-inference observations of students and teacher(s) (uses “I notice...” and “This matters because...” statements).

- Coach consistently plans for and models use of observational tools, such as anecdotal records, verbal flow, event count, time sample, or scripting during in-class coaching.
- Coach consistently uses notes to guide coach-team meeting and goal-setting process to impact teaching practice and/or student outcomes.
- Coach consistently supports the teaching team through reflection by asking open-ended questions. Coach encourages the teaching team to be aware, analyze, and plan by asking questions, such as:
  - Awareness: What did you try and why? How did it work out?
  - Analysis: How does that fit with what you planned to do? How do you feel about...?
  - Alternatives: What will you do differently next time? What other opportunities would be useful?
  - Action: How do you plan to learn more? What resources will you use next time?

2.4 The coach develops and sustains a positive rapport with children, as appropriate, to support teacher learning and development.

- Coach demonstrates confident and thoughtful use of the coaching strategies (see Appendix A) throughout the coaching session (both in-class coaching and coach-team meeting).
- Coach exhibits an understanding of and responsiveness to teacher readiness to change stages (see Appendix B for full list of teacher readiness stages).
Coach uses evidence-based reflection and feedback to support improvements in instructional practice and implementation of the curriculum.

3.1 The coach collects and uses various site-specific student data, including low-inference observations, record sheets, and photos to guide his/her conversation with teacher teams.

- Coach consistently uses notes from in-class experiences and discussions to plan and support teachers’ needs.
- Coach skillfully models use of low-inference notes and other evidence. A coach may be observed taking notes in parallel with a teacher to compare what has been observed during an activity.
- Coach consistently uses notes and evidence (including concrete examples and/or quotes from observations) to guide coach-team meeting and goal-setting process to impact teaching practice and/or student outcomes.

3.2 The coach develops and sustains a positive rapport with children, as appropriate, to support teacher learning and development.

- Coach consistently uses a reflection form alongside teaching teams to reflect, discuss, and develop goals/action steps based on in-class experiences during and between each coaching session.
- Coach guides teachers toward setting appropriate goals based on students’ abilities. S/he consistently references children’s learning trajectories as captured in observations and low-inference notes in a way that is understandable to the teacher.
- Coach always follows up with any coaching support needed for goals, reminding teaching team of goals between visits.
- Coach always follows up on progress of goals during each visit and/or develops next steps with teacher.
Coach uses evidence-based reflection and feedback to support improvements in instructional practice and implementation of the curriculum.

3.3 The coach facilitates the teaching team’s continued content knowledge development by sharing resources appropriate for teacher-identified focus area(s) and teacher team’s developmental stage that translate to changes in teacher practice/habits.

- Coach is familiar with the coaching tools and is able to access them and share appropriately based on the needs of the teaching team.
- Coach scaffolds the level of support provided to teachers in accordance with their developmental stage/readiness (see Appendix B).

3.4 The coach observes and provides feedback to teacher on other domains of practice as they relate to the goal or objective of the coaching relationship (including classroom management as it relates to curricular implementation).

- Coach consistently provides feedback based on concrete examples of teaching practice in domains other than the content focus as observed during coaching sessions and as relevant to the objective of the coaching relationship.
- Coach consistently offers examples of practice that demonstrate appropriate connections to other domains and/or curricula. Further, coach includes actions and language examples relevant to all members of the teaching team during these discussions.
- Coach uses open-ended language and questions to guide discussions, such as:
  - “I noticed...”
  - “Tell me more...?”
  - “What have you noticed when...?”
Coach establishes and maintains strong, trusting relationship with the site leader in service of supporting teacher development and curriculum implementation.

4.1 The coach establishes and maintains open lines of communication with site leader to support teacher growth, differentiating outreach according to site-specific circumstances.

- Coach goes above and beyond to keep leaders aware of the happenings in the classroom as it relates to curriculum units and teacher/student progression, including:
  - Maintaining strong communication habits with site leader, including timely weekly emails regarding logistics (possible meeting times, schedule changes) and key coaching content information (curriculum notes, positive occurrences during coaching sessions).
- Coach consistently confirms leader’s availability for coach-leader meeting prior to visit.

4.2 The coach uses evidence (observations, anecdotes, and teacher experiences) to discuss areas of strength and growth with site leadership.

- Coach consistently takes an organized set of notes (dated, labeled with goals) to aid in conversations with leaders.
- The coach notes always allow for organized, timely conversations that lead in a positive direction.
Coach establishes and maintains strong, trusting relationship with the site leader in service of supporting teacher development and curriculum implementation.

4.3 The coach shares relevant resources to support site leaders’ knowledge of curriculum and adult development.

- Coach consistently and systematically shares curriculum resources to ensure the leaders are an integral part of the success in implementing a curriculum.
- Coaches consistently shares articles, outside resources (informational books) with leaders to support their curricular and teacher support knowledge.

4.4 The coach observes and provides feedback to leadership on other domains of practice as they relate to the focus or objective of the coaching relationship (teacher practice, classroom management, student engagement, pedagogy).

- Coach consistently identifies and leverages opportunities for growth in other areas through implementation of the curriculum (ex., identifies new transition activities like singing a song).
- Coach provides leader with low-inference observations and feedback on teacher practice and other areas that can be addressed through the curriculum.
Coach identifies and leverages opportunities to develop coaching practice and fulfills administrative and professional responsibilities.

5.1 The coach responds to constructive feedback in a professional manner, demonstrating initiative to apply feedback to practice, identifying individual professional goals, and actively taking steps to change habits and behaviors.

- Coach actively participates during formative assessment meetings, shares observations, and reflects thoughtfully about his/her strengths and challenges.
- Coach responds constructively and collaboratively regarding feedback. Coach thoughtfully incorporates feedback into practice. Coach is not defensive regarding feedback, but rather considers deeply the evidence in his/her coaching practice that informed particular feedback.
- Coach looks deeply into all aspects of his/her coaching practice and makes a specific plan to incorporate new coaching strategies where appropriate.

5.2 The coach completes documentation, observations, and follow-up emails within 48 hrs. Responds to email and returns deliverables in a timely manner.

- Coach consistently (with almost no exceptions) submits coaching survey within 24 hours of visit, sends emails to teaching teams at least 48 hours prior to visits, and follows up with emails to each individual teaching team within 48 hours of visit.
- Coach responds to communications with lead coach within 24 hours and follows up with any actions within 48 hours.
- Coach sends emails to teaching team that outline particular plans for the upcoming visit concisely, goals that were set at the previous visit, and times and expectations for classroom coaching and meetings. Follow-up emails are also concise. Email and text communications include all members of the teaching team.
- Coach’s emails include the site leader for communication and to schedule meetings.
Coach identifies and leverages opportunities to develop coaching practice and fulfills administrative and professional responsibilities.

5.3 The coach manages site logistics effectively and is communicative with site-based staff; navigates school schedules; and works with site leadership to ensure that visits and meetings with teachers and leaders occur.

- Coach makes every possible effort with site leadership to secure sufficient in-class coaching and time for teaching team meetings (not full cohort meetings).
- Coach makes every possible effort to secure and establish consistent contact with site leadership and uses other modes of communication to reach leaders in the case of barriers to in-person meetings.

5.4 Coach uses lead coach observations and feedback to reflect upon improvements to his/her own coaching practices.

- Coach creates a specific plan for improvement based on reflections on practice and feedback from lead coach.
- Coach shows improvement in areas of practice by making particular efforts based on reflections and lead coach feedback at the previous formative assessment meeting.

5.5 Coach demonstrates a collaborative and considerate relationship with colleagues.

- Coach is sensitive to and able to become part of the Bank Street culture, is reflective about participation style during group times, and finds ways to grow.
- Coach works collaboratively during supervision days, training days, and facilitation days.
- Coach is meaningfully engaged during case studies and other reflective opportunities.
- Coach is open to receiving feedback from other coaches and core team members and pursues input from those colleagues when necessary.
Coaching Strategies

**Model**
Coach plans ahead to demonstrate an activity or a teaching strategy as the teacher watches. The teacher then implements the same activity or strategy.

**Collaborative Model**
Coach steps in during an activity to model a more effective way to implement an activity or strategy.

**Remind**
Coach gives teacher reminders in the moment to help him/her execute more effectively.

**Ongoing Narration**
Coach labels out loud, in real time, the behaviors of the teacher and children in order to highlight how the teacher influences children’s actions.

**Immediate Reflection**
Coach shares open-ended questions directly following an activity.

**Observe**
Coach observes the teacher to inform feedback and impact instruction.

**Reflect and Plan**
Coach works with the teacher to reflect on the activity/strategy and plan for the next one.
Teacher Stages of Developmental Readiness

**Pre-contemplation**
Teacher is not ready to make changes in his/her practice.

**Contemplation**
Teacher is thinking about making changes in his/her practice, but is overwhelmed by obstacles.

**Preparation**
Teacher is actively making a plan to make changes in his/her practice.

**Action**
Teacher is actively making changes in his/her practice.

**Maintenance**
Teacher is working to maintain changes in his/her practice.
Low-Inference Notes
Use this space to record teacher-child interactions in support of your coaching.