

What skills do I need to be an effective coach?

Active Listening	<p>This is so important, which is why it is top of the list. You can't be a good coach unless you really listen. It's not just about listening to what is being said but also listening to what is not being said. This is where you can really help by asking insightful questions to gain a greater understanding of staffs thinking. E.g. <i>'How are you feeling about the staff training session?'</i> <i>'What ideas do you have about how we can develop our resources more to support maths opportunities?'</i></p>
Building Rapport	<p>The coaching process will not work unless you create a good rapport from the beginning. Rapport is a connection or relationship with someone else. Sometimes rapport happens naturally however rapport can also be built and developed by finding common ground. Building rapport will allow your coachees to feel relaxed and open up. Make staff feel valued by having shared aims and a vision for the setting, by paying attention, appreciating and supporting staff, sharing experiences and sharing interests. As rapport deepens it also allows you to ask harder and more challenging questions.</p> <p>Something to consider - When you are looking at the role of your Deputy Maths Champion you may decide that they will provide a more 'hands on' daily coaching role with staff as they already work directly in rooms with staff and have a good rapport.</p>
Skilful Questioning	<p>Asking questions is a central part of effective coaching. Your aim is to evoke discovery, insight, and action and you can model this by being someone who digs deeper, rather than just accepting things and carrying on.</p> <p>Using open questions that start with either: <i>what, where, when, who, why</i> and <i>how</i> are the best questions to give insight into the person you are coaching.</p>
Empathising	<p>When we empathise we become one with that person's distress. As a coach put yourself in the other person's shoes and appreciate how they are likely to be feeling or think given the situation. You may not necessarily share their feelings but it is</p>

	important to try and understand it from their perspective in order to support them to move forward.
Summarising and Reflecting	<p>Summarising and reflecting helps you guide your coachee to make sense of things. Summarising means repeating what the coachee has said using the main points. For example 'so in summary the current snack time doesn't provide enough time to explore early maths concepts' Summarising is useful as it keeps the coachee focussed on the issue and their thinking progress so far.</p> <p>Reflecting means closely repeating or paraphrasing what the coachee has said to show understanding. Reflection can reinforce the thoughts of the coachee. It allows the coachee to step back and look at an issue objectively e.g. <i>'So you've identified that the current snack time isn't working effectively due to a lack of time, what can be done to ensure snack time provides opportunity to explore maths concepts?'</i></p>
Unlocking Limiting Beliefs	<p>Beliefs are 'a principle accepted as true or real without proof'. We all have them and often don't question them. Beliefs may be instilled by our own upbringing, something we have been told, read or seen; or perhaps an experience we have had that caused us to have an extreme emotion and has stuck with us. Beliefs can have a major impact on our behaviour. Some beliefs can help us become successful; others can hold us back.</p> <p>Identifying and challenging underlying limiting beliefs can consequently be one of the most powerful parts of the coaching process; and can be an enlightening and even an emotional process for the coachee. You can play a key role in unlocking staff's confidence. Beliefs such as 'we can't change it, we've always done it this way' or 'I can't teach maths I'm not good at it' can be explored and unpicked to uncover where the belief stems from and how the person can be supported to move forward.</p>
Staying Focussed	<p>It's really important as a coach to make sure that the coaching methods you use keep things on track towards aims and objectives. The Maths Champions programme has a clear focus and as part of this you will create an action plan, this will help you keep track of progress. A main role of the coach is to ensure the coachees don't digress too much or get caught up in too much detail.</p> <p>Staying focussed can involve summarising and guiding the flow of the conversation back to a framework such as the GROW model, using further questioning. It can also mean interjecting from time to time to pull things back on track.</p>

	<p><i>Something to consider</i> - Consider how you will manage your own time in relation to your coaching role and identify how you will keep your coachees on track and focussed. You may find it useful to map out a typical week in your setting and identify moments where you can catch up with staff in different rooms, according to shift patterns and routines.</p>
<p>Being Non-Judgemental and Open-Minded</p>	<p>As a coach you don't get to judge another person. Being a good coach is about being curious and having an open and inquisitive mind. This will allow you to focus on doing the best for your coachee by reflecting, providing feedback and asking powerful questions.</p>
<p>Giving Constructive Feedback</p>	<p>One of the most useful things for your coachee can be you pointing out to them things you are noticing about them. For instance, their behaviour or their reactions to questions. Sometimes people don't see stuff about themselves and often others won't be brave enough to tell them. As a coach, you have a privileged position of trust where you can point these things out to them, so it is well received and helps them to improve.</p>

For more information on supporting and coaching staff you can access 'Coaching as an Educational Lead' on-line course.