

Coaching is Froebelian

by Sally Cave

As Froebelians, we believe that:

- Children deserve and need **nurturing, knowledgeable and reflective educators**
- Educators that are nurturing, knowledgeable and reflective are not born, they need to be grown and to grow.

"I wanted to educate people to be free, to think, to take action for themselves."

(Froebel in Lilley 1967:41)

Leaders may wish to consider how they lead in order for children to have knowledgeable, nurturing and reflective educators. I suggest that Froebelian principles can show us the way.

What is coaching?

Coaching is the art of facilitating another person's learning, development, well-being and performance. Coaching raises self-awareness and identifies choices. Through coaching people are able to find their own solutions, develop their own skills and change their own attitudes and behaviours. The whole aim of coaching is to close the gap between people's potential and their current state.

The principles of coaching are:

- The client is resourceful.
- The coach's role is to enable the client to access their resourcefulness.
- Coaching addresses the whole person.
- The client sets the agenda.
- The coach and client are equals.
- Coaching is about change.

Links to Froebelian principles:

Without a significant relationship, there can be no significant learning.

I love every aspect of coaching because it suits me as an individual; it resonates with my values as a Froebelian leader and learner. Being a coach works for me because I believe in the competence and capability of people; I love the development of a relationship. **Relationships matter.**

When I am the coachee or client much the same applies, plus I have **autonomy**, no-one is telling me what to do! Coaching gives me **freedom** to explore my thinking with the coach available to provide **guidance** in the form of open, thought-provoking questioning. I think Froebel would have concurred with the principle of coaching in that we all have the solutions within us, we just need to engage with someone else who can facilitate and guide where and when appropriate.

A key Froebelian principle is **starting where the learner is** and coaching does exactly that for the educator. In a coaching conversation, it is the educator (client) who sets the agenda. The coach is responsible for supporting the educator to reflect, to become more self-aware. Adults are no different to children in that we all learn best by doing things for ourselves and from becoming more aware of our own learning.

An effective coaching conversation involves two adults playing. **Rehearsing ideas, feelings, and thoughts.** The coach supports the educator in making their inner, outer. Reflecting in this way helps the educator to consider alternative ways of thinking about their lived experiences with the children in their care.

Quite often an educator will suggest that the coaching conversation takes place outside. There are two main reasons given for this choice: the educator feels more comfortable and calmer outside **in nature**. Secondly it is often easier to think, reflect and struggle with new and alternative ideas when you are side by side with someone else rather than face to face.

The art of reflecting truly supports each of us in becoming more self-aware. We all think about our practice and pedagogy (inner) but talking it through (outer) with a coach enables **a deeper awareness of oneself, of our relationships with others and our place in the world.**

"The community is enriched by the diversity and uniqueness of individuals."

(Tovey 2020)

References:

Lilley, I. (1967) *Friedrich Froebel A selection from his writings*, Cambridge: Cambridge University.

Rogers, J (2012) *Coaching Skills, a Handbook (Third Edition)*, Maidenhead, McGraw-Hill Education Ltd.

Tovey, H. (2020) *Froebel's Principles and Practice Today*. London: Froebel Trust.

Further information about coaching:

The coach has the responsibility:

- To be non-judgemental, objective and open
- To clarify and encourage the client to set goals
- To develop the client's resourcefulness through effective questioning, challenge and support
- To observe confidentiality of all discussions at all times unless there is a potential for harm to be done to the client, others, the organization or the law
- To keep secure all records and reports resulting from the sessions and to destroy them at the end of the coachee's employment at Guildford Nursery School and Family Centre
- To agree with the coachee when an issue cannot be dealt with through this coaching agreement
- To support the coachee during their development
- To ensure that sessions are private and conducive to the development of the coachee
- To email agreed actions to the coachee following each session.

The coachee/client has the responsibility:

- To recognise the coaching process is an investment in your development
- To engage in honest and open communication with the coach
- To be prepared to take on board feedback you receive
- To be open to challenges to your thoughts, ideas, working practices
- To commit to the principles of coaching to aid your development
- To commit to carry out any agreed actions from the sessions.

Taken from the coaching agreement of Guildford Nursery School and Family Centre.

Useful websites:

[Home: Welcome » Jenny Rogers Coaching](#)
[Guildhall | LINDEN COACHING \(lindenlearning.org\)](#)