

## Coaching Candidate Adult Learners

This podcast shares information about how a coach learns about candidates' characteristics and selects appropriate coaching strategies for adult candidate learners.

There are two key words in the title of this podcast—coaching and adults. Effective NBCT reader coaches continue to develop their own skills as coaches and learn about the characteristics of their candidate adult learners. The NBPTS process is not just about turning in the portfolio. The NBCT reader coach responds to help the candidate use the NBPTS process as a lever to learn independently to improve teaching. The coach DOES NOT tell the candidate what to do, but rather helps them to learn to be independent as they plan, draft, and revise using the NBPTS resources.

One definition of a coach is “One who gets others to understand the tasks and then motivates them to do the work.” This succinctly states the role of the NBCT reader coach—to motivate the candidates and help the candidates to understand the National Board process by independently using the NBPTS documents. You should always reflect on how you are enabling the candidates to retain ownership of their work and not interfering with their thinking. The handout, “Coaching Role” identifies five roles of a coach which may guide the NBCT reader coach.

- Provide structure and support.
- Enable candidates to self-generate the portfolio on their own.
- Offer opportunities for inquiry, relying on well-crafted questions.
- Help candidates to sharpen their own problem-solving skills.
- Focus on developing the candidate's critical thinking.

To do this, you will continuously improve your own professionalism by learning more about coaching, your candidates, the NBPTS process and documents, and teaching.

Coaching adults is different than teaching children. Adult learners have different characteristics than child learners. You can review the handout titled, “Child Learner and Adult Learner” that identifies the differences. It is important for you to gain knowledge about your candidate learner so you may select effective ways to coach. The Architecture of Teaching framework applies here also. An effective coach should identify the characteristics of their candidate to determine the most appropriate strategies for each unique candidate. The handout titled, “Coaching Strategies for Candidate Characteristics” offers typical characteristics of both adult and candidate learners with connected strategies for the NBCT reader coach. As you review the characteristics and strategies, brainstorm what else you can do. As you read and/or conference with your candidate, continuously learn more about your candidate and identify what focus and strategy is appropriate for your candidate's needs.

For example, candidate adult learners have life responsibilities with time constraints and value their time. Candidates do not want to waste time. As you work with your candidate, you should collaboratively determine how to arrange for the reading and conferencing. Each candidate is unique. Some will need face-to-face or some will only want to talk by phone. Others may not want to talk at all but will communicate by email. As the coach, you will need to work with the candidate to design the coaching context that will be the most effective process. Another aspect of valuing time is punctuality and planning to make the best use of time. You will need to observe and communicate with the candidate to determine what they need and the best way to help them.

You can see on the handout that there are other characteristics and you may identify others as you continue to coach. It is important to reflect that each candidate is unique and one size of coaching does not fit all. Remember the coaching definition that a coach is someone who gets others to understand the tasks and then motivates them to do the work. You begin by knowing your candidates so you will be able to know how to help them understand the NBPTS task and motivate them to complete the portfolio.

The next podcast will help you to learn more about your candidate's knowledge of the NBPTS process and how to use the documents so you can begin to learn how to focus your feedback and questions.