

# Coaching Questions & Sentence Stems to Support Open-Ended Dialogue

## Guiding Questions for Setting-Up a Coaching Cycle

1. What do you hope students will learn as a result of our coaching work?
2. What have you tried so far?
3. What would you like to see?
4. What does it look like if...? (“I can statements”)
5. Is there any student work or data that could help us decide on a focus that would make the most impact with students (pre-assessment)?
6. What are the goals for student learning using the language, “Students will...”?
7. What are the learning targets/ “I can...” statements connected to these goals?
8. How could we start?
9. How will we deliver instruction that meets the needs of all students? What instructional practices will have the most impact on student learning?
10. How would you like to work together when I’m in the classroom (co-teach, model, observe)?
11. There are a few ways we could get there...
12. It’s helpful to have a weekly planning session for 30-45 minutes; what time works for you? We can look at student work and plan instruction for the next week.
13. It is important for me to be in your classroom one to three times per week; what time is best for you based on the goal for the students?
14. How long do we think it will take to reach our goal?
15. How will we measure the impact of our coaching cycle (post-assessment)?
16. What would be the best way to communicate between our planning sessions (meetings, emails, other)?
17. Do you have any other questions about our coaching cycle?
18. Is there anything you want me to be sure to do as your coach?

## Guiding Questions for Looking at Student Work/Data

1. What did you notice the students doing?
2. Why do you think they’re doing that?
3. How are students progressing towards the goal?
4. What evidence can we tease out that indicates successes or breakdowns in student learning?
5. What are the students’ strengths and needs as determined by the data?
6. As we sort student work what descriptors can we come up with for student work that meets the goal, exceeds the goal, or is not yet achieving the goal?
7. Did we notice any misconceptions or breakdowns in understanding for the students? How will they be addressed?
8. How will feedback be provided to students?
9. How does the information from sorting student work inform our instruction; whole group, small group, and conferring?
10. What will our work together look like next week when I’m in your classroom (modeling, co-teaching, or observing)?
11. I just saw someone do this...

## **Guiding Questions for Planning a Lesson & a Debrief**

1. How will the learning targets be introduced to the students?
2. What new content will be provided to the students? How?
3. How will student discussion be built into the lesson?
4. What are some anticipated misconceptions? How will they be addressed?
5. How will we make student learning visible?
6. How will we record what we notice about student learning; during the lesson and after)?
7. How will feedback be provided to students?
8. How will the students self-assess?
9. How will technology be used during the lesson?
10. Who's taking the lead for this lesson?
11. Would you like me to model? Do we want to co-teach? Or do you want me to observe?
12. What are the "look fors" in this lesson?
13. When is best to debrief about the lesson?

## **Guiding Questions for Debriefing a Lesson**

1. What worked? What would we tweak? Where do we go from here?
2. What did we notice about student learning?
3. Tell me more about that.
4. What did we notice about instructional practices as connected to student learning?
5. I wonder what would happen if...?
6. What pieces(s) of the lesson need clarification? Do we have any questions about student learning or instructional practices?
7. How does this inform our next steps?

## **Guiding Questions for Debriefing a Coaching Cycle/Exit Interviews**

1. How did your students benefit from this coaching cycle?
2. How did you benefit from this coaching cycle?
3. Which coaching practices were most useful / least useful to you?
4. What did the assessment data reveal at the end of the coaching cycle?
5. Do we need to adjust and continue our coaching cycle? Is there a way to extend our thinking (book study, video, observation)?
6. What are your next steps for student learning in this area?
7. When can we meet to touch base about how this work has continued for you?
8. What other feedback or questions do you have?

## Paraphrasing

1. Can you help me understand that better?
2. So what I'm hearing you say is...
3. I never thought about...
4. Would you say it's.... or....?

## Celebrations

1. Where are your kids excelling?
2. Where have you been successful?
3. It sounds like that part is going really well.

## Consulting

1. What do you think about?
2. Here are a few options to choose from...
3. Would you like to see what some other teachers have done?

## Validations

1. You noticed that...
2. You have a base there.
3. Smart to... / Great initiative to...

## Shift Logical Levels of the Conversation

Group members may have difficulty detecting meaning when the speaker is either exceptionally abstract or exclusively concrete. Below is a chart that gives examples of how you can listen for the expressed meaning and shift the conversation either up or down in order to better facilitate communication.

Comment	Shift Up	Shift Down
This class is making me crazy: no respect, no order, no following directions.	<b>Value:</b> Discipline is obviously very important to you.	So a choice for you might be to make some rules about raising hands, taking turns, being courteous, etc.
If they won't study, they won't learn, yet some kids don't do homework and still test well.	<b>Belief:</b> You believe that learning requires effort, yet for some kids, this doesn't seem to be so.	So it's puzzling that Also doesn't seem to study, yet he excels on tests.
Some of our group meetings are unfocused and a waste of time.	<b>Goal:</b> What you want is a productive team.	You want people on time, prepared, and on topic.

Garmston, R. (2008, Spring), Collaborative Culture: Raise the level of conversation by using paraphrasing as a listening skill. *Journal of Staff Development*, Volume 29 (2), 53-54