Louisiana Department of Education
Mentor Teacher Training

Module 4:
Communication Skills, Data Gathering, and Reflection Conversations

Secondary Universal Cohort

Facilitated by Learning Forward

Module 4 Outcomes

- Develop core mentor communication skills (pausing, paraphrasing, positive presuppositions, and questioning) for engaging new/resident teachers in planning and reflecting conversations and other forms of feedback that occur as a part of debriefing demonstrations and co-teaching.
- Acquire tools for gathering data from classroom observations of teaching and student learning.
- Plan and facilitate reflection conversations using data gathered during observations.

Module 4 Agenda

8:30-12:00

- Communication skills (pausing, paraphrasing, questions, and positive presupposition)
- Data gathering tools for classroom observations
- Data gathering practice

12:45-4:00

- Reflection conversations protocols
- Planning reflection conversations
- Application practice

Agreements

- **M**ake the learning meaningful
- **E**ngage mentally and physically
- **N**otice opportunities to support the learning of others
- **T**ake responsibility for your own learning
- **O**wn the outcomes
- **R**espect the learning environment including personal technology

Reflecting about co-teaching and culturally responsive teaching and mentoring

- What ideas stuck with me?
- What am I wondering about now?
- What are the most important ideas about co-teaching and culturally responsive teaching to share with resident/novice teachers?

Mentor Communication Skills Continued

Guiding questions:

- What are the core communication skills mentors use to develop and sustain a productive relationship focused on growing the competency, confidence, and efficacy of residents/new teachers?
- How does pausing promote thinking?
- What are the three types of paraphrasing mentors use to demonstrate they are listening?
- How do mentors use positive presuppositions to build resident/new teacher competence, confidence, and efficacy?
- How do I use questions to promote thinking?
- How do I improve my communication skills?

Pausing

Pausing within conversations allows those in interactions to process their thinking. Often referred to as wait time based on the research of Mary Budd Rowe, it acknowledges that the depth and quality of responses improve when pausing becomes a common practice. Pausing opens up opportunities for paraphrasing, productive questions, and more thoughtful responses. Pausing helps both internal and external processors. Internal processors benefit from gaining time to formulate their thoughts. External processors benefit when they have time to organize their ideas.

Four Places to Pause

1. After a question is asked
2. After someone speaks
3. Before answering or responding to a speaker
4. Collectively within a conversation

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is a communication tool in which the listener reflects his or her understanding of the speaker's message.

Some principles of paraphrasing include:

- Seeking to understand the meaning of the speaker
- Reflecting the verbal and nonverbal (emotions, gestures, tone, etc.) message of the speaker without adding or subtracting ideas
- Using the pronoun *you* instead of *I*
- Making the paraphrase shorter than the original message
- Refraining from turning a paraphrase into advice or suggestions

Three types of paraphrases

<u>Acknowledge and clarify</u>: To check understanding and feelings

- You're thinking that. . .
- So, you're wondering if. . .
- You're frustrated because. . .
- You're hoping that...
- You're excited that...
- What upsets you is...

<u>Organize and connect ideas</u>: To sort, prioritize, or connect the speaker's ideas

- Three ideas stand out in what you are saying . . .
- First, . . . , then . . .
- On one hand. . . and on the other hand. . .
- You are wondering about two different issues . .

Shift logic: To increase the specificity of the speaker's message to clarify the next actions or to elevate the conversation to goals, values, or beliefs)

Shift up

- You believe that . . .
- Your goal is to . . .
- You value . . .
- _____ is important to you.

Shift down:

- You want to decide . . .
- You want to determine what to do about . . .
- You want to plan how . . .
- You are considering . . .

Paraphrasing Examples

Presenting statement:
I don't know what to do. I can't manage these students. No matter what I do, it takes forever to quiet them down, regroup, and move on after any type of group or partner work. I have tried a dozen different strategies and nothing seems to work. I waste so much time in each lesson that I am about to give up and just do everything in whole group.

Acknowledge and clarify:
You are frustrated that none of the strategies you have tried to get students' attention after group or partner work seem to work as you want them to and you are losing instructional time.

Organize and connect ideas:
There are three issues that concern you. First, strategies to get students' attention to regroup aren't working. Second, you are worried about the time it is taking from instruction to get students regrouped. And, third you are considering using only whole group instruction.

Shift Up:
Your goal is to maximize instructional time.

Shift down:
You want to find effective strategies that work in your classroom to get students' attention to increase instructional time.

Paraphrasing Practice

Presenting statement:
I don't know how they can expect me to get these students on grade level when they came to me so far below level. How can I be held accountable for what their previous teachers failed to do? I just don't know what I can possibly do to close the gaps in their learning. It is so overwhelming imagining what it will take to get them ready for the test.

Acknowledge and clarify:

Organize and connect ideas:

Shift up:

Shift down:

Positive Presupposition

Positive presuppositions are a speaker's way to convey positive intent. The speaker communicates his or her belief that the other has the potential to perform at the highest level. A positive presupposition conveys and shares preferred and expected behaviors.

Non-examples	**Examples**
You don't know what to do, do you?	When choosing what to do, you want to consider multiple options.
Did you look at the data?	As you looked at your students' data, what are some questions you ask to guide your analysis?
Which teaching strategy is the right one?	As you consider the outcomes, your students, and the various pedagogical processes, which might be appropriate in this situation?

Revise the following statements or questions to include positive presuppositions.

1. Do you have a behavior plan?

2. You haven't thought this through.

3. Don't you think you need to assess students?

4. This isn't going to work.

5. Did you consider how to address the language needs of ELL students?

6. You are assuming that all students have the background knowledge.

7. Are you going to provide texts at different levels of complexity for students reading below level?

8. Aren't you expecting too much from the low readers in the class?

Questioning to Promote Thinking

Powerful questions:

- Invite the resident to do the thinking.
- Build the resident's capacity to think, solve problems, and make decisions, while statements reaffirm the coach's perspective.
- Create a culture of deep thinking about practice.
- Require the resident to examine events from multiple perspectives, e.g., from a student's perspective, from a critic's perspective, etc.
- are open-ended, allowing for many possible answers. Plural form facilitates this intention: *goals* instead of goal, *causes* instead of cause.

Top 10 mistakes made when asking questions

1. Asking closed questions
2. Asking solution oriented questions
3. Seeking "one true question"
4. Asking rambling questions
5. Asking interpretive questions
6. Asking rhetorical questions
7. Asking leading questions
8. Neglecting to interrupt
9. Interrupting
10. Asking "why"

From: *Coaching Questions: A Coaches Guide to Powerful Asking Questions* by Tony Stultzfus (2008)

Task:

Write five powerful questions.

Share them with a partner for review using the criteria above.

Collecting Data in Classroom Observations

Guiding questions:
• In what areas can we collect data about teaching practices and student learning and behavior? • How do I gather data about teaching practices and student learning and behavior in a resident's classroom? • How can resident's gather data about my teaching practices and student learning and behavior while observing demonstration lessons?

Fact:

Inference:

Judgment:

Reasons for gathering data:

Areas about which to gather data

Teacher verbal behaviors	Teacher nonverbal behaviors
• Positive and negative comments/ feedback • Questioning strategies • Clarity of presentation • Equitable distribution of response opportunities • High expectations	• Movement through class • Use of materials/resources • Use of technology • Non-verbal feedback • Proximity • Gender equity
Instruction	**Student nonverbal behaviors**
• Outcomes • Instructional methodology • Engagement strategies • Cultural responsiveness • Assessment • Differentiation • Accommodations • Activating background knowledge • Guided practice • Independent practice	• Engagement • Responsiveness • Responsibility • Independence • Interdependence • Respectful of property, personal space, classroom environment, and others
Classroom environment	**Student verbal behaviors**
• Instructional resources available • Routines • Behavioral expectations • Curriculum-related displays • Anchor charts • Functionality	• Questions • Clarifications • Explicit/overt thinking • Interactions with other students • Courtesy and respect • Seek assistance

Sample Data Gathering Tools

Tool #1: Question Log

Questions	How directed? (whole class / small group / individual)	Code (open/closed; level of thinking prompted; content/process; answered/unanswered)
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

Tool #2: Question-Response Log

Questions	Student Responses	Teacher Responses
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

Tool #3: Time on Task (5-minute intervals)

Time Intervals	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

Code: T=On Task; O=Off Task; ?=Unknown

Tool #4: Gender-Equity Interactions

Type of Interaction (Academic)	Teacher to Male Student	Teacher to Female Student
Specific positive feedback		
Specific corrective feedback		
General positive feedback		
General negative feedback		
Higher-order question		
Lower-order question		
Direction		
Cue		
Probe		
Greeting		
Personal compliment		
Personal correction		
Question about student		
Question about family		
Question about school		

Tool #5: Teacher-Student Interaction

Chapter 9: Mentor

Observation techniques, continued

Tool 9.4

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Desk template for teacher-student interaction

KEY	
–	Incorrect response
→	Teacher prompt or encourage
+	Correct response
X	Neither incorrect nor correct
Q	Positive teacher feedback following student response

Killion, J. & Harrison, C. (2017). *Taking the lead: New roles for teachers and school-based coaches*. Second edition. Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

Tool #6: Classroom Verbal Flow

Tool #7: Teacher & Student Movement

Teacher movement

Student movement

Tool #8: Teacher Tone and Expectations

Evidence of praise/positive reinforcement	Directed toward which student(s)?	Evidence of criticism/negative reinforcement	Directed toward which student(s)?

Select an area below from the Compass rubric. Consider how you might use or adapt one or more of the data collection tools to gather data to inform a reflection conversation with a novice or resident teacher.

- Managing classroom environment
- Questioning and discussion techniques
- Engaging students in learning

Select one of the general competencies from the teacher preparation competencies or one from the content pedagogy competencies and identify which data collection tool might help you gather data to inform a reflection conversation with a resident teacher/novice teacher. The competencies are available at http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teaching/teacher-preparation-competencies.pdf?sfvrsn=4

Practice Gathering Data

You will be observing a 9th-grade biology class. The teacher's goal is to use multiple methods to support students' acquisition of scientific vocabulary. This goal aligns with Disciplinary Literacy Teacher Preparation Competency B.1:

> B. The teacher candidate applies knowledge of disciplinary literacy to select and use appropriate and varied instructional approaches to build all students' ability to understand and express their understanding of discipline specific content through reading, writing, speaking, and language.
>
> 1. The teacher candidate provides opportunities for students to learn and use vocabulary and language specific to the certification content area, practice discipline-specific reading and writing strategies, and gain and express understanding of content by exploring key questions through grade-level print, digital, visual, and oral discipline-specific texts.

Lesson outcome: Develop understanding of both the concept of and the vocabulary related to the taxonomy, specifically the phylum of flatworms

Data gathering tool:

Reflection Conversation

Guiding questions:

- What is a reflection conversation?
- When do mentors have reflection conversations with residents?
- How do mentors apply the mentor stances in reflection conversations?
- How do mentors prepare for reflection conversations?
- What prompts or questions do mentors use in reflection conversations?
- What can I learn about reflection conversations from observing one modeled for me?
- What can I learn about reflection conversations from practicing one?

The overarching purpose of reflection conversations is to promote a resident teacher's professional confidence, competence, and efficacy. A reflection conversation can occur after demonstration teaching, co-teaching, or observations. After demonstration teaching, the mentor and resident reflect on the mentor's teaching practices and their effect on student learning. After a co-teaching lesson, the mentor and resident together analyze the effect of their co-teaching behaviors on student learning. After the mentor observes the resident teacher, they meet to reflect on how the resident teacher's behaviors influenced student learning.

In a reflection conversation, a mentor's goal is to facilitate a resident teacher's analysis of the instructional practices and decisions and their effect on student learning. A mentor also strives to deepen a resident teacher's awareness of how his or her beliefs, assumptions, and aspirations influence his or her practice. Sometimes reflection conversations include one or more mentor stances to develop a resident teacher's professional practice.

Consult	**Collaborate**	**Mediate**
Mentor directs the reflection conversation by describing what he or she observed and how it affected student learning.	Mentor shares responsibility for the reflection conversation by engaging the resident in jointly identifying the teaching practices and their effect on student learning.	The mentor facilitates the resident's self-analysis of his or her teaching practices and their effect on student learning.

Mentoring cycle
for demonstration teaching, co-teaching, and observing and reflecting

Planning conversation

- Clarify student and teacher learning goals
- Describe teaching strategies
- Determine assessment measures and techniques
- Clarify mentor's role

Teaching (Observation)

- Gather data about teaching practices and student learning, work, and behaviors

Reflection Conversation Part 1

- *Analyze*
  - Review/analyze data about teaching and student learning collected
  - Compare what actually happened with what was desired and planned
  - Formulate inferences about the interaction between student learning and teacher behavior by looking at student work

Reflection Conversation Part 2

- *Apply*
  - Discuss alternative teaching practices
  - Develop insights about practice and self
  - Examine what was learned about teaching and process of mentoring
  - Consider what to apply in subsequent situations

Preparation for a reflection conversation

- Review the teacher's learning goal.

- Review the data gathered about teaching behaviors and student learning from the observation.

- Select appropriate stance.

- Prepare/select questions or prompts for the conversation.

Potential prompts/questions for reflection conversations

Teacher decision making

- Teachers make many decisions as they teach. I am interested in the decisions you found yourself making during this lesson. Tell me about some of them and share your decision-making process. What effect did your decisions have on student learning?
- In what ways was this lesson different from what you planned? What do you think accounted for those differences? What was the effect of the shift from what you had intended?
- What did you notice about your own thinking and decision making during the lesson? How did your thinking and decision making affect students?
- What evidence do you have from the lesson that tells you if you students achieved the lesson's goals?
- What learning(s) are you taking away from this lesson that you can apply to future lessons?

Student learning

- What did you notice about student learning during the lesson?
- What are some specific examples of student learning that met your expectations?
- What are examples of student learning that did not meet your expectation?
- Think about a student who was struggling during the lesson. What part of the lesson helped clarify the student's misunderstanding?
- When you were talking with students as they were practicing the learning, working in groups, or working independently, what did you notice about their work?
- How did the students' questions and comments help you understand what helped and hindered their learning?
- How were students engaged in the lesson and applying the content in authentic ways?
- How do you know the students left with a clear understanding of the lesson and any homework they had?
- What did you learn about your students' learning today that will help you in the future as you plan and teach?

Instructional practices

- How did students know what was expected in terms of behavior in your classroom?
- What prepared students for today's lesson and helped them be ready to learn?
- What was the outcome of the lesson? Which standard(s) were the focus of the lesson?
- What did you do to make the outcome clear to the students?
- How were students making connections with today's lesson and previous and future ones?
- Talk about teaching strategy or methodology you used and how it fit with this lesson's content.
- What other strategies might have been used?

- How did you assess students throughout the lesson?
- What did/will you do for the students who have a difficult time achieving the lesson?
- What did/will you do to reinforce the learning for students who need additional reinforcement?
- What did you do while the students were practicing the learning independently or in groups?
- What are your plans for tomorrow? Where will you take this from here?
- How did you accommodate different students' learning styles, needs, interests, cultural background, and academic levels?
- How did you determine what instructional materials or resources (board, trade books, text, handout, video, etc.) to use during the lesson?
- What lessons are you taking away about your own teaching practices from today's class that will strengthen your practice in the future?

Notes on model reflection conversation

Practice Reflection Conversation

Plan to gather data from classroom observation linked to teacher learning goal and teacher preparation competencies.

Gather data from the classroom observation.

Analyze data gathered and plan powerful questions for reflection conversation.

Teacher instructional strategies/questions	Student responses	Level of question (literal-inferential)

Potential questions to ask the teacher about data as it relates to her goal.

Assignments

Prior to the next session, complete the following assignments:

- Co-teach with a colleague or new/resident teacher. Reflect on the experience using the reflection form that follows.
- Observe in a classroom to practice gathering data. Bring data collected to next session to share.
- Reflect on the cultural responsiveness in your own classroom by identifying practices implemented that align with the principles discussed. Use the reflection sheet that follows.
- Hold a reflection conversation. Complete the reflection conversation analysis below.

Co-teaching reflection:

What agreements did you establish prior to co-teaching? How did you decide those were the most important ones to establish?

What were the learning goals for you and your co-teacher for this co-teaching experience? How did you assess your success?

Which co-teaching method(s) did you use? Describe the factors you and your resident teacher/colleague considered to choose the co-teaching method you did.

What unanticipated surprises, issues, or challenges did you encounter and how did you and your co-teacher handle them? If you didn't have any, what might have contributed to the absence of them?

What will you do in future co-teaching situations, particularly with resident teachers, that will strength the opportunity for both teacher and student learning?

Culturally responsive teaching reflection:

Please respond to each prompt.

I am more aware of my students' culture because I [describe actions you are more conscious of taking now in relation to one or two specific students in your classroom and how those actions are affecting the students] . . .

I am striving to apply [which principle of culturally responsive teaching] by [describe actions you are intentionally taking and their effects on students' opportunity to learn] . . .

What I understand now about the significance of culturally responsive teaching is [summarize your learning] . . .

I can help resident teachers become more culturally responsive in their teaching practices by [explain your role in developing resident teacher's competence in cultural responsiveness] . . .

Reflection conversation analysis:

Describe briefly the reflection conversation. With whom did you hold the conversation? What was the teacher's learning goal? What was the student learning goal?

Which stance (consult, collaborate, mediate) did you intend to take? Explain your reason for selecting this stance?

What were some prompts or questions you prepared/selected for the conversation? Analyze how two of those prompts or questions aligned with your selected stance.

What did you learn about your use of communication skills (pausing, paraphrasing, questioning, and positive presuppositions) during the reflection conversation?

What did the teacher learn as a result from this reflection conversation?

What did you learn as a mentor from this reflection conversation?