

Underlying Assumptions for Effective Coaching/Collegial Conversations

- *That the coaching/collegial conversation process is a mutual learning process
- *That the speaker and the listener are professionals with the ability to self-assess and self-prescribe
- *That the speaker and the listener possess high professional standards and seek to be successful
- *That the speaker and the listener have the best interest of the students in mind
- *That the listener's role is NOT to "fix" the speaker

Conversation

We talk about whatever comes up. Talk flows from one thing to another.

Coaching during Conferencing & Collegial Conversation

The speaker controls the conversation. The goal for the conversation is to improve teacher and student success.

The listener is totally focused on the speaker in order to actively participate in supporting the best thinking of the speaker to reflect on planning, classroom information and identify next steps for improvement or new strategies.

As desired, the listener shares ideas with the speaker.

Paraphrasing, clarifying questions and questions that probe new ideas and relationships are helpful tools for the listener to use to support the thinking of the speaker.

COACHING-COLLEGIAL CONVERSATION SKILLS

To support effective communication that promotes professional growth please consider:

- *Communication skills are acquired more than they are in-born
- *The meaning people get from you comes less from what you say than from how you say it
- *Whenever two people are in each other's presence, communication inevitably occurs.
- *87% of the information stored in people's minds entered their body through their eyes.
- *Communication is a complex, ongoing dynamic and changing process

Build a Trusting and Reflective Environment by:

- Using non-judgmental responses (avoid criticism or praise)
 - Acknowledging ideas and feelings
 - Using statements & questions that are open ended and assume the positive intentions of the speaker
 - Listening
- *Listen to truly want to hear what the speaker has to say to support his/her own best thinking
*Listen knowing that the speaker is separate from yourself with alternative ways of seeing the world
*Listen trusting that the speaker has the capacity to handle, work through and find solutions to his/her own problems

Paraphrase and Ask Clarifying Questions to Fully Understand the Speaker's Thinking

Paraphrasing Stems:

- What I hear you saying is . . .
- So, if I understand you correctly . . .
- Then you're thinking that . . .

Clarifying Stems:

- Please tell me a little more about. . .
- Help me understand . . . (that idea. . ., what you mean when. . ., what you're saying here. . .)
- It'd help me understand if you'd give me an example of . . .
- Tell me what you mean when you. . .
- To what extent . . .?
- So, are you suggesting/saying . . .?
- I'm curious about. . .

Ask questions to promote thinking

- What might you see happening in your classroom if . . .?
- What do you think would happen if . . .?
- What seems to be effecting . . .?
- How might it look if . . . were changed in some way?
- How might it seem from. . . (any other point of view? - students?, parents?, other teachers?, etc.)

Adapted from Santa Cruz New Teacher Project/BTSA 1995, Turnbull & Turnbull 1986, Sussman, 1988

Coaching Cycle

1. Pre-Conference

Purposes:

To establish the context for the lesson

To clarify the teacher's goal for the lesson

To identify & describe the strategies & approaches the teacher will use

To identify evidences of success

To determine an area of professional interest for the purpose of this observation

To define a specific focus for data gathering

To identify the partner's role and the tools for data gathering

2. Observation

Purpose:

To gather desired information

3. Post Conference

Purpose:

To recall the lesson

To compare what actually happened with what was desired

To refocus on area of professional interest

To reflect upon evidence

To draw cause and effect relationships between teacher behaviors and student learning

To consider implications for teaching

To consider possible improvements or new strategies

To develop insight into the coaching process