

Tips for Conducting Effective Teacher Mentoring

Mentoring can accelerate the development of new teachers' instructional practice. Mentors need comprehensive and ongoing professional development to be effective. These conversation tips provide insight into the broader curriculum of mentor professional development offered by the **New Teacher Center at University of California, Santa Cruz**, a content contributor to PBS TeacherLine.

Use ***paraphrasing statements*** to communicate that you **HEAR, UNDERSTAND, and CARE**.

Some possible paraphrasing stems include:

- So...
- In other words...
- What I'm hearing is...
- What I hear you saying...
- From what I hear you say...
- I'm hearing many things...
- As I listen to you, I'm realizing that...

Use ***clarifying statements*** to **IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING, DEVELOP FOCUS, and SEEK CONNECTIONS**.

Some possible clarifying stems include:

- Would you tell me a little more about...?
- Let me see if I understand...
- I'd be interested in hearing more about...
- It'd help me understand if you'd give me an example of...
- So, are you suggesting that...?
- Tell me what you mean when you say...
- Tell me how that idea is like/different from...
- To what extent...?
- I'm curious to know more about...
- I'm intrigued by/interested in/I wonder about...

Use ***mediational questions*** to help your colleague to **HYPOTHESIZE what might happen, ANALYZE what works, COMPARE plans with outcomes, and IMAGINE POSSIBILITIES**.

Some examples of mediational questions include:

- What's another way you might...?
- What do you think would happen if...?
- How was...different from/similar to...?
- What sort of impact do you think...?
- What criteria do you use to...?
- How did you decide...?
- How did you come to the conclusion that...?
- When have you done something like...before?



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Offer *open suggestions* to **PROVIDE CHOICE, ENCOURAGE** without **overwhelming**, and **ENCOURAGE INDEPENDENCE**.

Some open suggestion stems might include:

- One thing I've noticed is...
- A couple of things to keep in mind...
- From my experience, I've learned...
- Some teachers I know have tried a couple of different things in this situation and maybe one would work for you...
- What I know about ____ is...
- Sometimes it's helpful if...

Follow suggestions with *tagging questions* to **INVITE** a teacher to **IMAGINE** or **HYPOTHESIZE**.

- How might that idea work in your classroom?
- Which of those ideas might work best with your student(s)?
- What do you imagine would happen if you were to try that?
- To what extent might that work in your situation?

Offer *non-judgmental responses* to **BUILD TRUST, ENCOURAGE SELF-ASSESSMENT**, and **FOSTER RISK-TAKING**.

Some examples of non-judgmental responses might be:

- I noticed how when you..., the students really...
- It will be interesting to see which of your ideas work out the best...
- How do you think the lesson went, and why?
- What did you do to make the lesson so successful?

Do you want to develop additional strategies for your teacher mentoring or instructional coaching practice? *PBS TeacherLine Peer Connection* taps the power of online communication, collaboration, and content to provide a rich, flexible set of tools to help instructional coaches and teacher mentors open and maintain productive communications and collaboration with the teachers they support.

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The tips and strategies on this card were contributed by the New Teacher Center at University of California, Santa Cruz. For more information on the New Teacher Center at UC Santa Cruz visit www.newteachercenter.org.



The contents of this card were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.



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