

Suggestions for Effective Coaching and Feedback

FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

There are fundamental strategies that should always be part of coaching and feedback.

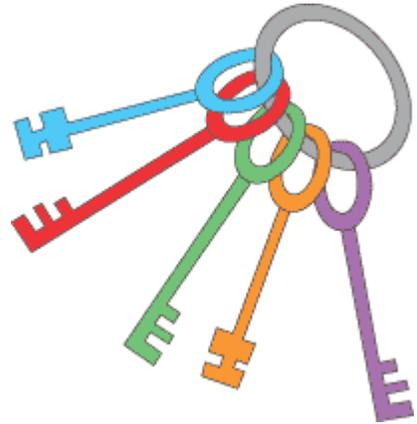
- Do not personalize the situation or behavior; concentrate on the facts.
- Be considerate and respectful of the other person; develop their autonomy and sense of community by increasing their self efficacy and self-awareness.
- Be specific and factual when sharing information; communicates effectively through questioning and developing greater precision in language.
- Develop trust by developing physical and verbal rapport with others; it's all about relationships.
- Be an example of a reflective critical thinker; apply coaching skills which enhance intellectual processes of performance. (<http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/becoming-a-critic-of-your-thinking/478>).

FIRST—YOU HAVE TO LISTEN AND OBSERVE

Five Keys to Active Listening

Use active listening to maximize input and to gain shared understanding. It will enhance reinforcement and redirection of behaviors.

- 1) **Listen for understanding**- pay attention to the words, actions, and feelings being expressed.
- 2) **Paraphrase in your own words** - reflect back what is being said and felt. Check for accuracy and VALIDATE (acknowledge) but do not dwell on feelings!
- 3) **Ask focusing questions** - to gain information and to keep focused on the issues.
- 4) **Recap (using the paraphrasing technique)** - create a factual summary, without judgment or elaboration, of the entire conversation from the other person's vantage point.
- 5) **Respond** - now that you have *listened, heard, understood, and recapped* the information, it is your turn to contribute addition ideas.





DON'T PERSONALIZE THE SITUATION OR BEHAVIOR, CONCENTRATE ON THE FACTS:

Don't blame or point fingers. Focus on the issues, not the person. By focusing on facts, you minimize defensive reactions, and encourage cooperation.

In tense, challenging, or negative situations,

- Avoid using “**You**” statements, “**You**” statements tend to be received defensively—they judge, and assume things that may not be true. Use neutral statements
 - Let's look at ways . . .
 - Let's talk about . . .
 - Let's think about...
- Get the *facts*.
 - What happened that lead to...
 - What did students do or say...

In some situations an “**I**” messages lets others respond with their perspective on the situation.

- “This is what I observed.” Vs. “YOU did this.”
- “Here's how I think . . .” Vs. “YOU shouldn't have done that.”

BE CONSIDERATE AND RESPECTFUL OF THE OTHER PERSON

People need to feel confident that they are capable of doing or learning to do the job effectively. As a coach, the confidence you show (or do not show) in the person you are coaching affects their performance.

It is important to give positive feedback based on specific actions.

Remember . . .

- **How** you say something is as important as **what** you say!
- Notice your nonverbal communication—body language, facial expressions, gestures.
- Keep confidential conversations confidential.

How you say something is **SIX TIMES** as important as **What** you say.



Communication is made up of three parts—
55% non verbal—expressions, gestures
38% tone of voice
7% actual words

Develop productive professional alliances with others.

- Collaborative relationships are more successful than adversarial ones.
- Good relationships reduce stress, build trust, and help you get the job done.
- The quality of your service is improved if there are strong relationships within the organization, including administration, other specialists, etc.



BE AN EFFECTIVE MATHEMATICS LEADER

What you *Do* is often more important than *What* you say.

“Actions speak louder than words.”

In your leadership role for the mathematics program, your actions show others:

- The priorities of the school and school division.
- How to deal with change.
- How to consider school and curriculum goals to make good decisions.
- What you value.

The way you handle situations and decisions is looked at by others as a guide to what you think is important. Teachers, students, and administrators to a certain extent model their behavior based on what they hear you say and what they see you do.

First, be sure you fully understand your *school’s* programs, priorities and goals.

Second, be sure you understand what your *school division’s* programs, priorities and goals are.

Third, be sure you understand what *your own* priorities and goals are and how they fit within the school and school division.

Fourth, be a proactive leader by doing the research necessary to stay current with the information you use to make decisions and to share with others.

Then

Look for opportunities to show your commitment to those priorities and goals.

- Spend time on what you say is important.
- Recognize the efforts of teachers as they attempt to follow your example.
- *Recognize that lots of little things done correctly add up to success.*

COACHING FOR RESULTS

Effective coaches help others to achieve results by *building on their strengths*, *developing their skills*, *providing encouragement*, and *increasing their confidence*. It requires getting the teacher to examine his or her own performance and find ways to improve performance. Coaches use informal work-progress discussions, formal coaching situations, and workday “coachable moments.”



1. **Identify opportunities to help a teacher improve his or her skills, knowledge, and abilities.**

Identify coaching opportunities and act on them—a teacher asks, is struggling or stuck, expresses the desire to improve, has a negative attitude, etc.

2. If the teacher does not seem to be ready, show why improvement will benefit their students or make their job less complex but don't force the issue.

Would you be interested . . .? Would you like to discuss . . .?

3. Ask questions to clarify the situation.

Encourage the teacher to analyze his or her own students' performance on a specific piece of work. The teacher's input might give the coach new information about the problem.

Ask "*How did . . .*" or "*What do they . . .*" questions rather than "Why" questions.

4. Help the teacher come up with possible solutions or actions.

Assist in developing concrete action plans.

Minimize defensive reactions by having the teacher participate

"What steps might be taken during the lesson . . ."

"Let's brainstorm some actions . . ."



5. Jointly develop course of action agreeable to both of you and how to follow-up.

Give other options to consider

"What do you think about..."

Reinforce positive ideas

"What are you going to do . . ."

Establish continued support

"When can I hear about how these new ideas worked and what adjustments may be necessary?"

6. End on a positive note.

Show that you have confidence in the teacher.

Offer your support.

Don't take over for teacher, HELP them take responsibility.

PERFORMANCE-BASED FEEDBACK



For people trying to change behavior or improve their teaching, reinforcement is critical. People often do not know whether they've made the right decisions or performed correctly unless they receive guidance or feedback from others. Your task as a coach is to help teachers, especially when they are trying to make changes, know how they are improving. Here are some examples of positive communication that is *specific, constructive, and reinforcing*.

"I noticed that you made some significant changes (Identify the change) in your lesson design."

"I see that you are beginning class with a problem for students to solve."

"I see that you are asking more open-ended questions that require students to think."

Without consistent, fair reinforcement, and positive verbal feedback, people will revert to their previous comfortable behavior, not necessarily because they do not want to perform more capably, but because they aren't sure **what** that is.



ANALYZING PROBLEM PERFORMANCE

Sometimes teachers have on-going instructional problems that require analysis of the source, reason, and resolution. By reflecting on the following questions the coach is better able to help define critical issues related to instructional problems.

One of the things the coach has to assess is the willingness and ability of the teacher to change their practice. As you think about the situations in each quadrant, what are some characteristics a teacher might demonstrate who falls in each area. For example in the bottom left if a teacher is unwilling to change but has the ability to change. This analysis will help the coach to build on the strengths of the teacher and open the doors of opportunity to work with the teacher to address the identified weaknesses where the teacher can make some changes to improve student achievement. By identifying the threats the teacher may feel about changing their practice the coach can think about how to provide support for the teacher to lessen the threats.

<p><i>Willing and able to change practices</i> <i>What characteristics demonstrate this condition?</i></p>	<p><i>Willing, but unable to change practices</i> <i>What characteristics demonstrate this condition?</i></p>
<p><i>Unwilling, but able to change practices</i> <i>What characteristics demonstrate this condition?</i></p>	<p><i>Unwilling and unable change practices</i> <i>What characteristics demonstrate this condition?</i></p>