ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Guide to Coaching School Principals in Minnesota:

_Incorporating Coaching Strategies into Principal Development and Evaluation_

August 2016
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Introduction

The Importance of Coaching to the Minnesota Leadership Evaluation Process

Principals play a critical role in student achievement, thus the Minnesota Statute 123B.147, Principal Development and Evaluation, is designed to help ensure the highest levels of principal quality and accountability. This evaluation system is designed to measure principal performance against clearly articulated Minnesota K–12 Principal Standards and support principal development as a part of a continuous cycle of improvement.

To truly ensure that a principal evaluation system will result in meaningful change, according to the research on evaluation for continuous improvement, district leadership should establish a culture that values inquiry, exploration, and self-reflection. For this to occur, three things should be true about the principal evaluation process:

1. It should be relevant and meaningful.
2. It should be designed around a growth-mindset, and support learning that leads to insights and actions.
3. Superintendents, or other evaluation designees, should serve as coaches, or change agents, as well as evaluators.¹

This requires a balance between supervisory responsibilities and nurturing, supportive leadership-coaching. Principal coaching, part of the broader category of leadership coaching, is a type of human resource development aimed at improving professional effectiveness and maximizing performance as it relates to a defined set of professional tasks or specific professional goals. When district leaders are able to establish relationships with school principals based on trust and a shared commitment to professional growth, the evaluation process will have the greatest positive impact on principal practice, school systems and structures, school-based programs, and student supports.

“Coaching is not supervision, but effective supervisors coach a lot.”

— Bloom, 2005
This type of coaching relationship between a supervisor coach and a principal has the power to dispel fears about the evaluation system, allow for rich, non-threatening conversations concerning crucial next steps in the improvement process, and lead to transformational change in principal and school performance. In addition, principal coaching addresses several critical district needs: effective site leadership for school improvement; the shortage of qualified candidates in a principal pipeline; the inadequacy of traditional educational leadership programs; and ongoing professional development for principals.

**Design of this Guide and How to Use It**

This Principal Coaching Guide is for supervisors who have coaching as an inherent part of their role, and not for people who have the primary role of serving as a leadership coach. Because we believe supervisors can greatly benefit from incorporating effective coaching skills and strategies in their work with principals, this was created as a companion resource to the *Implementation Guide for Growth-Focused Evaluation of Minnesota Principals*.

The roles of coach and supervisor differ in key ways, especially as they relate to authority and power, employment status, progress monitoring, confidentiality, and resource allocation. That said, a principal supervisor’s primary responsibility as both supervisor and coach is the same: to support the development of effective principals.

This guide is designed to help school district leaders across Minnesota apply basic coaching techniques to support principal development that can lead to measurable improvement in principal performance and greatly improved student outcomes in the schools in which they work. Research and practice confirms that principal coaching can provide the type of high leverage, individualized supports that principals need to become outstanding instructional leaders who have significant positive impact on their students.

- **Section I.** presents an overview of coaching, with special focus on leadership coaching. In addition to defining the concept of coaching, the chapter shares key research on the impact of coaching, distinguishes coaching from mentoring, and grounds coaching within a growth mindset.

- **Section II.** provides a model for effective leadership coaching, with detailed information about how to acquire and apply coaching techniques, skills, and tools.

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• **Section III.** organizes a range of essential coaching tools and protocols, organizing them to support coaches before, during, and after the coaching meeting.

• **Section IV.** unpacks the process of planning for and facilitating growth-focused conversations. This includes tips and strategies for planning, having, and reflecting on a growth-focused conversation. It also includes sample conferencing protocols to help supervisor coaches plan their own coaching meetings.

Each section includes key takeaways and resources for learning more about a particular topic.
Section I.

Principal Coaching as a Tool for Continuous Improvement

A Growth Mindset: The Basis of Principal Coaching

Research on achievement and success conducted by Stanford University psychologists Carol Dweck, Lisa Blackwell, and their colleagues have revealed the power of mindsets—a simple, yet groundbreaking idea (see Figure 1.1). A mindset is a person’s established set of attitudes and beliefs about themselves and the world around them.

**FIGURE 1.1**

These researchers have defined two distinct types of mindsets: a fixed mindset and a growth mindset. In a fixed mindset, people believe that qualities such as intelligence or talent are fixed traits that cannot be developed, and the brain and talent one is born with are responsible for the successes achieved. Figure 1.1, which is adapted from the work of Dweck et al., illustrates these differences. Thus, people with a fixed mindset try to seem smart and skilled, so people will see them as capable of doing a good job. In contrast, people who have a growth mindset believe that the most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent

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are just the starting point. A growth mindset helps nurture a love of learning and a resilience to obstacles and challenges that is essential for great accomplishments.

When superintendents and district leaders approach principal development with a growth mindset, they help principals to see that failures and setbacks are inevitable and can be opportunities for learning. They organize resources and time to support principal learning, and they provide timely feedback and guidance to nurture their development. Principals with a growth mindset are open to honest feedback, and resist being defensive when they receive criticism because they are able to see it as a tool for continual improvement. They use multiple data sources and are willing to learn from feedback from both their supervisors and teachers.

When data are gathered and analyzed with a growth mindset, principals can set strategic goals based on what is working well and what is seen as a challenge area. Principals recognize that they may need to work on reinventing aspects of their school, as well as improving as leaders, in order to bring about better results. Growth mindset principals recognize that in order to make significant improvements in teacher practice and student learning they must grow; they must find new solutions to existing challenges, because doing things the same way they have always done it, will most likely result in the same poor performance.

“It’s not that I’m so smart, it’s just that I stay with problems longer.”
– Albert Einstein

The Minnesota Principal Evaluation System is based on a growth mindset, and it structures the year-long cycle around principal self-assessment based on data, identifying priorities and goal setting for the year, creating an action plan to bring about the desired change, and evaluating progress toward defined goals and outcomes.

Despite the clearly articulated process, it must not be forgotten that change can be difficult. Principals may have great insight, and an inspirational vision to make beneficial changes to their school, but “when it comes to changing the world, what most of us lack is not the courage to change things, but the skill to do so.”

Coaching is a powerful and highly effective way to help principals develop the skills and strategies necessary for making profound and lasting changes.5

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What is Coaching?

There are many different definitions that describe the act of coaching as giving people support and honest feedback in order to help them develop, improve, and achieve their goals. At its core, coaching is about helping people reach their highest potential, by clarifying and then achieving their goals.6

The coach is a catalyst for change, who uses a cadre of well-developed skills, strategies, and tools to help people shift their perspectives and discover different approaches to achieving goals.7 A coach works closely with people to help them learn new skills, solve problems creatively, and meet challenges and opportunities efficiently and effectively. Much like a gardener tending her plants, a coach cares for and nurtures a learner, or “coachee,” so that the person will thrive.

Robert Hargrove, the author of Masterful Coaching, defines a coach as someone who:

- Sees what others may not as a result of their honed attention or listening skills
- Is in the position to step back (or invite participants to step back) from the situation in order to gain some perspective
- Helps people see the difference between their intentions and actions
- Helps reveal patterns of self-deception caused by defensive thinking and behavior.8

The coaching relationship can and should be transformational. It should help leaders become newer, organized version of themselves, ready to achieve agreed-upon goals. Extraordinary leaders do not just happen; they develop in the process of producing results. In order to improve or reinvent their schools, principals must first reinvent themselves as school leaders.

Leadership coaches should help principals accept that to get new results, they must be willing to try new methods. The purpose of this guide is to help district leaders implement the skills, strategies, and tools of effective coaches in order to support the continued growth of the principals they support.

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Coaching vs. Mentoring

The terms mentoring and coaching are often used interchangeably, since they both refer to a one-on-one relationship between two people where one person is helping the other develop key knowledge, skills, and abilities. However, the two techniques differ in a few fundamental ways related to the focus of the relationship and the intended outcomes.  

FIGURE 1.2

A coach facilitates a learner's ability to successfully complete a task or set of tasks, or achieve specific goals or objectives. The coaching relationship has a clear focus, is goal-oriented, and includes conversations that are well-defined and occur within specific timelines.

A coach helps a person learn the essential attitudes, behaviors, and skills to perform a job successfully and reach agreed-upon goals. This may mean dividing the task into manageable activities. Since experience is the most effective learning tool, coaching tasks are usually job-embedded, and part of the learner's actual responsibilities.

The intended result of a coaching relationship is a measurable improvement in performance and defined outcomes.

A mentor, a more experienced person, works with a less experienced person (the mentee, or apprentice) to provide general career support or personal development. As a result, mentoring conversations may be philosophical, with a greater focus on attitudes and behaviors than on specific skills and goals. Overall human development is the desired outcome.

The mentor serves as a role model; the learner may try to emulate or adopt qualities of their mentor. Mentors share anecdotes and personal stories, and ask guiding questions to help learners come to their own decisions through self-reflection and insights.

The mentoring relationship is intended to help generally improve work and life experiences for the mentee.

Minnesota’s Growth-Focused Principal Evaluation System encourages superintendents to foster a coaching relationship, rather than a mentoring relationship, with principals. Ideally, the coaching relationship is more focused on the development of specific skills and the achievement of discrete tasks and goals. That said, the incorporation of some mentoring techniques into the coaching relationship may be beneficial.

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The Impact of Principal Coaching: What the Research Says

There is a growing body of research on educational coaching. When coupled with coaching literature from business and management, we begin to see the potential impact coaching has on leadership development. Studies show that coaching that provides ongoing dialogue, feedback, and reflection may have more impact on changing practice than other professional development strategies.

Joyce and Showers studied four types of professional development (PD) to determine the effectiveness of each on concept understanding, skill attainment, and applying what was learned to daily work. They found that traditional PD involving a presentation of theory or modeling by a trainer results in about a five to 10 percent application of that knowledge or skill in daily professional practice. PD involving practicing learned skills increases application by only ten to fifteen percent, still not showing a significant catalyst for change. When this is contrasted with the impact of coaching as a professional development strategy, the likelihood that concepts and skills are applied increases to eighty to ninety percent.

**FIGURE 1.3 Impact of Training Components on Learning and Applications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Components</th>
<th>Concept Understanding</th>
<th>Skill Attainment</th>
<th>Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of Theory</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5–10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeling by Trainer</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>5–10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice and Feedback in Training</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>10–15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>80–90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A 2007 Wallace-funded report, *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World*, demonstrated that well-prepared principals make a significant difference in their schools. The report drew on multiple sources of evidence to produce detailed case studies of exemplary pre-service and district-based in-service principal training programs. A key finding determined that leadership training should not end once principals are hired. Rather, it should continue with high-quality, job-embedded support for new principals and ongoing professional development for all principals to

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promote career-long growth in line with the evolving needs of schools and districts. For new principals this should include individualized coaching, cohort-based learning, and targeted training.\textsuperscript{14} For more experienced principals, this should include job-embedded PD that promotes reflection and growth, and a tight link between principal evaluation and development.\textsuperscript{15}

A meaningful connection between the principal evaluation process and professional development and coaching is vital “to help leaders improve once weaknesses are identified.” This guide correlates closely to both the Minnesota Principal Development and Evaluation System and a cycle of principal coaching. It also outlines a process for continual improvement through the coaching relationship.

\textsuperscript{14} NewSchools Venture Fund, 2008, p. 21

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Principal Coaching as a Tool for Continuous Improvement

- This guide is for supervisors who coach, not for leadership coaches.
- Principal evaluation systems that result in meaningful change are relevant, embody a growth mindset, and include superintendents who serve as coaches as well as evaluators.
- When principal development is approached with a growth mindset, resources and time are organized to help principals achieve goals, and failures and setbacks are seen as opportunities for learning.
- Coaching is about helping people reach their highest potential by clarifying and then supporting the achievement of goals. The coaching relationship can and should be transformational.
- Principal coaching is more focused on the development of specific skills and the achievement of identified goals than mentoring, which includes more general supports.
- Studies show coaching that provides ongoing dialogue, feedback, and reflection may have more impact on practice than other professional development strategies.

Tools and Resources

Section II.
A Framework for Coaching Principals

Effective Supervisor Coaching

Principal coaching is an essential part of development and evaluation for principals in Minnesota as a means for providing high quality, targeted professional development to support continued principal improvement. As noted in Section I., Minnesota superintendents, or other evaluation designees, are encouraged to incorporate coaching techniques throughout the evaluation cycle to help principals develop skills and strategies to make informed and effective choices, as well as achieve professional goals.

The aim of coaching is to help principals “close the gap between potential and performance.”16 To accomplish this, coaches must promote trust, learning, and autonomy in order to produce self-directed learners and leaders who are increasingly self-sufficient. As principals internalize and apply the skills and strategies they learn in the coaching relationship, they are empowered to thoughtfully and effectively solve their own problems.17

Coaching Adult Learners

In order to be open to growth and change, adult learners must:

- Believe that learning is relevant and immediately applicable to life or work16
- Have an element of control over what and how they learn19
- Believe that experience and competence is respected and valued14
- Receive feedback that is specific, positive, relevant, growth-oriented, and focused on their goals20

Coaching is most effective when it is focused on specific areas a principal wants or needs to change, which is why coaching is closely linked with a reflection and goal setting cycle. Supervisor coaches should meet principals where they are, thus creating a customized experience that is responsive to their unique needs, interests, and contexts.

The sweet spot for coaching takes place in the intersection of three areas: the *being self* (internal attitudes, values, and beliefs; represents who we are), the *doing self* (external behaviors; what we do, our actions, and the work roles we play), and the *areas they have identified as wanting* to change or develop (see Figure 2.1.). Effective coaching sessions are built upon a principal’s improvement goals, with purposeful reflection on how one’s being self and doing self are supporting or hindering progress, and how a proposed action may affect both the principal’s being self and doing self. Reflection should result in a plan for ongoing development.

**FIGURE 2.1**

![Challenges Related to Coaching Principals](image)

**Challenges Related to Coaching Principals**

The relationship between supervisor coaches and principals presents a unique set of challenges. Because this is both a supervisory and a coaching relationship, principals may have difficulty being truly open, honest, and vulnerable, all of which are essential to the change process. Principals, used to being leaders, may have a hard time becoming learners. A supervisor coach should promote a spirit of inquiry and growth as well as a sense of collaborative purpose.

When coaching principals, supervisor coaches can serve as thought partners rather than experts, asking thought provoking questions that guide principals to discover the answers on their own. Though this format may differ from the approach used in other supervisory functions, it should be the norm for coaching conversations.

Effective supervisor coaches are willing and able to:

- Help principals reach their potential and accompany them on this journey
- Guide them to navigate their own courses
- Engage in growth-focused dialogue that promotes self-reflection, revision, and continual improvement

The Center for Creative Leadership’s core principles for coaching, shown below, provides a strong framework for values and outcomes for supervisor coaches.

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FIGURE 2.2

6 Core Principles for Coaching

1. **CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT**: Create a collaborative and supportive environment that allows the principal to feel safe and to take risks. Keep an open mind and avoid judgments.

2. **KEEP THE PRINCIPAL IN CHARGE**: Let the principal decide which goals to work on and which strategies to select. Listen, reflect back what you hear, clarify, and provide time and space for thinking and problem solving.

3. **FACILITATE AND COLLABORATE**: Be a catalyst and partner in the principal’s professional growth. Resist giving direct answers or taking the role of expert, and instead ask thought provoking questions or share suggestions.

4. **ADVOCATE SELF-AWARENESS**: Recognizing one’s own strengths and challenges is a key to good leadership. Foster honest reflection and self-assessment.

5. **PROMOTE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**: Help a principal learn through implementing action plans to achieve goals. Encourage thoughtful analysis of what went well and what didn’t so the principal can learn from each experience.

6. **MODEL WHAT YOU COACH**: Apply these principles in your own leadership development.

– Adapted from the Center for Creative Leadership, 2013

Coaching Dispositions

Dispositions are defined as a person’s attitude, beliefs, or tendency to act or think in a particular way. The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) defines dispositions as “values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities.” When the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) included specific dispositions into their published ISLLC Standards, they brought the importance of dispositions for school leaders into the national conversation. However, not much is published on the key dispositions for effective coaches.

We can derive a set of coaching dispositions from those identified as necessary for teachers, school leaders, and other “helping professions.” These include being positive, person-centered, empathetic, able to see the potential of others, respectful, honoring diversity, self-aware, self-confident, trustworthy, adaptable, authentic in their beliefs, committed to supporting growth others, objective, and dedicated. Supervisor coaches should help principals cultivate the maturation and development of their own dispositions, which will help students succeed.

Coaching embodies a growth mindset, which recognizes that dispositions can be developed and nurtured. It is important for supervisor coaches to first assess their own dispositions. They should reflect on how these dispositions affect their ability to build meaningful coaching relationships and to help principals reflect, set goals, and implement action plans that will help them grow and develop as leaders.\(^{30}\) Disposition self-assessments serve three purposes: 1) clarifying the dispositions that lead to good leadership coaching, 2) making supervisor coaches aware of their own strengths and challenges, and 3) helping supervisor coaches create their own plans for professional growth and development.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

**Effective Supervisor Coaching**

- Coaching should help “close the gap between potential and performance” by promoting inquiry, growth, and a sense of collaborative purpose about achieving specific goals (based on areas in which a principal wants or needs to change).
- Supervisor coaches serve as a thought partner, asking thought provoking questions that guide principals to discover their own answers.
- When proposing actions and changes, supervisor coaches should consider how they may affect a principal’s *being self* (attitudes and beliefs) and *doing self* (behaviors and roles).
- Supervisor coaches should reflect on how their dispositions impact coaching relationships.

**Tools and Resources**

- Center for Creative Leadership. (2013). *The six principles of leadership coaching*.

The Three Essential Elements of Coaching

Effective coaches seamlessly apply three essential elements—techniques, skills, and tools—in their coaching interactions.

**TECHNIQUES:** Effective coaches apply a range of coaching strategies or approaches. This forms the game plan behind their coaching practice.

**SKILLS:** Effective coaches have foundational coaching skills such as relationship building, listening, observing, questioning, and giving feedback.

**TOOLS:** Effective coaches bring practical resources that shape the coaching relationship, provide data, and help to compile meaningful feedback.

The more adept supervisor coaches are at employing the right skills and techniques in the right situations, the more likely they are perceived to be competent, adaptable, caring, and honest. This leads to more responsive, relevant, and powerful coaching relationships.

Techniques

Coaching techniques are the strategies or methods supervisor coaches use to help principals plan, reflect on their actions, and achieve defined goals. Effective coaches move fluidly between a variety of techniques, a process Bloom, Castagna, Moir, and Warren call blended coaching. This approach to coaching is built upon a gradual release of responsibility framework in which a supervisor coach may begin a coaching relationship by using more directive and instructive techniques, then move to a more collaborative approach, and eventually practice facilitative coaching strategies that empower principals to take the central role in their own problem solving and capacity building.

When supervisor coaches act as facilitators, using questioning and feedback skills rather than direct instruction or advice giving, they encourage principals to become more independent, take more initiative, and consider new behaviors and solutions. Coaches should be familiar with this continuum of coaching techniques, including when and why specific techniques should be used.

The techniques coaches use may depend on whether they are helping principals learn something new (their *doing self*), in which case they may use instructive techniques, or adopt a new perspective (their *being self*), in which case they may select facilitative strategies. Supervisor

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coaches may choose to apply collaborative coaching strategies, which fall between the core strategies of instruction and facilitation, when they are focused on working alongside a principal on a specific plan or solution.31

**Applying a Continuum of Coaching Techniques**

Effective supervisor coaches move fluidly between instructional, collaborative, and facilitative strategies as they attempt to address specific needs and build a principal’s autonomy. When coaching is part of the larger principal evaluation process, a supervisor coach should also utilize evaluative coaching for components directly tied to the evaluation system. Effective supervisor coaches should cultivate the ability to quickly recognize which strategy is needed.36

**FIGURE 2.3**

**Core Coaching Techniques**30,37

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Evaluative | Performance-based assessment methods used to judge work and achievement according to clearly defined external criteria and standards | Performance-based ratings, evaluative feedback, rubrics, assessment reports | • Rates performance level (exemplary, proficient, basic, unsatisfactory)  
• Attends to both development and accountability | • May focus more on judgment and accountability than development  
• May reduce risk-taking and honesty |
| Instructional | Didactic methods used when a coach needs a more direct teaching role; typically used to help a principal learn a new way of doing something. | Modeling, providing resources, and direct instruction (e.g., share an article, tips for scheduling, how to set up a system) | • Develop the knowledge and skills for job success  
• Clarify and commit to goals and take effective action  
• We change who we are, by changing what we do | • May encourage dependence, rather than independence  
• May build specific knowledge and skills, but not overall capacity |
| Collaborative | Cooperative methods used when a project or task can benefit from shared work; best when the principal and coach each have a part of what is needed to do the job well. | Coach may offer a range of approaches or solutions, but the principal determines specific processes and tools that will best match her school | • Provides scaffolding for principals to adopt new ways of doing and being  
• Can help successfully achieve stated goals  
• Eventually, principal can complete these tasks and projects independently | • May undermine the authority of the principal  
• May encourage the principal to give up power when the coach takes over |


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Facilitative | Constructivist methods that draw out ideas and solutions from principals, and help them make decisions and develop their capacity through reflective practice | Observation, reflection, analysis, reinterpretation, and experimentation (e.g., coach helps the principal gather and interpret data and feedback, and select a course of action) | • Create new possibilities by reexamining perceptions and assessments  
• Develop problem-solving skills and an inquiry approach to improvement  
• Build a reflective practice  
• Shifts control from the coach to the principal | • May take time to do effectively  
• May first require the establishment of a trusting coaching relationship |

These four techniques represent a continuum toward principal autonomy and are often used in conjunction with one another to respond to different real-time challenges. Because lack of time is the biggest barrier to successful coaching, an effective supervisor coach determines which issues should be addressed quickly and directly through instructional coaching, which require a side-by-side collaborative approach, and which are best addressed through a facilitative process over time.

The supervisor coach will also determine when it is appropriate to evaluate and assess a principal’s progress toward goal attainment, autonomy, and effectiveness. For example, a supervisor coach may determine that a principal needs direct instruction in what effective teacher observations look like, collaborative coaching to create a teacher observation plan, and facilitative coaching for building the principal’s capacity to deliver effective teacher feedback.

**Effective Strategies for Implementing the Core Techniques**

Supervisor coaches rely on a variety of strategies as they implement each of the above core coaching techniques. The techniques most related to each strategy are noted below in parentheses.

- **Stay focused on the goal** (evaluative, instructive, collaborative, and facilitative): A supervisor coach stays focused on the principal’s situation and avoids sharing personal examples, which may appear disrespectful to the principal’s experience or context.

- **Learn the art of offering a suggestion** (evaluative, instructive, and collaborative): A supervisor coach remains clear and precise when offering advice or proposing solutions, focusing on one activity at a time. Suggestions are followed with a question that invites the principal to consider the impact, or how the proposed action might work in context.

- **Get permission to instruct** (especially important for instructive coaching): To ensure comfort as a learner, a supervisor coach asks a principal for consent before introducing new information, skills, or tools.

- **Ask clarifying questions** (collaborative, facilitative): A supervisor coach asks the principal questions that encourage deliberation and thinking. Questions may be used to gather information, clarify a message, or make connections between ideas.
• **Paraphrase** (collaborative, facilitative): A supervisor coach restates the principal’s message to ensure shared understanding and clarity. After restating, the coach may insert personal perspective or summarize key points. The paraphrase is important because it communicates that the coach is attempting to understand exactly what the principal is saying. Hearing the coach’s paraphrase may cause the principal to refine the message.

• **Ask mediational questions** (collaborative, facilitative): A supervisor coach asks the principal to reimagine potential outcomes of actions. This may include hypothesizing what might have happened, analyzing what worked or didn’t work, or comparing and contrasting what was planned and what actually took place.

• **Give non-judgmental responses** (collaborative, facilitative): A supervisor coach shares data, observations, and feedback in a factual and objective manner, using specific details to provide evidence and illustration. If the principal can trust the supervisor coaches to provide an accurate recollection and honest feedback, then this will allow more room for listening to and learning from feedback.

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**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

**Coaching Techniques**

• Coaching techniques are the strategies or methods that supervisor coaches use to help principals plan, reflect on their actions, and achieve defined goals.

• Effective supervisor coaches move fluidly between a continuum of techniques (evaluative, instructional, collaborative, and facilitative) as they attempt to address specific needs and build principals’ autonomy.

• The goal is a gradual release of responsibility, where supervisor coaches may begin by using more directive and instructive techniques, and move towards more facilitative strategies that empower principals to take the central role in their own problem solving.

• Supervisor coaches rely on a variety of strategies as they implement each of the above core coaching techniques such as: asking clarifying questions, paraphrasing, offering mediational questions, and providing non-judgmental responses.

**Tools and Resources**


Researchers have identified a set of coaching competencies that define what a coach needs to be able to do well in order to support the change process.\textsuperscript{38,39,40,41,42} Teaching Learning Solutions has synthesized the long list of research-based coaching competencies into four areas, or clusters of skills (see Figure 2.4). The coaching methodology embeds these four competency areas into an interpersonal process that includes what a supervisor coach should do before, during, and after a coaching meeting to fully support the principal’s growth and development.

**FIGURE 2.4**

These four competency areas include:

**PREPARATION:** reviewing the principal’s current competencies, goals, and data; structuring the coaching conversation; and choosing appropriate coaching techniques

**RELATIONSHIP BUILDING:** employing interpersonal skills such as trust and rapport building, nonjudgmental responses, and sensitivity/empathy

**PUSHING FOR DEPTH & REFLECTION:** a principal’s self-reflection and analysis that results from a coach’s process of listening, questioning, paraphrasing, and feedback

**ACTION/APPLICATION:** goal-setting, action/implementation, data collection, and progress monitoring based on what is learned in the coaching meetings


\textsuperscript{40} International Coach Federation. (2011). Core competencies. Retrieved February 4, 2016, from (http://www.coachfederation.org/icfcredentials/core-competencies/)


This cycle helps principals set meaningful goals, act in pursuit of those goals, and reflect upon the impact of those actions (Bloom et. al., 2005). Supervisor coaches help create the environment and conditions necessary for this to successfully take place. Through the safe environment of the coaching meeting, supervisor coaches use carefully constructed questioning and dialogue to build principals' capacity and provide data-informed feedback to inform next steps. Before the Coaching Meeting.

**Competency Area: Preparation**

Good planning is critical to successful coaching. When a supervisor coach is well prepared and confident, the principal uses this as evidence of competence, credibility, integrity, and character. The supervisor coach should consider the principal's goals and the intended outcomes for the meeting, and then design a plan for achieving those outcomes and supporting the principal's progress toward the attainment of the goal. This requires two vital skills: data analysis and structuring a coaching conversation characterized by a careful sequence of open-ended questions.

Prior to the meeting, the supervisor coach gathers multiple forms of evidence and data including student data, teacher data, school-based evidence, key research, and related literature. Once this information is analyzed, a supervisor coach can use it to inform planning, evaluate the principal's strengths and weaknesses in the focus area, and anticipate challenges that might arise in the meeting. Data gathered prior to the meeting can be used to provide evidence-based feedback during the coaching meeting.

To plan for the coaching meeting, the supervisor coach designs the structure of the coaching conversation (including drafting questions and anticipating potential questions) and identifies coaching techniques that may be most beneficial in this context. The questions will be used to initially gather data and clarify what progress has occurred since the last meeting, and will then transition to checking current progress related to the principal's goals.

The supervisor coach's questions should explore planning, data collection and analysis, decision making, leadership and management, systems and structures, and faculty and staff support, as opposed to trivial tasks or deliverables that might come up in a principal's daily work responsibilities. Finally, the supervisor coach should consider where and when to draw upon the various coaching techniques to guide the principal through a process of learning, reflecting, creating, and implementing new behaviors and strategies.

**During the Coaching Meeting**

**Competency Area: Building Relationships**

Even though there are specific differences between a pure coaching relationship and a supervisory coaching relationship, both are based on trust, rapport, and mutual commitment to the relationship. When engaged in coaching activities, the supervisor coach should be focused on collaboration rather than management, provide a fresh perspective, authentic feedback, and emotional support and encouragement.

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A supervisor coach should establish trust and rapport from the beginning of the coaching relationship. The principal may be anxious, unsure of what to expect, or guarded. Immediately implementing strategies to establish trust and build rapport will help create a nurturing and successful coaching relationship.

“People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care”

– Theodore Roosevelt

Establishing Trust

Trust is a building block of an effective coaching relationship. Supervisor coaches should assure principals that they can be relied on for character, ability, honesty, and intention in order for principals to place their confidence in them. Trust is established over time, and it is continually tested and reevaluated. It is an assessment made about people based on their sincerity, integrity, reliability, competence, ability, and benevolence. Only through trust can principals feel safe enough to reveal vulnerabilities, expose mistakes and deficiencies, and ultimately grow.

FIGURE 2.5

Key Characteristics that Establish Trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Tips for supervisor coaches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Sincerity/Integrity | The supervisor coach is genuine, authentic, and honest. | • Do what you say. Make sure your behaviors match what you say.  
• Be aware of what your body language communicates.  
• Tell the truth and stand by your word. |
| Reliability     | The supervisor coach can be counted on for keeping promises. | • Follow through on commitments and promises.  
• Schedules regular check-ins.  
• Meet deadlines and appointments. |
| Competence/Ability | The supervisor coach has the knowledge & skills to coach. | • Clarify your role as coach and the coaching process.  
• Introduce and discuss issues of trust and confidentiality.  
• Implement a range of coaching skills, strategies, and tools. |
| Benevolence     | The supervisor coach shows kindness, compassion, and empathy. | • Be familiar with the principal’s culture and background.  
• Connect as people (interests, families, values).  
• Address the principal’s issues with empathy and non-judgmental. |


Building Rapport

Once trust has been established, rapport can be built, establishing a common bond, a mutual fondness, and a sense of being in synch with one another. Being in rapport means “enter(ing) that person’s world” and engaging in a type of dance. Rapport leads to a state of harmony and shared understanding; a safe and intimate place for open communication and a meaningful coaching relationship.

Strategies for Building Rapport: Supervisor coaches build rapport using deliberate communication strategies like those listed below.

- **Be approachable, be kind, and communicate acceptance.**
  Rapport requires a sense of safety and approval. The supervisor coach should smile and make eye contact during coaching interactions. Be approachable, positive, and supportive. This will help the principal see that the supervisor coach is able to view things from a different perspective.

- **Be fully present and be an active and thoughtful listener.**
  The supervisor coach should filter out all distractions, giving full attention to the principal and asking questions to learn more about the principal’s ideas, experiences, and perspectives. It’s important to listen more than speak, aiming to truly understand what is being communicated.

- **Make personal connections.**
  Get to know the principal and open up personally in order to build rapport. This can be done through open-ended questions that build upon commonalities. The supervisor coach should listen for words or expressions the principal uses, and integrate them into conversation.

- **Be aware of your body language and environmental cues.**
  Body language is a type of nonverbal communication where thoughts, intentions, and beliefs are communicated through physical actions (such as gestures, facial expressions, postures, eye movements, etc.), and significantly impact how a person is perceived. The supervisor coach should be aware of what nonverbal messages the principal is conveying. Similarly, the supervisor coach should consider how the seating arrangements and other aspects of the physical environment may influence the principal’s comfort (e.g., sitting together is much more collaborative than sitting behind a desk).

- **Use mirroring strategies**
  Mirroring occurs when individuals adjust their actions and words to reflect the person with whom they are speaking. This can include subtly echoing body language (either doing what they do, or using complementary moves), language (including word choice and style), and speech patterns (such as volume and tempo).

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Supervisor coaches will know that rapport has been achieved when they feel trusted and respected, and can easily engage principals during coaching interactions. Rapport is also evident when principals’ body language and verbal responses show openness, relaxation, connection, and even enjoyment of the process.

**Competency Area: Pushing for Depth and Reflection**

Research shows that when school principals attend trainings or workshops, they are only able to transfer a small amount of what they learn into their daily practice. However, their ability to implement new knowledge and skills soars when they are given an opportunity to put these skills into practice with the help of a coach who provides ongoing feedback to guide implementation.

To help school leaders grow and develop their practice, coaching that is focused on meaningful dialogue is essential. A primary goal of the coaching relationship is to “build the habits of mind that constitute reflective practice…conversations between a coach and coachee serve as a model for the internal dialogues of a self-reflective practitioner. This requires supervisor coaches to push for depth and reflection by listening, observing, questioning, giving feedback, and encouraging reflection and critical thinking, and then using the data that emerges from that process to set goals, plan, implement, and assess.

**FIGURE 2.6**

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52 Joyce, B., & Showers, B. (2002). *Student achievement through staff development* (Third ed.). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.


Clear, effective communication skills are prerequisites for pushing for depth and reflection. When supervisor coaches and principals share information openly and honestly, a constructive and cooperative dialogue can take place. At the start of each coaching meeting, a principal should have a chance to share areas in which support is needed. Through careful listening and questioning, the supervisor coach should be able to help make the principal’s agendas explicit, and use this information to co-craft goals to be accomplished through planned action and behavior change. For maximum learning, it is critical that the coaching dialogue remain focused on the principal’s agenda, rather than the supervisor coach’s agenda.

At a basic level, all communication consists of four steps: 1) a message; 2) the transmission of that message; 3) the interpretation of the message by the receiver(s); and 4) a communicative dialogue, or back and forth. When information flows in only one direction (e.g., a speaker to a passive listener), miscommunication can easily occur. The speaker may unintentionally share inaccurate information, or the listener may incorrectly interpret the speaker’s meaning. To avoid misunderstanding, a reciprocal communicative dialogue is critical to ensure the message is received in the way it was intended.

In a coaching relationship, a supervisor coach is focused on acquiring data from and about principals, and then clarifying what it is seen and heard through questioning in order to ensure proper interpretation of meaning. Carefully crafted questions facilitate the communication exchange. As the principal responds to the supervisor coach’s questions, the coach can learn a great deal by both listening carefully to what the principal says (the words and content) and observing body language (nonverbal responses).

**LISTENING**

Active listening means that a supervisor coach is fully attentive to what the principal says. In a coaching conversation, the principal will be doing much of the talking, and the supervisor coach will be responsively listening. To listen carefully means filtering out distractions, maintaining eye contact, and avoiding interruption or redirection until the principal has finished speaking.

The primary goal of a listener is to accurately receive the message being shared. At times, that requires looking for clues or inconsistencies between verbal and nonverbal messages in order to hear the full message. A supervisor coach should consider the following questions when listening thoughtfully and strategically:

- What does the principal’s word choices convey about meaning and intention?
- Are there patterns of language or words that help you to understand the principal’s underlying thinking?
- Is the principal being specific and concrete, or speaking in generalities?
- Is the principal using language that represents facts and reality (supported by evidence) or making interpretations (sharing opinions or judgments)?

A supervisor coach should be sure that the principal has finished speaking before responding. A coach should listen as much for silences and hesitations, emotions, and deflections, as to what the principal is saying with words.
**OBSERVING**

Observing is another way to “listen” to what a person is saying. Indeed, the ability to interpret nonverbal cues is the hallmark of a truly skilled listener.\(^{56}\) How a message is communicated is often more telling than the actual content of the message. And the supervisor coach can learn a great deal about the principal’s dispositions and skills by noticing responses to questions, both verbally and nonverbally.

A supervisor coach should schedule time to observe the principal in action—meeting with teachers, making presentations, solving problems, and doing other daily tasks. Observing the principal in real life implementation of strategies and actions is a powerful data gathering opportunity and opens the door to rich and meaningful feedback.

**QUESTIONING**

Questions are a powerful way to deepen the conversation and gather useful data.\(^{57}\) In a coaching relationship, asking questions that clarify, explore, summarize, and probe may help extend the principal’s thinking and expand the depth and breadth of the conversation. Questions are most effective when they mirror the principal’s language and are closely built from the content and information shared. Questions are less effective when they are vehicles to carry veiled judgment or advice, as this may undermine productive communication and trust.

**Types of Questions**

There are two types of questions: open and closed. The type of question to ask depends on the type of information sought.

**FIGURE 2.7**

**Types of Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open Question</td>
<td>Questions with no right or wrong answer that help to expand a conversation and find out more about someone or something</td>
<td><em>What do you think works well in your staff meetings?</em></td>
<td>Encourages thinking and reflection; may result in a lengthy, free form response describing a problem or challenge, or providing important background information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed Question</td>
<td>Questions easily answered with a single word or sentence</td>
<td><em>When are the staff meetings?</em></td>
<td>Provides explicit details and clarifies facts, which can help to set goals and solve problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Effective Open Questions to Use for Coaching

Open questions can vary greatly. The examples below are effective for leadership coaching.\(^{58}\)

**FIGURE 2.8**

*Effective Open Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invitational</td>
<td>Voices a request or encouragement</td>
<td><em>Would you consider…?</em></td>
<td>Builds buy-in, ownership, and engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>Asks for precise information</td>
<td><em>How often does…?</em></td>
<td>Clarifies and explains a situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evocative</td>
<td>Seeks reflection or analysis</td>
<td><em>What might this mean?</em></td>
<td>Expands thinking/understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarification</td>
<td>Encourages substantiation and justification for statements</td>
<td><em>What evidence…?</em></td>
<td>Keeps focus on reality, not perception</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Giving Feedback**

The term *feedback* describes information that is provided after something has been done, in order to provide information about how well these efforts to reach a goal are working. Feedback is an essential component to the continual improvement process and serves as a catalyst for an ongoing reflective practice. The supervisor coach provides feedback on what was seen and heard, with the goal of helping the principal make subtle behavior changes in order to improve results.

**Characteristics of effective feedback**

Effective feedback shares a few key characteristics.\(^{59}\)

- **It is goal-referenced:** When a principal sets a goal and takes action to achieve the goal, feedback provides information about whether changes are needed to meet deliverables, and compares planned versus actual outcomes.

- **It is tangible and transparent:** Feedback should describe exactly what was seen and heard in relation to progress toward articulated goals in order to provide a clear vision of progress. The supervisor coach should avoid vague descriptions, instead sharing data that helps provide an objective view of what is happening.

- **It is actionable:** Feedback should be concrete, specific, and useful (“When you did x it resulted in y.”) and should help principals come up with interpretations and solutions. Feedback is not advice; it is actionable information about what the principal can do more or less of next time to achieve goals.

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• **It is specific and personalized:** User-friendly feedback should be delivered in a way that the principal can fully understand without being overwhelmed. It helps to deliver feedback by acknowledging the principal’s areas of strength and it may be more effective to share one important thing that was noticed that, if changed, will likely yield immediate and noticeable improvement.

• **It is timely, ongoing, and consistent:** A supervisor coach provides timely feedback that the principal can immediately apply in order to better achieve stated goals.

**Feedback Challenges**

Providing effective feedback is an essential element of the coaching process, but it can also be one of the more challenging aspects to implement. The way that a supervisor coach shares feedback with a principal depends greatly on the quality of the relationship they have established and the principal's readiness to receive the feedback. When the relationship with a principal is nurtured and carefully developed, the feedback will more likely be well received.

In addition, feedback takes time. It is vital to schedule and allow adequate time in your meeting to provide meaningful feedback, and ensure that feedback is provided in a timely manner, so the principal is able to make ongoing improvements. It is also important to recognize that feedback may need to be delivered in multiple sessions.

**After the Coaching Meeting**

**Competency Area: Action**

Coaching is not merely a theoretical activity; rather, it should be a catalyst for action and change. Following a coaching meeting both the supervisor coach and the principal have follow-up steps that include reflecting on and applying what was learned. In this critical phase of the process, the principal integrates the ideas, strategies, and solutions from the coaching meeting into practice in order to make progress toward achieving stated goals.

For specific, high leverage actions to have the greatest impact, the supervisor coach should ensure that every coaching meeting includes data-based feedback that helps define the most strategic next steps to take for the principal. The end of each coaching session also should include action planning, where the supervisor coach and principal work together to identify the changes the principal will implement in order to bring these ideas to reality and accomplish defined goals. This process may fall along the continuum of coaching techniques—from having a supervisor coach instruct or model a skill or strategy to serving as a facilitator who guides the principal through questions and feedback.

If the aim of coaching is to help the principal “close the gap between potential and performance,” then the action step is where the potential transcends into performance. The principal will want to plan specific action steps to put into practice before the next coaching meeting in order to report back on affected outcomes. Executing these plans is the principal's “homework” to accomplish in between coaching sessions. Because the principal sets the goals,

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the principal should determine the specific actions to put into practice, and how to measure impact.

The supervisor coach’s role in this process is to help the principal be as specific as possible and define action steps that will likely be completed and yield progress toward positive growth. The level of challenge, and the timeline for implementation should be negotiated between the principal and the supervisor coach\(^\text{63}\), but both should be clearly defined by the end of the meeting. The supervisor coach can support these action steps and changes through ongoing conversations (conducted in person, over the phone, or via email) and can motivate, assist, and provide meaningful feedback during the process.

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**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

**Coaching Skills**

- Effective principal coaching helps principals set meaningful goals, act in pursuit of those goals, and reflect upon the impact of those actions.

- Coaching competencies can be organized into four areas: preparation, relationship building, pushing for depth and reflection, and action. These competencies are applied in an interpersonal process that includes what supervisor coaches should do before, during and after coaching meetings to fully support the principals’ growth and development.
  
  - **Preparation** includes two vital skills: data analysis and structuring a coaching conversation to include a careful sequence of closed and open-ended questions.
  
  - **Relationship building** is primarily focused on establishing trust and rapport.
  
  - **Pushing for depth and reflection**, in which supervisor coaches should be committed to listening, observing, questioning, and giving effective feedback.
  
  - **Catalyzing action** and change by helping principals plan action steps to complete between coaching meetings, and turning potential into performance.

**Tools and Resources**


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A tool is an instrument that is necessary for the practice of a specific role or vocation or a device that aids in accomplishing a task. Coaching tools are practical resources that help supervisor coaches accomplish all aspects of the coaching process, from developing the foundational coaching skills (relationship building, listening, observing, questioning, and giving feedback) to implementing the core coaching strategies (instructional, collaborative, facilitative).

One of the benefits of having a common set of supervisor coaching tools is to create an effective principal coaching experience for all principals in Minnesota. While coaching styles may differ, and goals on which coaching interactions are focused may vary tremendously among principals, a common set of tools brings a degree of consistency and shared practice to the formative evaluation process for principals. The featured coaching tools help supervisor coaches prepare for their coaching meetings, facilitate the coaching experience, and reflect and plan after a coaching meeting.

Section III. will present the full set of tools in Minnesota’s Framework for Growth-Focused Conversations. Accompanying each tool is an explanation of the tool, where it fits in the coaching process, and directions on how it should be used. These tools include:

**Tools for Use Before the Coaching Meeting**

- **Principal Competency Matrix:** Helps the supervisor coach determine the principal’s starting points in specific areas or skill sets. Knowing the principal’s starting points will help determine the appropriate coaching techniques to use.

- **Coaching Techniques:** Provides basic tips and strategies for implementing three highly effective coaching techniques: instructional, collaborative, and facilitative.

- **Conferencing Protocol:** Helps the supervisor coach structure coaching conversations, guide the principal through a process of creating goals and plans of action to achieve the goals, acting in pursuit of the goals, and reflecting on the impact of the action.

**Tools to Be Used During the Coaching Meeting**

- **Building Strong Coaching Relationships:** Tips and strategies for building trust and rapport with the principal.

- **Coaching Communications and Feedback:** Strategies for developing the coaching skills of effective listening, observing, questioning, and providing feedback.

- **Coaching Language:** Tips and techniques for implementing core instruction and facilitative coaching moves, including sentence starters and examples.

- **Characteristics of Effective Feedback:** Tips for providing feedback that helps the principal change behaviors and get improved results.

- **Responding for Equity:** Strategies for starting an equity conversation.
After the Coaching Meeting

- **Supervisor Coach’s Reflection Worksheet:** A tool to help the supervisor coach reflect on coaching meetings and identify next steps for the principal.

- **Conversation Analysis Tool:** Helps the supervisor coach reflect on how actions in the four key coaching competencies (listening, questioning, giving feedback, and non-verbal communication) played out in a coaching meeting. Helps the supervisor coach determine how these skills are tied to perceived dispositions, and how these actions and behaviors can affect the coaching relationship.

- **Dispositions Self-Assessment for Coaches:** To be reviewed by supervisor coaches periodically throughout the coaching relationship to help reflect on which dispositions may be an area for growth, and how current dispositions are impacting coaching relationships.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Coaching Tools

- Coaching tools help supervisor coaches accomplish all aspects of the coaching process.

- The coaching tools in this guide help supervisor coaches to:
  - Prepare for coaching meetings
  - Facilitate the coaching experience
  - Reflect, plan, and support principals after a coaching meeting

- A common set of tools brings a degree of consistency and shared practice to the formative evaluation process for principals

Tools and Resources

Section III.
Tools for Coaching Principals

Section III. provides specific tools that supervisor coaches can use to plan coaching meetings; build effective coaching relationships; implement effective and differentiated coaching techniques; give actionable feedback; and plan for continual improvement.

These tools are designed to support supervisor coaches in engaging principals in collaborative, improvement-focused conversations, which is an essential component of the principal evaluation cycle. Having coaching conversations throughout the evaluation cycle can make principals more likely to achieve improved outcomes.

The tools are organized into three categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools to help to plan the coaching meeting.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOOL: Conscious Competency Matrix:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps determine the principal’s starting point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOOL: Coaching Techniques:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps the supervisor coach use a variety of appropriate coaching techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOOL: Conferencing Protocol:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans and structures the coaching conversation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools to help facilitate the coaching meeting.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOOL: Relationship Building:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tips and strategies for building trust and rapport with the principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOOL: Pushing for Depth and Reflection:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps the supervisor coach collect data, clarify, analyze, and give feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOOL: Coaching Language:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence starters and examples of instructional and facilitative coaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOOL: Responding for Equity:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies for starting an equity conversation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools to use to reflect on what happened after the coaching meeting.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOOL: Coach’s Reflection Worksheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps the supervisor coach quickly reflect on meetings and identify next steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOOL: Conversation Analysis Tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps the supervisor coach reflect on what happens during meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOOL: Dispositions Self-Assessment for Coaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps the supervisor coach assess how dispositions affected the coaching interaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the remainder of this section, each tool is introduced, explained, and provided.
Tools to Be Used for Planning
BETORE
the Coaching Meeting
Tool: Principal Competency Matrix

The Conscious Competency Matrix is divided into four levels that range from Unconsciously Incompetent (unskilled) to Unconsciously Competent (skilled). The supervisor coach uses this matrix to informally “assess” a principal on a specific skill or capability, not as an overall rating.

Description

The Conscious Competence Matrix helps to understand the range of thoughts and emotions people experience throughout the learning process. The matrix highlights two factors: consciousness (awareness) and skill level (competence). Individuals move through four levels as they build competence in a new skill:

- **LEVEL 1: Unconsciously unskilled**—unaware that they don’t have this skill, or need to learn it.
- **LEVEL 2: Consciously unskilled**—aware that they don’t have this skill.
- **LEVEL 3: Consciously skilled**—aware that they have this skill.
- **LEVEL 4: Unconsciously skilled**—unaware that they have this skill (because it comes naturally).

Tips for Use

By determining the principal’s levels for specific skills, the supervisor coach can be better prepared to encourage the learning process.

- **If the Principal is Level 1**—Make the principal aware of how much learning is needed and why these skills are needed. Be sensitive and give plenty of positive feedback.
- **If the Principal is Level 2**—Help the principal navigate any feelings of discouragement. Encouragement and support builds motivation and confidence.
- **If the Principal is Level 3**—Keep the principal focused on needed skills and give opportunities to practice these skills.
- **If the Principal is Level 4**—Make sure the principal stays up-to-date with skills and continually refines practices based on new data.
In the Conscious Competence Matrix, the principal's starting point is determined by their level of competence in a skill. The levels range from Level 1, where the principal is unconsciously incompetent (unskilled), to Level 3, where the principal is consciously competent (skilled). Each level describes the principal's awareness of the skill and their ability to perform it reliably.

**Level 1: Unconsciously Incompetent (Unskilled)**
- The principal is not aware of the existence or relevance of the skill area.
- The principal is not aware that they need to learn it.

**Level 2: Consciously Incompetent (Unskilled)**
- The principal is aware of the existence and relevance of the skill.
- The principal is aware of deficiency in this area, ideally by attempting or trying to use the skill.
- The principal realizes that improving the skill or ability in this area will improve overall effectiveness.
- Ideally, the principal has a measure of the extent of the deficiency in the relevant skill and a measure of what level of skill is required for their own competence.

**Level 3: Consciously Competent (Skilled)**
- The principal achieves “conscious competence” in a skill when it can be performed reliably at will.
- The principal will need to concentrate and think in order to perform the skill.
- The principal can perform the skill without assistance.
- The principal will not reliably perform the skill unless thinking about it. The skill is not yet “second nature” or automatic.
- The principal should be able to demonstrate the skill to another but is unlikely to be able to teach it well to another person.
- The principal should ideally continue to practice the new skill and, if appropriate, commit to becoming “unconsciously competent” at the new skill.
- Practice is the single most effective way to move from level 3 to 4.

**Level 4: Unconsciously Competent (Skilled)**
- The skill becomes so practiced that it enters the unconscious parts of the brain—it becomes “second nature.”
- Common examples are driving, sports activities, typing, manual dexterity tasks, listening, and communicating.
- It becomes possible for certain skills to be performed while doing something else, for example, knitting while reading a book.
- The principal might now be able to teach others the skill concerned; although after some time of being unconsciously competent, the principal might actually have difficulty in explaining exactly how to do it. The skill has become largely instinctual.
- This arguably gives rise to the need for long-standing unconscious competence to be checked periodically against new standards.

The aim of the coach or evaluator is to move the principal into the “consciously competent” stage, by demonstrating the skill or ability and the benefit that it will bring to the principal’s effectiveness.
Tool: Coaching Techniques

This tool shows a continuum of coaching techniques that support principals’ movement toward autonomy, sustainability, and change.

Often referred to as the I-C-F, it introduces: INSTRUCTIVE techniques, COLLABORATIVE techniques, and FACILITATIVE techniques.

In an evaluation model, EVALUATIVE techniques could be included to the left of Instructive.

Description

Effective supervisor coaches move fluidly between instructional, collaborative, and facilitative techniques, applying the strategies that are most effective for the specific coaching situation. An effective supervisor coach determines which technique to apply depending on where principals are with respect to experience, competency, and dispositions in a specific issue; how quickly an issue needs to be addressed; and whether something would be best done through side-by-side collaborative work, or when it is time to build the principal’s capacity and autonomy.

Tips for Use

After using the Conscious Competence Matrix (the previous tool), a supervisor coach should review the descriptions in the Coaching Techniques tool to determine which techniques are best for different phases of a coaching meeting. The principal’s competency level and needs, the content of the meeting, and the intended outcomes will help determine what and where the supervisor coach will utilize these approaches. It can also help to follow this tool with the Conferencing Protocol, to plan the questions to ask and the language to use to frame a coaching session.

- When using instructional techniques, the supervisor coach should stay focused on the goal, learn the art of offering a suggestion, and ask for permission to instruct.

- When using collaborative or facilitative techniques, the supervisor coach should ask clarifying questions and paraphrase to ensure understanding, ask meditational questions to imagine potential outcomes of actions, and be sure to respond nonjudgmentally.
## Core Coaching Techniques

**What coaching techniques will I use?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructive</th>
<th>Collaborative</th>
<th>Facilitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Supervisor coach directs the interaction based on assessed needs</td>
<td>• Supervisor coach guides interaction without directing it</td>
<td>• Supervisor coach acts as a facilitator of the principal’s thinking and problem-solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supervisor coach provides information</td>
<td>• Supervisor coach and principal contribute ideas somewhat equally</td>
<td>• Principal actively directs the flow of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supervisor coach offers suggestions and solutions with rationale</td>
<td>• Supervisor coach and principal co-construct solutions and materials</td>
<td>• Principal self-assesses and self-prescribes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Examples:**
- Share a process for analyzing student work
- Model an instructional strategy for a teacher
- Suggest an assessment strategy to a principal for evaluating plan implementation
- Offer a menu of ways to a teacher to differentiate instruction
- Share thinking that leads to a solution
- Provide samples of leadership team meeting agendas to a principal
- Reference current research
- Provide information
- Point out ways to tweak continuous improvement plan implementation to a principal

**Examples:**
- Co-develop a lesson, curriculum unit, meeting agenda, or action plan
- Problem-solve issues of practice
- Analyze examples of student work together with a teacher
- Co-observe a teacher and debrief together

**Examples:**
- Pose questions that clarify and deepen the principal’s thinking
- Facilitate a group of teachers as they assess student work
- Observe a data team meeting and take notes for the facilitator
- Listen as a principal analyzes walkthrough data

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This tool was adapted for the Minnesota Department of Education with permission by the New Teacher Center.
Tool: Conferencing Protocol

To make the most of this tool, we have provided you with a version of the Conferencing Protocol that describes each level of the protocol, as well as a blank template to help you plan your own coaching conversations.

Description

The Conferencing Protocol Template provides a process for supervisor coaches to create and guide conversations that help principals achieve clear and in-depth thinking that leads to useful learning and meaningful improvement. Specifically, the format and template help organize and structure a coaching meeting, using it to help organize, sequence, and pace the conversation.

Tips for Use

The “F.O.R.I.D” method represents the different levels of a conversation: beginning with the objective level, and moving to the reflective, interpretive, and decisional levels. The Conferencing Protocol organizes a conversation to start with more obvious, easily accessible information, and builds complexity to help principals think more analytically and creatively about current challenges and potential solutions. Supervisor coaches begin by clearly identifying a specific topic or focus for the conversation, and then brainstorm questions to uncover facts, followed by the principals’ emotive responses, interpretations, and the decisions required. Section IV. of this guide has more information on the Coaching Protocol.

To plan for the coaching conversation using this Coaching Protocol, supervisor coaches should review the tools listed in the “during the coaching conversation” section of this chapter, especially the Pushing for Depth and Reflection tool, since it focuses on how to ensure that principals can reflect deeply on their practices and make changes that will have positive impacts on teachers and students.
Conferencing Protocol

How will I structure the conversation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation Level</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Content and Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **F** Framing Level | To establish a shared purpose and outcomes | In order to…
Draw the principal into the conversation
Ask questions that…
Promote collaboration,
Invite inquiry and professional growth, and
Seek consensus and agreement |
| **O** Objective Level | To understand and examine the facts | In order to…
Identify and clarify facts, evidence, or issues
Ask questions that…
Identify factual information,
Examine data, and draw information from the principal
What do you see in the data?
What factual statements can you make based on the evidence? |
| **R** Reflective Level | To explore context and assumptions | In order to…
Understand the principal’s feelings, impressions, and insights
Ask questions that…
Deal with emotions and feelings,
Solicit the principal’s reactions, and
Make personal connections
What surprised you? What encouraged you?
What discouraged you? How does this make you feel? |
| **I** Interpretive Level | To make meaning | In order to…
Engage the principal in reflective practice, and determine the current impact and future implications
Ask questions that…
Identify patterns and determine their meaning or significance,
Identify effects, and encourage free flow of ideas and insights
What does the evidence tell us? What insights do you have?
What good news is there for us to celebrate?
What doesn’t the data tell us? What else might we need to know? |
| **D** Decision Level | To develop next steps | In order to…
Make decisions and develop an action plan
Ask questions that…
Describe desired outcomes,
Prompt the principal to make decisions, and
Build commitment to next steps
What are our proposed next steps? What decisions can we make?
What is our action plan moving forward? |
Tool: Conferencing Protocol Template

The “F.O.R.I.D” method represents the different levels of a conversation: beginning with the objective level, and moving to the reflective, interpretive, and decisive levels.

Supervisor coaches can use this Conferencing Protocol template to organize the conversation, starting with more obvious, easily accessible information, and building complexity to help principals think analytically and creatively about current challenges and potential solutions.
## Conferencing Protocol Template

**TOPIC:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation Level</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>F</strong> Framing Level</td>
<td>To establish a shared purpose and outcomes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>O</strong> Objective Level</td>
<td>To understand and examine the facts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong> Reflective Level</td>
<td>To explore context and assumptions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I</strong> Interpretive Level</td>
<td>To make meaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong> Decision Level</td>
<td>To develop next steps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES:**
Tools to Be Used for Planning

DURING

the Coaching Meeting
Tool: Relationship Building

From the first moments of the coaching relationship, supervisor coaches should work to establish trust and rapport, the building blocks of a successful relationship.

Description

This Relationship Building tool divides trust and rapport into their component parts to help better define the building blocks of a healthy relationship.

Tips for Use

 Supervisor coaches should approach the trust section as an ongoing goal. Trust takes time to build, but it can only be nurtured and developed if the four characteristics are displayed on a regular basis, in a variety of situations.

On the other hand, the strategies outlined in the rapport section are concrete things that will help put a principal at ease.
Relationship Building

How will I build trust and rapport in my coaching relationships?

**TRUST:** Trust is a building block of an effective coaching relationship. The following tips can help to earn someone’s trust.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust Characteristic</th>
<th>What does this mean?</th>
<th>What can you do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Sincerity / Integrity** | The supervisor coach is genuine, authentic, and honest. | • Do what you say. Make sure your behaviors match what you say.  
• Be aware of what your body language communicates.  
• Tell the truth and stand by your word. |
| **Reliability** | The supervisor coach can be counted on for keeping promises. | • Follow through on commitments and promises.  
• Schedules regular check-ins.  
• Meet deadlines and appointments. |
| **Competence / Ability** | The supervisor coach has the knowledge and skills to coach. | • Clarify your role as coach and the coaching process.  
• Introduce and discuss issues of trust and confidentiality.  
• Implement a range of coaching skills, strategies, and tools. |
| **Benevolence** | The supervisor coach shows kindness, compassion, and empathy. | • Be familiar with the principal’s culture/background.  
• Connect as people (interests, families, values).  
• Address the principal’s issues with empathy. |

**RAPPORT:** Rapport leads to a state of harmony and shared understanding. The following tips can help establish rapport with principals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust Characteristic</th>
<th>What can you do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Be approachable, kind, communicative, and accepting | • Rapport requires a sense of safety and approval. Smile and make eye contact.  
Be approachable, positive, and supportive. |
| Be fully present and an active and thoughtful listener | • Give full attention and filter out all distractions. Ask questions to learn more about principals’ ideas, experiences, and perspectives and show genuine interest in what they’re saying. Do more listening than speaking. |
| Make personal connections | • Get to know the principals personally. Use open-ended questions to discover and build upon commonalities. |
| Be aware of body language and environmental cues | • Become aware of what nonverbal messages are conveyed through physical actions. Consider how seating arrangements and other aspects of the physical environment may impact the experience. |
| Use mirroring strategies | • Adjust actions and words to reflect the other person. This can include subtly echoing body language, language, and speech patterns. |
Tool: Pushing for Depth and Reflection

Coaching that is focused on meaningful dialogue where a coach pushes for depth and reflection is essential to achieve the goal of helping school leaders grow and develop in their practice.

Description

Supervisor coaches push principals to think deeply about practice and reflect on how their actions and behaviors impact teacher performance. Supervisor coaches accomplish this by listening, observing, questioning and giving feedback that encourages reflection and critical thinking and then using the data that emerges in that process to set goals, plan, implement and assess progress.

This tool provides some easy tips for implementing this collaborative communication strategy.

Tips for Use

Even though the graphic illustrating this tool shows a linear progression, pushing for depth and reflection is an ongoing, cyclical process. It is a framework for approaching communication that is similar to the therapeutic model, where the goal of the interaction is to carefully listen, question, and provide information that helps individuals come to their own realizations and make specific changes that help to bring about improved outcomes.

This tool works like a checklist. Reviewing these tips could be helpful prior to a coaching conversation in order to be reminded of effective strategies, or after a coaching conversation to reflect on the efficacy of the meeting. It is also important to connect this process to the Conferencing Protocol tool, since, when used together, they help supervisor coaches push for depth and reflection.
Pushing for Depth and Reflection

*How do I maintain trust and rapport as I push for depth and reflection?*

### Active Listening and Observing

- Filter out all distractions
- Maintain eye contact and show understanding through gestures/body language
- Avoid interrupting or redirecting until the speaker has finished talking
- Do more listening than talking
- Ask clarifying questions and paraphrase to ensure understanding
- Observe non-verbal communications

### Questioning and Dialogue

- Ask questions that clarify, explore, summarize, and probe
- Ask questions that help ensure the understanding of the principal’s message
- Mirror the principal’s language in your questioning
- Build questions upon information the principal has shared
- Be careful to make sure questions don’t communicate advice or judgment

### Giving Feedback

- Describe exactly what was seen or heard
- Provide information about the principal’s progress toward stated goals
- Be concrete and specific when sharing actionable information
- Focus on a few key areas—don’t overwhelm the principal with too much information
- Deliver feedback in a positive and personal way
- Share timely information that can be immediately applied to improve performance
Tool: Coaching Language

These conversation strategies help ensure that the supervisor coach will use language that helps establish a safe environment for sharing, and a dialogue process that builds the capacity of principals to engage in continual improvement.

Description

This tool defines four essential communication strategies to build the habits of mind that result in reflective practice.

Tips for Use

The communicative process is one in which information is shared by one person, received by another, and mutual understanding is confirmed through a back and forth dialogue. The four strategies defined in this tool help ensure this process will not only avoid misunderstanding, but will also build a shared understanding of current successes and challenges and support the clear vision of next steps to achieve goals.

Ensuring that all responses are non-judgmental is essential for building trust and rapport and for creating a collaborative environment where principals will be open and willing to share what is happening and plan for the future. Clarifying and meditational questions should be asked to get more information, and paraphrasing should be used to ensure that supervisor coaches’ understanding what is being said.
Coaching Language

What conversation strategies am I using?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paraphrasing</th>
<th>Clarifying</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrasing communicates that the listener has heard, understands, and cares.</td>
<td>Clarifying communicates that the listener has heard but does not understand fully what was said.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrasing involves either restating in your own words or summarizing.</td>
<td>Clarifying involves asking a question (direct or implied) to gather more information, discover the meaning of the language used, get clarity about the speaker's reasoning, seek connections between ideas, and develop or maintain a focus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some possible paraphrasing stems include the following:</td>
<td>Some possible clarifying stems include the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• So, ...</td>
<td>• Would you tell me a little more about...?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In other words, ...</td>
<td>• Let me see if I understand ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What I'm hearing then, ...</td>
<td>• I'd be interested in hearing more about ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What I hear you saying, ...</td>
<td>• It'd help me understand if you'd give me an example of...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• From what I hear you say, ...</td>
<td>• So, are you saying/suggesting ...?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I'm hearing many things, ...</td>
<td>• Tell me what you mean when you ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• As I listen to you I'm hearing, ...</td>
<td>• Tell me how that idea is like (different from) ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• From what I hear you say, ...</td>
<td>• To what extent ...?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I'm curious to know more about ...</td>
<td>• I'm intrigued by... / I'm interested in... / I wonder...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What criteria do you use to...?</td>
<td>Note: Why tends to elicit a defensive response.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mediational Questions</th>
<th>Non-Judgmental Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mediational questions help the principal hypothesize what might happen, analyze what worked or didn't, imagine possibilities, and compare and contrast what was planned and what ensued.</td>
<td>Non-judgmental responses help to build trust, promote an internal locus of control, encourage self-assessment, develop principal autonomy and efficacy, and foster risk-taking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some possible mediational question stems include the following:</td>
<td>Possible strategies and examples include the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What's another way you might...?</td>
<td>• Identify what worked and why: I noticed how when you ___ the students really ___.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What would it look like if...?</td>
<td>• Encourage: It sounds like you have a number of ideas to try out! It'll be exciting/interesting/great to see which works best for you!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What do you think would happen if...?</td>
<td>• Ask the principal to self-assess: What did you do to make the lesson so successful?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How was ____ different from (like) ____?</td>
<td>• Listen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What sort of impact do you think...?</td>
<td>• Ask sincere questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What criteria do you use to...?</td>
<td>• Show enthusiasm for / interest in the principal's work &amp; thinking: I'm interested in learning/hearing more about ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When have you done something like ____ before...?</td>
<td>• Ask sincere questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What do you think...?</td>
<td>• Show enthusiasm for / interest in the principal's work &amp; thinking: I'm interested in learning/hearing more about ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How did you decide [come to that conclusion]...?</td>
<td>• Ask sincere questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What might you see happening in your classroom if...?</td>
<td>• Show enthusiasm for / interest in the principal's work &amp; thinking: I'm interested in learning/hearing more about ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tool: Responding for Equity

This tool helps supervisor coaches push principals’ thinking on issues of equity. It provides an entry point into a conversation about equity.

Description
Supervisor coaches are often in a position to push principals’ thinking and to help them identify and avoid biases they have and assumptions they make that may limit their effectiveness. This tool helps supervisor coaches respond in ways that ensure greater equity to instances when principals provide an entry point for raising these issues.

Tips for Use
This tool provides some tips for responding to equity issues when working with principals. It highlights ten things supervisor coaches can do to alter current practices and perspectives to teach for social transformation and promote equitable learning outcomes for all students. Examples are provided to show how supervisor coaches can encourage principals to respond in specific ways to push their thinking to help ensure equity.
Responding for Equity

*How can I help push someone’s thinking to help respond for equity?*

“In educational terms, equity is the principle of altering current practices and perspectives to teach for social transformation and to promote equitable learning outcomes for students of all social groups.”

“Equity is the approach.” “Equality is the goal.”

1. **Embrace the idiom:** Find a word or phrase that the teacher uses, and paraphrase it.
   - **Comment:** I do want my students to be successful.
   - **Response:** You say you want your students to be successful…

2. **Extend the idiom:** Take a word or phrase beyond the original thinking to suggest new possibilities.
   - **Comment:** Yes, I want them to be successful, but I don’t think they even think about going to college.
   - **Response:** For years, people haven’t thought that Latino students have the ability to be successful. You say you want your students to be successful. Could they be more successful if they were prepared for and encouraged to plan for college?

3. **Build an assets inventory:** Help the teacher think of skills and knowledge the students bring rather than deficits.
   - **Comment:** These students don’t even know how to write a three-paragraph essay or know what a thesis statement is.
   - **Response:** What do your students know about organizing? What can they write? What can they do outside of school that you can build on in your lesson? How can we find out? (The hook on the wall)

4. **Find common ground:** Find something you both agree on.
   - **Comment:** I want them to do their homework.
   - **Response:** We both know it is important they do their homework. Let’s think of ways we can support them.
5. **Identify the Inequity:** Describe the inequity explicitly.
   - **Comment:** Some, students just won’t make it.
   - **Response:** If we look at history, we will see that patterns of students who “haven’t made it.” These are usually students who aren’t part of the culture of power. What can we do to make sure that all students “make it”?

6. **Apply equity principles with examples of how to do whatever it takes to bring about equality.**
   - **Comment:** Those boys all want to sit in the back of the classroom. I know that I don’t always get back to see if they are doing their work, but at least they are not bothering the rest of the class.
   - **Response:** It is more important that we don’t ignore any students, especially African Americans, whose race has been traditionally ignored. In fact, let’s think of how we can help them see themselves in the curriculum and experience success.

7. **Put race on the table:** Name the race, culture or language.
   - **Comment:** Well, you know how those people are ….
   - **Response:** Sometimes we make assumptions about Jamaicans. What are some ways we can find out more about their culture and values?

8. **Highlight the historical perspective:** Fill in the missing history or connect the teacher with resources to do this.
   - **Comment:** These people are happy if their kids just graduate from high school.
   - **Response:** Throughout history, people have thought this about Latinos. Let’s look for resources that can help us learn more about Latino history. Because our history curriculum has been incomplete, we have to consciously fill in the gaps. Do you know any resources about successful Latinos?

9. **Expand the vision of equality:** Help teachers envision true equality rather than the one that is generally held.
   - **Comment:** I have two Black students in my Advanced Placement Calculus Class. So anyone can do it.
   - **Response:** When all cultures are equally represented in Advanced Placement, or at universities for that matter, then there will be true equality in education.

10. **Begin to write a new history:** Help the teacher put plans into action what will change the existing inequities, and change the paradigm.
    - **Comment:** At our school, Filipino students have always had the highest dropout rate.
    - **Response:** That doesn’t mean that it has to continue. What if we explicitly focus on seeing that all of our students, including Filipinos, graduate?

 monetary

Adapted from Enid Lee
Tools to Be Used for Planning

AFTER

the Coaching Meeting
Tool: Coach’s Reflection Worksheet

This tool provides an opportunity for reflection and identifying next steps.

Description

The Coach’s Reflection Worksheet provides guidance through the process of reflecting on the coaching meeting, with a particular focus on the degree to which the principal was taking ownership of the process, and planning for next steps.

Tips for Use

Supervisor coaches can complete this Coach’s Reflection immediately following the coaching meeting. It provides a structured process for recording the coaching techniques used, the degree of principal participation, and the balance of talking, as well as essential next steps for ensuring the principals’ ongoing development.
Coach’s Reflection Worksheet

*What are next steps for the principal and for me?*

1. Put a mark on the line to indicate who talked more in this conversation.

2. Put a mark on the line to indicate which coaching technique you predominately utilized in this conversation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Me</th>
<th>The Principal</th>
<th>Instructive</th>
<th>Collaborative</th>
<th>Facilitative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Is there anything you can do next time to enable the principal to speak more?*

*Is there anything you can do next time to build the principal’s capacity and autonomy?*

3. Put a mark on the line to indicate who spent more time providing answers, information, and solutions in this conversation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Me</th>
<th>The Principal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Is there anything you can do next time to assist the principal in reflecting more?*

4. Use the boxes below to record next steps based on this conversation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Next Step</th>
<th>My Next Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. How will you follow up on next steps for the principal in your conversation? How are your next steps supporting growth for both the principal and for you?
Tool: Conversation Analysis Tool

This tool helps the supervisor coaches reflect on how their own skills and dispositions are impacting the coaching process.

Description

This tool looks at four key strategies—listening, questioning, giving feedback, and non-verbal communication—and offers ways in which they can be implemented in order to promote effective coaching.

Tips for Use

This serves as a powerful self-analysis tool to help recognize areas of strength and opportunities for growth in these four key coaching areas. Supervisor coaches can review this list after each coaching session to identify one or two things that can be improved for the next meeting.
### Conversation Analysis Tool: Principal Coaching

**How are my skills and dispositions impacting the coaching process?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Coaching Skills</th>
<th>Non-Examples of Coaching Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listening:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Listening:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Paraphrases what the principal has said to ensure clarity and understanding</td>
<td>• Interrupts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourages, accepts, explores, and reinforces the principal’s feelings, perceptions, concerns, and beliefs</td>
<td>• Talks over the principal and doesn’t defer to him or her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Integrates and builds on principal’s ideas/suggestions</td>
<td>• Finishes the principal’s thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allows the principal to vent or clear the situation without judgment or attachment in order to move on to next steps</td>
<td>• Appears distracted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allows for silence and short pauses</td>
<td>• Speaks more than listens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Questioning:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Questioning:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Paraphrases and asks questions that reflect active listening and an understanding of the principal’s perspective</td>
<td>• Asks questions that do not demonstrate active listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Asks clarifying questions about information provided</td>
<td>• Asks closed questions that have yes-or-no answers or that narrow the conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Asks questions that evoke discovery, insight, commitment or action, or that challenge the principal’s assumptions</td>
<td>• Asks questions that have advice embedded within them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Asks open-ended questions that create greater clarity, possibility, or learning (how or what questions)</td>
<td>• Asks questions that ask the principal to justify or look backwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Asks questions that move the principal toward what he or she desires</td>
<td>• Asks a number of questions in a row without allowing the principal to respond to them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Invokes inquiry for greater understanding, awareness, and clarity</td>
<td>• Asks questions that are leading or have a right or wrong answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Asks clarifying questions in order to deepen the principal’s awareness or understanding</td>
<td>• Asks questions that reflect the coach’s interpretation (not understanding) of what the principal said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Refocuses and redirects the conversation when necessary</td>
<td>• Asks rhetorical questions that may reflect judgment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Giving Feedback:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Giving Feedback:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides feedback that is clear and direct</td>
<td>• Provides feedback that is based in opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides feedback that is evidence-based</td>
<td>• Provides feedback that is framed by the coach’s prior experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uses appropriate and respectful language</td>
<td>• Provides more than 2 pieces of critical feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides feedback that allows the principal to make his or her own learning</td>
<td>• Provides mostly instructive or directive feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appropriately uses humor to lighten the tone of the conversation</td>
<td>• Moves the principal to action quickly without substantive reflection and without ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When appropriate, provides feedback that challenges beliefs about students, parents, and learning capabilities</td>
<td>• Provides feedback that reflects the coach’s biases or reflects disrespect for student groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interrupts deficit language</td>
<td>• Allows deficit language to be used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Verbal Communications:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Non-Verbal Communications:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Maintains eye contact the majority of the time</td>
<td>• Crosses arms or uses other body language that unintentionally communicates disengagement or judgment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Keeps arms and body relaxed and open</td>
<td>• Uses facial expressions that could reflect judgment, frustration, or distraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nods head</td>
<td>• Allows interruptions or distractions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uses facial expressions that reflect empathy, concern, understanding, and caring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Establishes an appropriate physical setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tool: Coaching Dispositions

This tool helps supervisor coaches periodically assess how their skills and dispositions are affecting the coaching process.

**Description**

A self-assessment for supervisor coaches to use to identify their strengths and areas for growth with respect to dispositions that help ensure successful coaching relationships.

**Tips for Use**

This self-assessment can be done on a regular basis so that supervisor coaches can monitor their progress as they work to develop the dispositions that help ensure successful coaching.
### Dispositions of Coaches

#### How are my skills and dispositions impacting the coaching process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I have this disposition</th>
<th>Disposition</th>
<th>I need to develop this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have this disposition</td>
<td>Is skilled at conducting observations and providing feedback</td>
<td>I need to develop this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have this disposition</td>
<td>Is effective in different interpersonal contexts</td>
<td>I need to develop this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have this disposition</td>
<td>Is accepting of others</td>
<td>I need to develop this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have this disposition</td>
<td>Communicates hope and optimism</td>
<td>I need to develop this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have this disposition</td>
<td>Is growth-minded</td>
<td>I need to develop this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have this disposition</td>
<td>Is a model of a continuous learner</td>
<td>I need to develop this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have this disposition</td>
<td>Assists principals in identifying next small steps for improvement</td>
<td>I need to develop this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have this disposition</td>
<td>Listens with curiosity and inquiry</td>
<td>I need to develop this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have this disposition</td>
<td>Assumes positive intent</td>
<td>I need to develop this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have this disposition</td>
<td>Believes in the capacity of others</td>
<td>I need to develop this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have this disposition</td>
<td>Is conscious of own biases and limitations</td>
<td>I need to develop this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have this disposition</td>
<td>Is empathetic and-withholds judgments until evidence is examined</td>
<td>I need to develop this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have this disposition</td>
<td>Is focused on improving education practice and leader practice</td>
<td>I need to develop this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have this disposition</td>
<td>Provides specific rather than vague feedback</td>
<td>I need to develop this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have this disposition</td>
<td>Is culturally proficient</td>
<td>I need to develop this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have this disposition</td>
<td>Challenges biases and inequitable practices</td>
<td>I need to develop this</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES:**
Section IV

Growth-Focused Conversations

Protocols are most often associated with diplomatic situations where politicians or dignitaries follow set procedures that ensure mutual respect, or with computer technology where one set of computers can “talk” to another. In education, protocols help us to develop habits and behaviors to be more effective when working with others.64

Section IV. introduces the **Conferencing Protocol**, a protocol that organizes a principal coaching meeting into concrete segments. The actual **Conferencing Protocol** and the **Conferencing Protocol** template can be found in Section III. of this guide. This structure ensures that a meeting will provide the necessary time and attention for principals to think about what they want to say, and for supervisor coaches to be more strategic listeners,60 all of which are critical in the growth-focused conversation. When conversations are planned in this way, they are more likely to result in meaningful outcomes, “no matter how sensitive or challenging the topic.”65

The Conferencing Protocol is based on a framework that is commonly referred to by several different names, including: the focused conversation method, the O.R.I.D method (representing the different levels: objective, reflective, interpretive, decisional), or the F.O.R.I.D method (which adds a framing level). As Jo Nelson explains in *The Art of Focused Conversations for Schools*, this protocol is designed around natural process of encountering something in the external world (objective); associating it with internal experiences (reflective); finding meaning (interpretative), and drawing conclusions (decisional).66 It is so powerful, because it provides an easy to follow procedure for structuring the coaching conversation in a way that supports effective communication, extends thinking and learning, makes learning meaningful, helps solve problems, and strengthens the effectiveness of the evaluation process.62

Each conversation centers on a specific topic. Supervisor coaches use questions to uncover facts about the topic, tease out principals; emotive responses and interpretations, and guide them

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toward making decisions about how to apply newly learned skills to improve practice. The conversations build in complexity to help principals think more analytically and creatively about current challenges and potential solutions.

This Conferencing Protocol should be used as a guide, not a script. While the sequence of questioning levels builds in a meaningful way, supervisor coaches should be flexible and responsive, making sure to follow the natural flow of the conversation when possible. For instance, if a supervisor coach asks an objective level question and a principal responds with an emotional interjection, the supervisor coach may move to the reflective or interpretive level to follow the line of thinking. Remember, it is through conversation that supervisor coaches build trust and rapport, gather data, and push for depth and reflection. The implementation of the Conferencing Protocol should keep principals’ needs at the forefront so that the coaching conversation helps them achieve clear and in-depth thinking.

Conferencing Protocol Planning Guide

Thoughtful and strategic planning for the coaching meeting is key to establishing the conditions necessary for growth-focused conversations that result in positive change. The Conferencing Protocol Template provides an effective structure for planning. The following tips to designed to help guide the process.

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### FRAME THE CONVERSATION
- Pick a specific topic, issue, or experience as a starting place.
- Identify intended outcomes of the conversation. What will the principal leave with?

### BRAINSTORM QUESTIONS
- List questions that will reveal facts about the topic and those that dig deeper.
- Write all possible questions on the topic without concern for order or quality.

### SELECT/ORDER QUESTIONS
- Record questions that best address the outcomes in the Conferencing Protocol.
- Be sure to have a few questions for each level.

### PRACTICE THE CONVERSATION
- Edit questions, order, and flow while thinking about the principal’s perspective...
- Rehearse the conversation and prepare a timeline.

### PLAN YOUR OPENING
- Provide an invitation for the principal to own the process.
- Plan to introduce the focus topic, intended objectives, and shared expectations.

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Supervisor coaches can use the Conferencing Protocol template (in Section II.) to plan a conversation that builds in complexity and helps principals think strategically about current challenges and potential solutions. The following table provides a more detailed explanation of each conversational level.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation Level</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Ask questions that…</th>
<th>Sample Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **F** Framing Level | • Draw the principal into the conversation  
• Establish a shared purpose and outcomes | • Promote collaboration, invite inquiry and professional growth, and seek consensus | • What topic, issue, problem, or experience is best to focus on?  
• What is the intended outcome of the conversation? |
| **O** Objective Level | • Identify and clarify facts, evidence, or issues | • Identify factual information, examine data, and draw information from the principal | • What do you see in the data?  
• What factual statements can you make based on evidence? |
| **R** Reflective Level | • Explore context and assumptions  
• Understand the principal’s feelings, impressions, insights | • Deal with emotions and feelings, solicit the principal’s reactions, and make personal connections | • What surprised you? What encouraged you?  
• What discouraged you? How does this make you feel? |
| **I** Interpretive Level | • Make meaning through reflective practice  
• Determine impact and future implications | • Identify patterns and determine their meaning or significance, identify effects, and encourage free flow of ideas | • What does the evidence tell us? What insights do you have?  
• What good news can we celebrate?  
• What doesn’t the data show?  
• What else might we need to know? |
| **D** Decision Level | • Develop next steps  
• Make decisions and plan actions | • Explore desired outcomes, and prompt the principal to make decisions and commit to next steps | • What are our proposed next steps?  
• What decisions can we make?  
• What is our action plan moving forward? |

**Using the Conferencing Protocol to Have a Growth-Focused Conversation**

The supervisor coach uses the Conferencing Protocol Template as a guide to navigate the meeting, taking on the role of conversation facilitator, pacing the conversation, asking questions, managing silences, and restating or clarifying when necessary. The supervisor coach should listen and observe, determining what changes or modifications should be made to the planned process (e.g., questions that should be skipped or rephrased, questions to be added, additional supports, etc.). It is important to keep in mind that all of the skills and techniques discussed in Section II., particularly as they relate to building trust and rapport and coaching techniques,
should be used here to ensure that a principal feels safe and comfortable, remains focused on the task, and agrees to a realistic follow up action.

Just before the start of a coaching meeting, the supervisor coach should set up a conducive environment, minimizing distractions to support active listening. The supervisor coach shares an opening statement, inviting the principal to be a partner in this journey, setting a context, and articulating the intended outcome. Then, the supervisor coach asks questions, beginning with the objective level, moving to the reflective level, and then to the interpretive. As the principal responds to the questions, the supervisor coach practices active listening and reflective responding, redirecting as necessary, refocusing responses, following up with clarifying questions, or restating what was said to ensure understanding. The more specific the question, the more specific the answer.

If the conversation gets off-topic, the supervisor coach should reestablish focus, while being respectful and responsive to the importance of the tangent. In addition, the supervisor coach should listen carefully for assertions or answers that are not supported by evidence to ensure that the conversation is helping to surface truths. Similarly, it may be important to challenge assumptions or perceptions and help the principal understand the impact of subjectivity and potential alternative viewpoints or explanations.

The supervisor coach should leave enough time to formally conclude the meeting, without rushing through the closing. As the conversation comes to a close, the supervisor coach should reflect on whether or not the planned closing is still relevant and meaningful, and make modifications as necessary.

The purpose of the closure is to work together with the principal to summarize the learning, affirm the principal’s insights and progress, and clarify agreed upon next steps. Closure should set the stage for the principal to take what was learned in the meeting and plan for specific action steps that will help achieve the agreed-upon goals. It should also identify what was not addressed, and create a plan for revisiting those items later.

At the end of all coaching meetings, the supervisor coach should thank the principal for the dedication and work towards progress.
Reflecting on the Protocol and Growth-Focused Conversations

After the coaching meeting, the supervisor coach can use the same categories to reflect on the effectiveness of the coaching conversation.

**Framing**
What were you hoping would come from this conversation today? • How did you choose this particular conversation?

**Objective**
What was the focus of the conversation with the principal? • What were you hoping to achieve as the facilitator of the conversation? • What is one thing that stood out to you as you review the conversation? • When did you see and hear the principal particularly engaged in the conversation?

**Reflective**
At what point did you have a strong feeling about something that was said? • When did you feel the most success? • Where did you have the most difficulty? • Were there any parts of the conversation where you wished you felt better prepared?

**Interpretive**
What worked effectively for you? How can you repeat this in the future? • What objectives did you meet as a result of the conversation? • Were the questions you asked helpful in understanding the data, facts, and evidence provided by the principal? • What insights have you gained about the principal that will help you work more effectively?

**Decisional**
What are the next steps for the principal? For you? • What are the priorities for future conversation? • Would focusing on specific techniques or dispositions help you work with the principal more effectively? • What steps will you take for self-growth?

Model Conferencing Protocols

The following pages contain model templates to help supervisor coaches prepare for and facilitate actual coaching conversations. They are intended as guides, or outlines, to help supervisor coaches envision how the protocol can be used and provide a workable starting place so supervisor coaches don’t have to reinvent the wheel. Sample templates include:

- Debriefing Classroom Visits or Walkthroughs
- Debriefing a Meeting
- Debriefing Working with and Supporting PLCs and Instructional Leadership Teams

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• Making Mid-Course Corrections for an Action Plan
• Examining Underachievement for Ethnic Groups in the School
• Thinking Through a Serious Personnel Issue

If supervisor coaches choose to plan their own growth-based conversation, they can use the blank template in Section III., along with the Conferencing Protocol Planning Guide earlier in this chapter to help identify questions to ask at each level.
Conferencing Protocols
Conferencing Protocol for Debriefing Classroom Visits or Walkthroughs

This conversation template is designed to facilitate a reflective dialogue around classroom observations that helps the principal identify strengths and areas of growth among the teaching faculty, and use this data to inform supports and professional development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation Level</th>
<th>Content and Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **F** Framing Level | • The goal of today’s meeting is to debrief what we saw this morning when we conducted classroom walkthroughs so that we can reflect on strengths and challenges as they related to instruction and curriculum, and trends we see across the classrooms in your building.  
• Let’s review and talk about what we saw. |
| **O** Objective Level | • What grades and subjects were observed? What didn’t we see?  
• What stood out for you about the teaching? What activities do you remember?  
• What stood out for you about what students were doing?  
• What did you notice about the classroom environments? |
| **R** Reflective Level | • What surprised you about what we observed?  
• When or where did students seem to be disconnected or have difficulty?  
• Which activities fostered high student involvement or engagement?  
• During which classroom visit did you have a strong feeling that the instruction would lead to successful student learning? |
| **I** Interpretive Level | • When students were disengaged or had difficulty, what could have been done differently?  
• When students were involved or engaged, how might they describe what they learned today?  
• What understanding is emerging about where we most need to focus to improve student learning?  
• What best practices and/or positive trends in instruction can you identify?  
• What insights have you gained about teaching and learning in your school? |
| **D** Decision Level | • Which teachers may need extra help? Which can serve as mentors/models for others?  
• What feedback will you give to teachers you observed?  
• In what ways can what you observed help you better address student needs?  
• Where might you target professional development in the coming weeks? |
| **CLOSING** | • I really appreciate the thoughtfulness with which you reflected on your observations and used the observational data to inform your next steps. Let’s recap what your next steps are. Thank you so much for sharing this with me. |
Conferencing Protocol for Debriefing a Meeting

This conversation template is designed to support the principal in reflecting on the effectiveness of a faculty meeting and provide direction on how to improve the structure of future meetings. Since the decisional level answers are the key ones in this conversation, it may be helpful to record the answers to this level to document next steps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation Level</th>
<th>Content and Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>F</strong> Framing Level</td>
<td>• Let’s take time to reflect on what happened during the meeting so we can determine what worked well, and what you might want to change about the structure of staff meetings moving forward.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **O** Objective Level | • How was the meeting structured/organized? Is this similar to other meetings?  
• Who took the lead?  
• What ideas, topics, or concerns were raised in the meeting?  
• Who was present? Who participated?  
• How long did it go? Was there enough time to complete everything on the agenda? |
| **R** Reflective Level | • What seemed to go well in the meeting?  
• What frustrated you?  
• What didn’t get accomplished? Why? |
| **I** Interpretive Level | • What was the impact of this meeting?  
• Who helped accomplished the meeting goals? Who hindered progress?  
• In what ways was this meeting similar or different from other staff meetings?  
• What needs have emerged? How can staff meetings be more effective?  
• What trends are emerging in our discussion so far? |
| **D** Decision Level | • What do you want to be sure continues to happen in meetings?  
• What do you think needs to be stopped?  
• What changes are needed? Who will take responsibility for implementing these changes?  
• How will you use this information to plan for the next staff meeting? |
| **CLOSING** | • Let’s recap on the few things you said you would do to plan for the next meeting so that it will run more effectively, and what you will need to do to make that happen. At the end of the year we will do this again.  
• Let’s agree to check in before the next meeting to make sure you are ready to implement these changes. |
### Conferencing Protocol for Debriefing Working with and Supporting PLCs and Instructional Leadership Teams

This conversation template is designed to support the principal in reflecting on the effectiveness of professional learning communities (PLCs) and Instructional Leadership Teams. The common thread is for teachers to experience the strength of teamwork as they work together in common planning and collaborative learning. The more teachers work together to plan and evaluate practice, the more likely it will be that all students have the opportunity to succeed. The goal of the meeting will be to support the principal in determining how to empower staff to take ownership of and commitment toward their collaborative meetings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation Level</th>
<th>Content and Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>F</strong> Framing Level</td>
<td>• Effective schools are based on the development of effective teams. In this conversation we are going to explore what makes an effective team, and we will consider how your PLCs or your Instructional Leadership Team are functioning as compared to the definition of an effective team.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **O** Objective Level | • Where have you seen effective teams working in your school? Give examples?  
• What are other examples of effective teams? In society? History? Sports? Others?  
• How are your PLCs structured? How often do they meet? What accountability do they have? How do they communicate what is happening?  
• How is your leadership team structured? How often do they meet? What accountability do they have? How do they communicate what is happening? |
| **R** Reflective Level | • What seems to be working well?  
• What has been frustrating for you?  
• What is staff communicating about the successes and challenges of their team?  
• When have you wished for more teamwork among staff? |
| **I** Interpretive Level | • What do you think the members of this team hope to get out of their participation?  
• What are the results or benefits of effective teamwork?  
• What could we do better here to make this a highly effective team?  
• How are / should roles and responsibilities be determined?  
• What impact might this team have on students? On the program? On teachers? |
| **D** Decision Level | • What do you want to be sure continues to happen in these meetings?  
• What do you think needs to be stopped?  
• What changes are needed? Who will take responsibility for them?  
• How will you use this information to plan for the next staff meeting? |
| **CLOSING** | • Let’s recap the timeline and plan for improving upon team systems, structures, and processes. Thanks so much for thinking through this with me. |
Conferencing Protocol for Making Mid-Course Corrections for an Action Plan

This conversation template is designed to support the principal in revisiting an action plan that was created earlier in the year in order to develop a realistic revised plan that deals with changing situations. The goal for this process is to establish a renewed commitment to the plan, and identify next steps required in order to complete and implement the revised action plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation Level</th>
<th>Content and Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Framing Level**   | • This conversation is an opportunity to check in on your action plan implementation and progress toward achieving the goals you set. The action plan is your opportunity to ensure that you are taking the steps necessary to achieve the goals you set for yourself. This is a key part of the principal evaluation process.  
• Action plans are living documents. Thus, they need to be revisited if you are having difficulty with any part of this process, or if the context or situation has changed in your school or district. It is important to address these changes on a regular basis, and make the necessary modifications, so you can keep on track to success. |
| **Objective Level** | • Look at the original plan. What action steps have you successfully implemented? What resulted from these actions? What is the evidence?  
• What actions steps have you not yet implemented? Why?  
• What has happened since you started implementing this plan (events, actions, accomplishments, etc.)?  
• What new information do you have regarding the plan?  
• Does your goal still seem relevant? Achievable? |
| **Reflective Level** | • What concerns do you have about the implementation of your plan?  
• What has been the high point of your action plan implementation? The low point?  
• What do you still is important? |
| **Interpretive Level** | • What elements of this plan still need to be completed as you designed them? What is most critical to success?  
• What changes do you need to make? What elements of the plan should be reconsidered or let go? What should be added? Why?  
• When will you do them?  
• What impact does completing this plan have on your work? |
| **Decision Level**   | • What do you need to include in your revised plan?  
• What steps can you take to ensure completion of your goal? Let’s set up an outline of what to include.  
• When will we need another mid-course check? |
| **CLOSING**          | • Good work. I’ll check in with you next week to review your revised plan and provide feedback. I think the new time line is more realistic for implementation and goal attainment. |
Conferencing Protocol for Examining Underachievement for Ethnic Groups in the School

This conversation template is designed to support the supervisor coach in looking at achievement gap data, to investigate whether any subgroup of students is experiencing any noticeable barriers or challenges. The goal is to use the school’s data as a catalyst to help the principal explore equity issues in the school. In addition to analyzing existing issues among student subgroups, and arriving at next steps for ensuring equity, the principal can use this experience to prepare to facilitate a similar discussion with faculty or the school board.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation Level</th>
<th>Content and Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **F** Framing Level | • Today we’re going to look at your school’s achievement data disaggregated by student subgroups (gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, English language learners, special education, etc.). I would like to review and analyze this data with you, so we can determine the extent to which equity challenges exist in your school.  
• Let’s begin by reviewing the data. Then we’ll work together to evaluate the current situation at your school. |
| **O** Objective Level | • According to the data, what subgroups are experiencing underachievement?  
• Is this consistent with the district data? |
| **R** Reflective Level | • What are your first reactions to the data?  
• Try to put yourself in the place of a student from one of the subgroups, or the family of that student. How would you feel about these findings?  
• What similar things does this remind you of in our school system? |
| **I** Interpretive Level | • What are the long-term implications of under-achievement of subgroups?  
• What lessons can we learn from this data analysis?  
• What are the critical issues in our situation that need to be addressed?  
• How has this situation been addressed successfully in other locations?  
• What might be some solutions to solve this problem? |
| **D** Decision Level | • What do you think we can do to address this problem on an ongoing systemic basis?  
• Which one would make a difference for our minority students? For other student subgroups?  
• Which ones can we successfully implement?  
• Which of these suggestions should be given high priority?  
• What should be our next step? |
| **CLOSING** | • Thank you. I hope this will move us a long way down the road to ensuring that all of our students achieve at the highest possible level. |
Conferencing Protocol for Thinking Through a Serious Personnel Issue

This conversation template is designed to help the supervisor coach facilitate a conversation that supports the principal in clarifying how to deal with a difficulty with a teacher. The goal is to help the principal decide how to move forward to address the problem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation Level</th>
<th>Content and Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>F</strong> Framing</td>
<td>I understand you have been having a tough time dealing with a particular tenured teacher. Let’s work together to explore the situation and identify concrete next steps for generating solutions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **O** Objective     | What facts do you know about this situation?  
                      | What employment history is relevant here?  
                      | What behaviors have been observed or reported regarding this teacher?  
                      | What have you seen for yourself? |
| **R** Reflective    | What is your reaction or response to these reports?  
                      | What is your real concern about this? Why? |
| **I** Interpretive  | What are your legal obligations?  
                      | What are the possible traps or dangers in making a decision in this situation?  
                      | What are your options?  
                      | What are the advantages and disadvantages of each option?  
                      | How do these options impact students? Parents? Other teachers? |
| **D** Decisional Level | What do you need to verify with other teachers, parents, or students?  
                        | What’s your first step? |
| **CLOSING**         | OK. Let’s make sure we are all on the same page. Let’s put this plan into motion. |
This guide was written by Risa Sackman.

ABOUT FHI 360

FHI 360 is a nonprofit human development organization dedicated to improving lives in lasting ways by advancing integrated, locally driven solutions. Our staff includes experts in health, education nutrition, environment, economics development, civil society, gender, equality, youth, research, technology, communication and social marketing – creating a unique mix of capabilities to address today’s interrelated development challenges. FHI 360 serves more than 70 countries and all U.S. states and territories.

ABOUT THE BUSH FOUNDATION

The Bush Foundation invests in great ideas and the people who power them. Established in 1953 by 3M executive Archibald Bush and his wife, Edyth, the Foundation encourages individuals and organization to think bigger and think differently about what is possible in communities across Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations that share the same geography.