**Everett Public Schools**

**Deeper Learning - Communication Toolkit**

“Common interests, collaborative efforts, and capacity building all require

effective communication between and among a school’s educators.”

Les Foltos, 2013, pg. 68

*Peer Coaching - Unlocking the Power of Collaboration*

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide instructional and peer coaches the opportunity to strengthen their communication skills to build positive relationships and trust with mentees. It is suggested that coaches engage in all toolkit activities to practice all aspects of communication with peers.

Table of Contents:

Explore Communication Skills: Activities for Paraphrasing and Asking Questions pp. 2-3

Opening the Door to a Coaching Conversation pp. 4-5

Learning-Focused Verbal Tools p. 6

Communication Skills: Self and/or Peer Assessment pp. 7

## Explore Communication Skills

## *Activities for Paraphrasing and Asking Questions*

## Introduction

*What do coaches need to know and be able to do to support teachers’ needs? How can you use communication skills to build relationships and trust?*

## Getting Started

As a coach, you will:

* Use communication skills to focus on student learning.
* Build relationships and trust.

### Part A: Listening & Paraphrasing

Communication skills help coaches earn trust and inspire collaborating teachers to think more deeply about using available and emerging technologies. You will learn and practice communication skills in this activity.   
Review the [Coaching Skills Cue Card](http://moodle.peer-ed.com/moodle/pluginfile.php?file=/10627/mod_lesson/page_contents/272/Coaching_Skills_Cue_Card.doc).

* Let’s focus on listening and paraphrasing skills first. Review the key features.
* Complete the Just Listen Activity below to deepen your own listening and paraphrasing skills.

### Just Listen Activity

1. Split into A/B partners.
2. Person A will be the speaker, talking for one minute about how technology is currently used in your work setting.
3. Person B will be the listener, fully listening without interruption for one minute.
4. At the end of one minute, person B will paraphrase what the speaker said.
5. Person A will give feedback to person B as to the accuracy of the paraphrase.
6. Reverse the roles and repeat the process.
7. Debrief:
   * How did this activity help or hinder your ability to listen?
   * How many of you had the urge to ask questions? Why?

### Part B: Paraphrasing, Clarifying Questions, & Probing Questions

Communication skills help coaches earn trust and inspire collaborating teachers to think more deeply about using available and emerging technologies. You will learn and practice communication skills in this activity.   
Review the [Coaching Skills Cue Card](http://moodle.peer-ed.com/moodle/pluginfile.php?file=/10627/mod_lesson/page_contents/272/Coaching_Skills_Cue_Card.doc).

* Review the remaining communication skills on the *Coaching Skills Cue Card*, focusing on clarifying and probing questions.
* Complete the Paraphrasing and Questioning Activity below to deepen your own paraphrasing and questioning skills.

### Paraphrasing and Questioning Activity

### Split into A/B/C partners.

1. Person A will be the speaker, talking for three minutes about a problem of practice that you want to try to solve (i.e. an aspect of a lesson plan, student engagement, use of technology)
2. Person B/C will be the listeners, fully listening without interruption for three minutes.
3. At the end of three minutes, Person B will paraphrase what the speaker said.
4. Person A will give feedback to Person B as to the accuracy of the paraphrase.
5. Person C will ask clarifying questions.
6. Person A will answer these questions.
7. Person B & C will ask probing questions.
8. Person A will answer these questions.
9. Reverse the roles. Repeat the process 3 times, so that group member has the opportunity to be the speaker, paraphraser, clarifying questioner, and that all have time to practice crafting and asking probing questions.
10. Debrief:
    * How did this activity help or hinder your ability to listen, paraphrase and ask clarifying or probing questions?

Coaching Skills Cue Cards

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Active Listening**  Is focused on the speaker.  Is blocking out all competing thoughts.  Is leaning forward and nodding. | |
| **Paraphrasing**  Is restating what was stated.  Is used to check for understanding.  Clarifies what was heard by summarizing.  Indicates acceptance and encouragement.  Establishes relationship between speakers. | * *So . . .* * *So what you are wondering is . . .* * *As you . . .* * *So your hunch is . . .* * *You’re thinking . . .* |
| **Clarifying Questions**  Lead to a clear picture or understanding of a topic or idea.  Are factual.  Are answered quickly.  Are used to gather information. | * *How did you . . .?* * *What . . . ?* * *How did . . . ?* |
| **Probing Questions**  Are thought provoking and encourage deeper  thinking.  Usually start with a paraphrase.  Are often open-ended. | * *You said . . ., have you ever thought about . . . ?* * *Why . . . ?* * *What might the next step be?* * *What did you learn from that?* * *Are there other strategies that you could use to . . .?* |

*Peer-Ed’s Peer Coaching V4.5*

**Opening the Door to a Coaching Conversation**

*\*Adapted from the OSPI Mentoring Academy Winter 2015*

“You’re (emotion) because (content),

and what you want is to (be/have/do → goal) -

and you’re searching for ways to make that happen.”

## Introduction

*What do coaches need to know and be able to do to support teachers’ needs? How can you use communication skills and Learning-Focused Verbal Tools to build relationships and trust?*

## Getting Started

As a coach, you will:

* Use communication skills and Learning-Focused Verbal Tools to focus on student learning.
* Build relationships and trust.

### Starting a Coaching Conversation

Communication skills help coaches earn trust and inspire collaborating teachers to think more deeply about using available and emerging technologies. You will learn and practice communication skills using Learning-Focused Verbal Tools in this activity. 

* Review the **Opening the Door to a Coaching Conversation Protocal** and the **Learning-Focused Verbal Tools Table**.
* Complete the Opening the Door to a Coaching Conversation Activity below to deepen your skills in responding to a coaching opportunity.

### Opening the Door to a Coaching Conversation Activity

1. Split into A/B partners.
2. Person A will be a teacher in distress. Think about a distressful moment in your teaching experience in which you would have benefited from coaching from a colleague.
3. Person B will ask Person A what’s up.
4. Person A will state their distressful situation.
5. Continue to follow the protocol. Use paraphrasing, clarifying questions, and probing questions when appropriate. Use the Learning-Focused Verbal Tools included in this packet.
6. Reverse the roles so that each partner can pratice starting a coaching conversation.
7. Debrief:
   * How did this activity help or hinder your ability to start a coaching conversation?

**Opening the Door to a Coaching Conversation Protocol**

1. If you think your colleague is distressed, ask what’s up.
   1. this might be during a meeting time or might be when time is too short to have a full conservation - like the hallway or at lunch.
2. Listen without interrupting.
3. When he/she stops talking, clarify by summarizing the **emotion** and **content** of what was said.
   1. Ex. “You’re frusturated because the kids kept interrupting and talking out during instruction.”
   2. Verbal and non-verbal feedback will tell whether you’ve understood the emotion and content accurately.
   3. Try again if you’ve missed the mark. Getting this part right gives you permission to continue.
   4. Understate rather than risk overstating the emotion - ex. “concerned” rather than “overwhelmed”, “sad” versus “devastated”, “annoyed” versus “furious”. It is better to have the teacher correct you “up” rather than “down”.
4. State what you perceive to be the teacher’s **goal (to be, have, or do**).
   1. Ex. “and what you want is to havea well-managed classroom where students are on task and attentive.”
   2. State the goal as something the teacher can actually control.
   3. You want to promote efficiany (the teacher’s sense of power and ability to make things happen), not wishful thinking.
5. “And you’re looking for ways to make that happen.”
   1. This statement helps move the teacher beyond emotion into thinking.
   2. Solutions are possible. There is a way to reach the goal.
6. You now have opened the door to a coaching conversation.
   1. If it can’t happen right away, finish by setting aside time to talk further. Ex. “Let’s both think about this and meet in your room right after school today.”
7. Follow-up conversation - by framing the issue ahead of time, you deal with the emotion and get the teacher’s thinking started. Your follow-up conversation will be more focused and efficient as a result. You should be able to jump directly into discussing strategies to reach the goal.
   1. “What are some things you’ve tried?”
   2. “Think about a time when your students were attentive to the lesson - what were some things you were doing that might have contributed to their good behavior?”
   3. “Would you like to hear some ideas that have worked for other teachers?”

**Learning-Focused Verbal Tools**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **3 Types of Wait Time – 3 Purposes** | | |
| Wait Time 1 – PAUSE after asking a question | * to allows think time * to signal support for thinking * to demonstrate your belief in your colleague’s capacity for thinking | |
| Wait Time 2 – PAUSE after a colleague responds | * to allow time to retrieve additional and/or related information | |
| Wait Time 3 – PAUSE before your next question or response | * to model thoughtfulness and a need to think before responding | |
| **3 Types of Paraphrase – 3 Intentions** | | |
| Acknowledging and Clarifying | * So, you’re feeling \_\_\_\_\_\_ * You’re noticing that \_\_\_\_\_ * In other words \_\_\_\_\_ * Hmmm, you’re suggesting that \_\_\_\_\_. | |
| Summarize and Organize | * So there seems to be two key issues here. \_\_\_ and \_\_\_. * On the one hand there is \_\_\_\_. On the other hand there is \_\_\_\_. * For you then, several themes are emerging: \_\_\_\_. * It seems you’re considering a sequence or hierarchy here: \_\_\_\_\_. | |
| Shifting Level of Abstraction (Up or Down)  *\*moves language and thinking to lower or higher logical level, illuminating larger ideas or shifting down to precision of thinking* | * So, a(n) \_\_\_\_\_\_ for you might be \_\_\_\_\_. | |
| Shifting Up:   * Category * Value * Belief * Assumption * Goal * Intention | Shifting Down:   * Example * Non-example * Strategy * Choice * Action * Option |
| **Methods for Inviting Thinking** | | |
| Using an **approachable voice** when talking with mentee | * Modulating your voice so it rises at the end of your statement, paraphrase or question signals *openness* and *exploration* | |
| Using **plural forms** with talking with mentee | * Easier for the mentee requiring less evaluation in the early stages of the conversation, before they know which issue to focus on * Example: *goals* instead of *goal*, *concerns* instead of *concern* | |
| Using **exploratory language** when talking with mentee | * Inserting exploratory language when paraphrasing and questioning * Examples: ***some, might, seems, possible, hunches*** * *“So, you’re noticing that* ***some*** *of your students are having difficulty with that concept.”* * *“How* ***might*** *you go about doing that?”* * *“You’re naming* ***some possible*** *solutions. Which* ***seem*** *most promising at this point?”* * *What are* ***some*** *of your* ***hunches*** *about why that* ***may*** *be so?”* | |

Adapted from Mentoring Matters: A Practical Guide to Learning-Focused Relationships by Lipton, L., Wellman, B. and Humbard, C.,MiraVia, Sherman, CT, February 2003

**Communication Skills: Self and/or Peer Assessment**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Norm** | **Rarely** | **Occasionally** | **Frequently** |
| **Pausing** |  |  |  |
| Listens attentively to others’ ideas with mind and body |  |  |  |
| Allows time for thoughts after asking a question or making a response |  |  |  |
| Rewords in own mind what others are saying to further understand their communication |  |  |  |
| Waits until others have finished before entering the conversation |  |  |  |
| **Paraphrasing** |  |  |  |
| Uses paraphrases that acknowledge and clarify content and emotions |  |  |  |
| Uses paraphrases that summarize and organize |  |  |  |
| Uses paraphrases that shift a conversation to different levels of abstraction |  |  |  |
| Uses non-verbal communication in paraphrasing |  |  |  |
| **Probing** |  |  |  |
| Seeks agreement on what words mean |  |  |  |
| Asks questions to clarify facts, ideas, stories |  |  |  |
| Asks questions to clarify explanations, implications, consequences |  |  |  |
| Asks questions to surface assumptions, points of view, beliefs, values |  |  |  |
| **Putting Ideas on the Table and Pulling Them Off** |  |  |  |
| States intention of communication |  |  |  |
| Reveals all relevant information |  |  |  |
| Considers intended communication for relevance and appropriateness before speaking |  |  |  |
| Provides facts, inferences, ideas, opinions, suggestions |  |  |  |
| Explains reasons behind statements, questions, and actions |  |  |  |
| Removes, or announces, the modification of own ideas, opinions, points of view |  |  |  |
| **Paying Attention to Self and Others** |  |  |  |
| Maintains awareness of own thoughts and feelings while having them |  |  |  |
| Maintains awareness of others’ voice patterns, non-verbal communications, and use of physical space |  |  |  |
| Maintains awareness of groups’ tasks, mood, and relevance of own and others’ contributions |  |  |  |
| **Presuming Positive Intentions** |  |  |  |
| Acts as if others mean well |  |  |  |
| Restrains impulsivity triggered by own emotional responses |  |  |  |
| Uses positive presuppositions when responding to and inquiring of others |  |  |  |
| **Pursuing a Balance Between Advocacy and Inquiry** |  |  |  |
| Advocates for own ideas and inquires into ideas of others |  |  |  |
| Acts to provide equitable opportunities for participation |  |  |  |
| Presents rationales for positions, including assumptions, facts, and feelings |  |  |  |
| Disagrees respectfully and openly with ideas and offers rationale for disagreement |  |  |  |
| Inquires of others about their reasons for reaching and occupying a position |  |  |  |

*Adapted from, and used with permission of, the publishers of Garmston, R. & Wellman, B. The Adaptive School: A Sourcebook for Developing Collaborative Groups. Norwood, MA. Christopher-Gordon.*