

OUTSTANDING TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT TECHNICAL SKILLS NATIONAL PROGRAMME

Powerful Learning Conversations Toolkit for Teachers
Created by London South East Colleges

THE 5 STAGES OF POWERFUL LEARNING CONVERSATIONS

Throughout our project we have learned that observation feedback is most effective when focused on increasing a teacher's own powers of observation and reflection about the impact of their behaviour and teaching strategies on learners, as well as developing self-evaluation skills. A single observation and feedback is a good start, but for the developmental process to be effective, the observation-feedback cycle needs to be continuous, with targets created after the first observation reviewed in follow-up observations. We have evidence that this powerful learning process can help teachers focus and take ownership for developing areas of learning, behaviour and technical skills.

1. Self assessment

The initial starting point is for teachers to undertake a self-assessment of their strengths and areas of practice that they wish to develop against the Education and Training Foundation professional standards.

2. Powerful Learning Conversations first meeting – pre observation

The teacher will explore the area of practice that she wishes to focus on for development. This maybe an area that is found to be challenging, in need of development or innovative (risk taking/experimental). This is also a time to agree the arrangements and the focus for the developmental observation.

3. Developmental observation

The duration of a developmental observation will usually last between thirty to forty minutes. The observer records details of what is happening in the lesson and uses these notes to prompt discussion, reflection and evaluation. The observer may draw a map of the lesson and record details about learners and learner engagement e.g. directed questions, volunteered answers, group work.

4. Powerful learning conversation 2 – post observation reflection

As agreed beforehand, the teacher and observer discuss the lesson for around 40 – 60 minutes. The observer uses a coaching style to promote reflection and evaluation, not to provide judgements and feedback.

5. Powerful learning conversation 3 – action planning

The observer will discuss support and development opportunities and may recommend a number of coaching sessions or attendance at a targeted CPD event.

POWERFUL LEARNING CONVERSATIONS AND THE GROW COACHING MODEL

The five stages of the powerful learning conversations draw on elements of the GROW model of coaching. This is a simple, yet effective strategy in structuring and facilitating the 'powerful learning conversations'. Designed by Sir John Whitmore, the coaching model framework is used to structure powerful learning conversations into four key stages;

- 1) Goal
- 2) Reality
- 3) Options
- 4) Will.



KEY COACHING SKILLS FOR POWERFUL LEARNING CONVERSATIONS

1. Developing rapport and building trust

Being able to establish a trusting, empathetic and mutually respectful working relationship with the teacher. Having a high degree of empathy with a diverse range of teachers from different subjects and contexts. Being supportive of the teacher and providing genuine encouragement.

2. Self awareness

Having awareness and being conscious about the impact of the coach's interaction, communication and body language on the teacher. Being 'present' and recognising what is occurring in the session.

3. Having a positive attitude and belief in the teacher

Believing in the teacher's innate potential and ability to determine and achieve the things that they want to change in their practice. Believing in the powerful learning conversations process and avoiding providing the solution or advice.

4. Self management

Recognising, understanding and being able to manage personal opinions, attitudes and views about the lesson, the teacher, the actions of others or the wider context. Suspending judgement about the teacher and what she is saying or what others have said. Being aware of and adhering to personal boundaries.

5. Contracting

Being able to ensure a mutually agreed understanding about the powerful learning conversations process and the methodology. Be able to explain the difference between mentoring, coaching using powerful learning conversations and counselling. Ensuring and maintaining confidentiality, efficient record keeping and time management.

6. Managing the powerful learning conversations process

Being able to effectively manage and structure the powerful learning conversation stages and process. Be able to set out clear structures and use well-considered questions to enable the teacher to freely explore their chosen practice

developments, deeply reflect and evaluate the difference it makes to learners and learning. Manage the time well and clarify the next steps.

7. Listening

Being able to convey a genuine interest in what the teacher is saying and be curious. Be able to listen to what is being said without interrupting. Being able to listen attentively, empathetically and accurately. Being able to give thinking time and be comfortable with silence. Being able to pace the conversation and keep it focused.

8. Reflecting back

Being able to reflect back with accuracy to enable the teacher to hear back what she has said and to check if that is what was meant. Using paraphrasing to play back what was said, word for word. Using summarising to condense a lot of information into short and concise points to focus the conversation on the most important aspects.

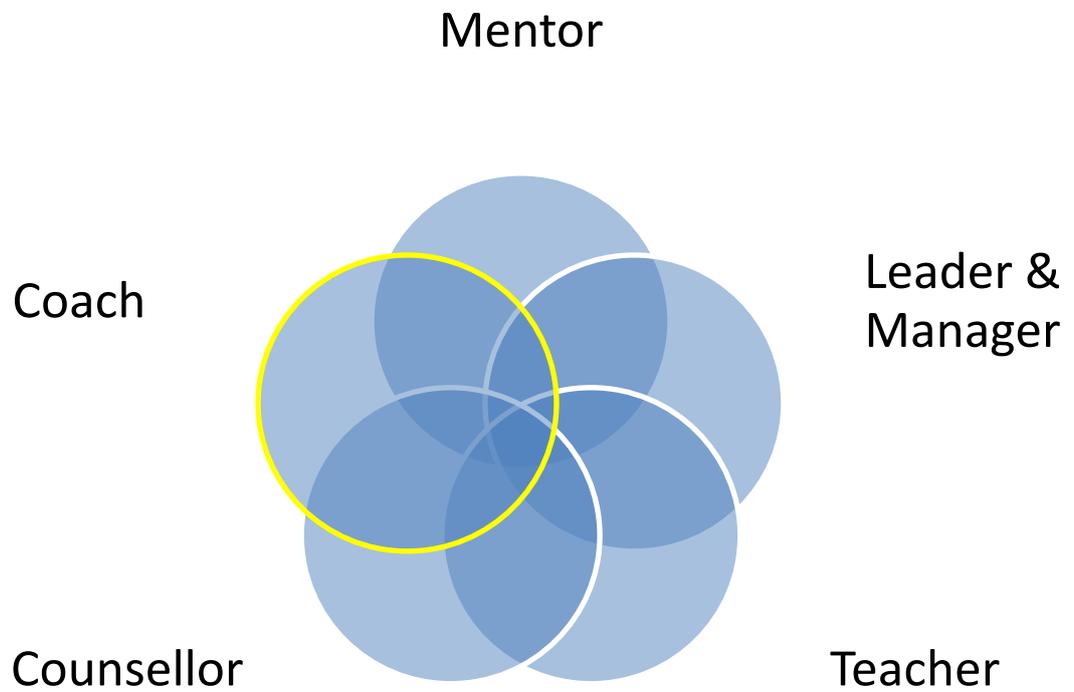
9. Questioning

Be able to understand and ask powerful questions to raise the teacher's awareness and to increase their responsibility. Using questions to promote reflection and to challenge constructively and supportively. Being able to form questions based on the evidence of what you have heard and observed. Asking open questions to promote exploration and to empower the teacher to discover the answers for herself. Using question to leave responsibility and choice with the teacher. Avoiding using 'why' questions which, according to executive coach Graham Alexander, can create fear and destroy trust by implying that there are right or wrong answers. Using 'what else' to encourage the teacher to summarise and look for other ways.

10. Goal setting and action planning

Being able to elicit and build a clear focus from the teacher so that she chooses a realistic and clear goal for development. Enabling the teacher to unpack what is happening now and to generate a broad range of ideas that are prioritised, honed and worked into a clear action plan that she takes responsibility for.

BOUNDARIES



POWERFUL LEARNING CONVERSATION COACHING QUESTIONS

Powerful learning conversation 1 – pre observation

What are you currently working on in your practice?

What aspect of your practice would you like to focus on in this session?

Do you have a goal in mind that you would like to discuss?

How best could we use the time that we have together?

Tell me about your learners? What would they say about the lessons they have with you (pace/pitch/challenge/ interest/enjoyment/feedback/learning)

What could you do to change the situation?

What approaches have you seen used in similar circumstances?

What difference do you want to make to learners? How will you know?

Which option most interests you?

Powerful learning conversation 2 – post observation discussion

Reflection

Tell me about your learners.

Tell me more about

What do you think went well in the lesson? How do you know?

How well did you achieve your lesson aims? How do you know?

What word would you use to describe your learners' progress?

Out of 10, how would you rate your learners' progress in this lesson? What would make it a 10?

What happened when you?

What was the difference when you.....?

At what point did you notice.....?

How do you think the learner(s) felt when.....?

How did learners respond when....?

Tell me what you said when...?

How did you feel when....?

What happened when you decided to.....?

How did you know it was effective when you....?

What positives can you build on in your next lesson?

What/how would you change this next time?

What would you like to do more or less of?

Powerful learning conversation 3 – action planning

Goal setting

From our discussion about your lesson, what is the key thing that you would like to focus on now for developing?

How would you like things to be in your next lesson?

What would look, feel differently to learners?

When do you want to achieve that by?

How will you know that this has worked well?

Exploring options

What would you do differently if you were able to start again?

What might you wish to change?

How will you plan to...?

What are some ways in which you can..?

What else could you do?

Tell me about a time when that technique/method worked well? How would you rate students' learning in that lesson?

What approaches have you seen used in similar circumstances?

Who might be able to help?

What if you had...? (More, less, power, money, magic wand)?

Action planning

Out of all the ideas we have discussed, which option most interests you?

What steps are you willing and able to take in your next lesson?

What is the most courageous step for you to take?

What difference do you think this would make to student's learning?

What would look/feel different for (the most able/less able/less engaged) learners?

What would happen if you didn't do that?

What might get in the way of you doing that?

What resources do you already have to help you achieve your goal?

What are the benefits of taking this action

What support do you need? How and when will you get it?

On a scale of 1- 10, how motivated do you feel to do this?

What prevents your motivation from being a 10?

What would happen if you do nothing?

What the first thing you are going to do?

Who will notice?

Time management cue

How can we best use the last five/ten minutes of our time together?

POWERFUL LEARNING CONVERSATION 1

Teacher:		Subject	
Coach:		Date	
Development priorities (what areas of your practice do you want to develop?)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 			
What difference will this make to your learners?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 			
Planned developmental activities		Timeframe:	Recognise progress and impact by:
1.			
Developmental Observation details:			
Date/time:			
Group:			
Post observation conversation booked:			
Date/time:			
Room:			

POWERFUL LEARNING CONVERSATIONS 2

DEVELOPMENTAL OBSERVATION OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Teacher		Observer		Date	
Course		Subject			
Lesson Objectives					
Focus agreed for observation					

Evidence and notes taken in lesson

Evidence. Cause and effect: teaching → learning; students → teaching



Learner Feedback

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Successes

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Following the post observation discussion, what is your **priority area for development** (written by teacher)

Teacher input

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What **CPD support** would you find helpful? (e.g. training, 1-1 coaching, peer mentoring, sign-post to CPD resources) (written by teacher)

Teacher input

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How well has this observation helped you to reflect on what works best in your teaching and learning to meet the diverse needs of learners?

Teacher input

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