

Conferencing Template for the Challenged

Conferencing Phase I: Providing a Focus for the Conference

To best provide a focus for the conference, set the proper tone by letting the teacher know that the conference will be a professional experience. Sample statements include:

- “Thank you for coming in today to talk about your teaching. It’s nice to have people like you who are dedicated to students working here. I know that your time is valuable, so I’ll stay focused during this conference today.”
- “Thank you for meeting with me today and talking about this professionally important topic.”
- “Thanks for your willingness to get together and address this situation.”

Next, provide an overview or outline for the conference. People like it when they know what to expect during a conference. Use this phase of the conference to lay out the plan for your time with the teacher. Sample statements include:

- “During this conference, I plan to ask you for your perception of the lesson—what you think went well and what you would change if you were to teach it again. Then I’ll give you my perceptions of the effective areas and those that may need refinement. Finally, we’ll explore how we can work together to continue to hone your teaching skills.”
- “As we work together today to address the issue, we will use the following format:
 - “I’ll share my concerns about _____.”
 - “I’ll give you a chance to respond to what I share with you about _____.”
 - “Once both you and I are clear about the issue and how it came about, I’ll have you share your strategies to address _____.”
- “In this meeting, I’ll share the details of the concern I briefly outlined when I was in your classroom and provide you with an opportunity to respond. Then we can develop a plan together.”

Conferencing Phase II: Gaining Information and Feedback About the Teaching Performance

During the second phase, ask the teacher questions to help him or her reflect on the event and share his or her perceptions. It is important to find out what the teacher thought of the lesson. This helps build his or her reflective skills.

Be careful with this section because sometimes people think that the lesson was great when it was not. Don’t just accept a teacher’s perception if you have a different opinion about the lesson. Sample statements include:

- “As you think back to the lesson, how do you think things went overall? What went as planned? What didn’t go as planned?”
- “From your perspective, what went well and what didn’t go well in this lesson?”
- “As you think about your performance this year, talk about your areas of growth, and then share areas that continue to challenge you.”

Next, the evaluator should provide specific feedback, including examples of effective teaching practices. In this section, you can give the teacher feedback about the lesson and what worked or went well from your perspective. Sample statements include:

- “As I watched the lesson, I noticed that _____ really seemed to be working well for you. That is an example of _____ from our teacher evaluation core competency list. Since it is effective, you should continue to use it in the future.” (Up to three or four effective areas can be mentioned.)

- “In my observations, I’ve been able to see some positive trends in your teaching. Let me share a few of them here.”
- “While there are many areas where you are doing a good job, three teaching areas stand out above the others. Let me share specific examples of when I’ve seen these used in your classroom, and the impact I observed on the students in your classes.”

Then, tell the teacher what needs to be changed in his or her future teaching performance. This section of the conference is where you can thoroughly explain or teach something the teacher needs to improve or refine. Sample statements include:

- “One area that was not quite as effective as it could be was _____. Let me explain what this principle is all about. [*Explains.*] In the future, it is my expectation that you include this in your instruction to the students.”
- “I’ve noticed in the last few walkthrough observations I’ve conducted that you have been _____. This behaviour is still a little below the district standards.”
- “In examining your assessment data, I found that _____. This indicates to me that students are making very little growth in the areas of _____.”

Conferencing Phase III: Ensuring the Major Recommendations From the Conference Are Applied in the Classroom

In the third phase, begin by asking questions to make sure the teacher understands the marginal area and what his or her expectations are for the needed improvement. Making sure the teacher understands the issue and what improvement you expect is key to your success as an administrator. Asking clear questions to ensure that the teacher understands can feel unnatural, but it ensures that your expectations are clear. Now, if the performance does not improve, you can move forward in taking additional actions because you are sure the teacher understood what needed to be changed. Sample questions include:

- “I want to make sure you are successful in changing _____. What are my expectations, and when do I want you to implement them?”
- “If you were going to share the major points of our discussion with _____, what would they be?”
- “This conversation was very productive and important to your future here at _____. What is your understanding of my expectations for your teaching performance?”
- “Before we leave today, let’s take a minute to review what was discussed and what we agreed on as a result of our time together today.”

Finally, share the plan for follow-up to ensure the recommended changes are made in the classroom. Follow-up is essential to the success of any teacher evaluation process. Here you plan to check in with the teacher in the future to make sure that the refinement area you shared is being implemented. Sample statements include:

- “We both agree that _____ is an important area for you to use in your teaching. I’ll stop back in a couple of weeks to see how you are integrating it into your teaching.”
- “Now that we both are on the same page, I plan to come to your classroom next week to see you _____.”
- “In order to support you through this change, I plan to stop by next week to talk with you about how you have _____.”
- “As you develop _____, you need to send them to me so I can review them before _____.”