

B R I E F

**STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING THE  
IMPACT OF POST-OBSERVATION  
FEEDBACK FOR TEACHERS**

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“In many cases you are sending in principals to give feedback to teachers who they have been managing for 10, 15, 20 years, and they have never told that teacher that they need to improve. So now, after 15 years of working with this same person, they are about to have to sit down and tell them, ‘Hey, you’re not very good at this particular set of things.’ Even for people who have the best of intentions, the psychology of that is hard.”

-Kevin Huffman, Commissioner, Tennessee  
Department of Education<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

Across the country, districts are committing to observing, assessing, and giving feedback to teachers multiple times a year. This is a departure from the traditional hands-off and indiscriminating approach to teacher evaluation and development. Just a few years ago, the story was very different—only a quarter of teachers experienced evaluations that identified areas in need of development, and fewer than half of those teachers said they received useful support to improve.<sup>2</sup> Currently, school systems are dedicating an enormous amount of effort to accumulating data on teachers, but the field still has a lot to learn about how best to use data to support the improvement of teaching.

“Feedback is information about the gap between the actual level and the reference level of a system parameter which is used to alter the gap in some way.”<sup>3</sup>

This brief, the result of a 90-day cycle (see highlight box), examines the features of post-teacher-observation feedback conversations between principals and teachers that orient teachers for receptivity and learning. We focused specifically on teachers’ conversations with their principals because many of the current teacher evaluation policy reforms place principals in the feedback-giving role, despite the limited guidance available on how this can be done well. The experience of receiving feedback from a supervisor

is qualitatively different from receiving feedback from a peer, colleague, or other whose judgments are not as consequential. Feedback from supervisors certainly can produce more anxiety.

The observation process is commonly considered to be an accountability-oriented activity, with the main purpose of feeding data back to the administration to inform decisions about hiring, firing, development, or promotion. However, a conversation that provides feedback after an observation also holds great potential to foster teacher learning and improve teacher practice. We find that even in the context of accountability, teachers and principals can have learning-focused feedback conversations that promote teacher self-reflection and development. However, this is a challenging task that requires both teachers and principals to skillfully attend to the tensions that arise where the goals of accountability and learning intersect.

## THEORY

### The Biopsychosocial Model of Responses to Threat

Imagine a teacher talking with an administrator who has just observed his classroom. What might he be thinking? After our many conversations with teachers, it is apparent that one dominant response is *threat perception*. This teacher would be aware that his professional image as an effective educator and even livelihood are potentially threatened. A long line of research from the field of psychology on the *biopsychosocial model of chal-*

### 90-Day Cycle

A 90-day cycle is a disciplined and structured form of rapid inquiry aimed at developing timely and useful information for practitioners. An essential feature of 90-day cycles is the integration of scholarly and practitioner knowledge-melding theory with best practice to provide actionable knowledge. 90-day cycles are not intended to be exhaustive studies, but rather quick turn-around pieces on timely topics.

lenge and threat offers insight into the experience of teachers. This model applies to motivated performance situations, in which the performer is evaluated and the outcome of the evaluation is relevant to his or her personal goals.<sup>4</sup> While our study is the first we have come across that applies this theory to the teacher observation and feedback process, the biopsychosocial model of challenge and threat has been applied to areas including test taking, public speaking, and athletic competition. According to the model, the way we perceive a situation determines whether that event will be psychologically processed as a threat or received as a challenge. The perception of threat evokes an automatic reaction—one that evolved long ago in human history and that is biased toward survival. Threat responses mobilize our minds and even our bodies in extreme ways, raising our heart rate or releasing hormones or other stress chemicals that facilitate the fight or flight response. Importantly, however, psychological research shows that not all adversity is viewed as a threat. Often, the same experience can be viewed as a challenge. Research

finds that the mind and the body process challenges differently. Challenges, these studies show, mobilize the body similarly to threat responses, but in such a way that the mind is still flexible and open to changes or alternatives, allowing space for creativity or thoughtfulness. Under motivated performance conditions, we experience a sense of challenge when we feel we can access the necessary resources to fulfill the demands facing us. We experience a sense of threat when we do not feel we can access the necessary resources to fulfill our demands.<sup>5</sup>

This long and extensive line of research has direct relevance to the feedback interaction. A teacher being critiqued can view the same feedback either as a threat to her core self or as a challenge for improving her abilities. Crucially, how a teacher defines the interaction (or how the administrator portrays it) can have profound effects on whether it leads to improved practice—effects that happen both in the mind and on a biological level in the body. In sum, an important insight is that it is not *the feedback* per se that causes teachers to react positively or negatively. Instead, it is the perceived *meaning* of the feedback—the recipients’ interpretation, or “*appraisal*,” of it—that can cause it to have positive or negative effects.

Imagine again that conversation between a teacher and an administrator who has just observed his classroom. If the teacher positively appraises his own abilities, has knowledge of the evaluation process, trusts his relationship with this administrator, and has a sense of belonging in the school community, it is likely the teacher will experience this evaluative moment as a challenge—an opportunity to share his strengths and receive feedback on how to improve. Alternatively, if the teacher is uncertain about what to expect from the observation and feedback process, lacks trust in his administrator, or doesn’t feel a sense of belonging in the school community, it is likely



Figure 1. A teacher’s appraisal of the relative balance of the demands and resources of an evaluative situation will influence the extent to which he or she experiences challenge versus threat.

that teacher will experience the observation and feedback process as a threat. Consequently, that response can interfere with the teacher's interpretation of and willingness to respond to what he hears.

The teachers we interviewed for this study did not manifest this challenge response when receiving feedback from their principals, though some did manifest a challenge response when receiving feedback from a coach or mentor. The teachers described the evaluation experience as “nerve-racking” and “terrifying,” or as an “out-of-body experience.” When reflecting on a post-observation conference, a teacher recalled “just nodding” throughout the entire conversation. These are classic descriptions of a threat state, which prepares individuals to respond effectively to potential dangers but does not prime them for learning, creative thought, or behavioral flexibility.<sup>6</sup>

To foster receptivity and learning-oriented feedback conversations, principals and teachers need to remain attuned to the potential for this threat response. If teachers don't sense that their core abilities are under indictment, they are more likely to see the conversation as an opportunity for growth—a chance to meet the challenge of continuous improvement of practice. Given that teachers need feedback on their performance to improve, what can be done so that they are more likely to see that feedback as a challenge and not as a threat? Here are some things that seem to effectively lead to that appraisal.

## FINDINGS

### Threats to Teachers in Feedback Conversations

What are some reasons why feedback conversations are threatening rather than challenging? Below are some of the features of these conversations

that teachers talked about in our interviews. We focused our interviews on new teachers because we expected the stress associated with the observation and feedback processes would be different for a novice, untenured teacher than for an experienced teacher. Note that the teachers' responses have little to do with their level of performance (and presumably therefore with the evaluative messages contained in the feedback). Both teachers who were identified as needing a great deal of help and teachers identified as being among the best reported that these features of feedback conversations made them feel threatened.

- *Evaluations based on a “thin slice”*

Teachers can feel threatened by judgments about their teaching based on only a thin slice of their daily activities. Teachers recognize that the principal's time is scarce, but such scarcity raises the stakes for teachers who feel they have few opportunities to make a good impression. For example, though one teacher was supposed to receive multiple observations throughout the school year, he correctly predicted that his first observation would also be his last. The infrequency of classroom observation can make it difficult for teachers to feel relaxed and competent in the classroom. As one teacher put it, teaching under observation felt like “performing a dog and pony show.” Teachers are aware they are being judged, and even if the judgment doesn't lead to a consequential personnel decision, teachers value their principal's opinion of them as professionals. In addition to making teachers feel misunderstood or undervalued, infrequent observation hampers the principal's ability to give the teacher useful feedback. The principal may have walked in on an exceptionally challenging classroom moment. Alternatively, the principal may have observed an uncharacter-

istically well-executed lesson and missed the opportunity to help the teacher address more typical pedagogical challenges.

- *Unclear expectations*

Teachers tend to prefer announced visits to unannounced visits, as they allow for “mental preparation.” However, even in the case of announced visits, teachers often don’t know what to expect beyond the day and time of the visit. Similarly, and perhaps as a consequence, the teacher does not know what to expect from the post-observation conversation. Teachers described the wait between observation and debrief as “excruciating.” During this time, they reported “playing out every possible interpretation of the observation.” They enter into the feedback conversation unsure of purpose, of what is to come, and therefore distracted by insecurities.

- *Sense of disempowerment*

The functions of evaluation and improvement are conflated in the observation experience. Teachers we spoke with recounted the common refrain from principals that they are “there for your improvement.” Yet no matter how often such phrases are repeated, until teachers experience professional support from their principals they will assume observations are being used solely to judge them. Feedback feels like something done *to* them, rather than *for* them.

- *Absence of helpful information*

Few teachers we spoke to could recall so much as a single piece of concrete feedback they received in a formal observation post-conference that helped to improve their practice. More often, they were given a summary of the lesson and their effectiveness rating according

to a district rubric, neither of which helped inform their teaching or guide their improvement.

## RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS IN FEEDBACK CONVERSATIONS

A teacher’s appraisal of available resources represents another critical factor in determining whether that teacher experiences challenge or threat in feedback following observation. When individuals believe they possess sufficient resources to cope with the demands of a performance situation, they are more likely to experience a challenge response. In the challenge state, individuals feel invigorated and motivated to meet the challenge. Under threat, they feel their “self” is on the line. Equipping teachers with resources to turn to in response to feedback suggestions and setting clear expectations for the structure of both the observation and feedback conversation will help them cope with the stress inherent in any performance evaluation. These strategies can mitigate the anxiety teachers experience and empower them to take advantage of the feedback conversation to improve their practice. The following strategies represent critical attributes of a feedback process that can mitigate teacher anxiety and increase the uptake of feedback.

- *Scaffold listening strategies to foster an improvement-oriented conversation*

When individuals are under stress in a performance situation and experience a threat, they have a heightened sensitivity to negative cues—they look for markers of threat such as negative verbal or non-verbal communication.<sup>7</sup> This also occurs when an individual is in a mindset of mistrust. Everything seems to reinforce the notion that the other person is

not trustworthy. In reflecting upon a feedback conversation, one teacher described being pre-occupied with his binary classification—whether his principal thought he was a good teacher or a bad one. This mental interference describes some of the “noise” that undermines the opportunity for meaningful communication.

Most communication experts agree that active listening is a critical factor in effective manager-employee exchanges. Active listening includes such behaviors as empathetic body language, posing helpful questions, validating employee expression through considerate conversation turn-taking, and paraphrasing to ensure mutual understanding.<sup>8</sup> Listening strategies such as paraphrasing, reflecting, drawing out, taking notes, and asking follow-up questions are some techniques a principal can use to gain insight into the teacher’s challenges and circumstances. The principal becomes better able to probe deeply into difficult issues and redirect the conversation when necessary. Simultaneously, these listening strategies can make the teacher feel heard and understood. Several teachers and coaches mentioned that asking the right question is essential to helping teachers identify what needs improvement. One teacher stated that her coach made her feel more capable by restating her own words using professional language: “Normally, I would be super inarticulate, and she would rephrase it. I might say ‘the kids really liked the lesson,’ and she would say, ‘You were using engagement strategies.’ She helped me develop terminology for what I was doing.”

- *Sequence the conversation into a predictable format*

Anxiety has been defined as “a state of helplessness, because of a perceived inability to predict, control, or obtain desired results or outcomes in certain upcoming personally salient situations or contexts.”<sup>9</sup> Clarifying expectations and improving the teacher’s ability to predict the process and results of a feedback conversation have the potential to lessen the level of anxiety and helplessness a teacher experiences.

Start with an affirmation of what is working  
Teachers consistently reported that the quality of feedback conversations could be improved if the conversations started with an authentic recognition of what is working. “Principals should start a conversation with something that is going well,” a teacher told us. “Teaching is a difficult profession and it is easy to break down and want to quit . . . [but] everyone does something well.” Recent research also supports these teachers’ sentiments. Novices tend to seek and respond to positive feedback, which acts to increase their commitment to the task. In contrast, experts tend to seek and respond to negative feedback.<sup>10</sup> Starting on a positive note affirms for teachers that the conversation will be focused on supporting them to become better teachers and helps clarify that they are not at risk of being terminated.

- *Address the teacher’s concerns*

To foster a climate of autonomous, self-reflective collegiality, principals must enable teachers to be primarily responsible for judging the success of their own work.<sup>11</sup> Teachers we spoke with were eager to have an opportunity to be heard and understood. They wanted face-to-face time with their principals to discuss their own philosophies, goals, and con-

cerns. Several teachers expressed the idea that teachers are their own toughest critics; they find themselves reflecting on their teaching practice not just after the lesson is completed, but during it. As one teacher put it, “even during a lesson I am reflective. I think about what I could have done differently, or what I should have done instead.” Another teacher we spoke to mentioned that being invited by her principal to share her thoughts on the strengths and weaknesses of her own teaching also gave her the opportunity to showcase that she is a self-reflecting practitioner with her own opinions. Another teacher felt that voicing her concerns gained her respect from her principal, encouraging her to seek help more often, while a mentor we interviewed underscored the importance of giving teachers the opportunity to reflect before offering them feedback: “by listening, you hear what teachers need most.”

Following an observation, the principal has insights and suggestions for the teacher, but the teacher also has unique insights into the challenges she faces in her classroom. In many cases, these insights can and should affect the principal’s interpretation of what he or she observed. If given the opportunity to design the feedback process, one teacher said that he would “tweak feedback so it enhances what teachers are trying to do.” Principals may enter into a feedback conversation with information they want to give the teacher to help that teacher improve, but feedback also has instrumental value to a teacher. In fact, research shows that employees often want feedback in a particular area, but are inhibited by the strong social risks associated with asking for feedback directly, such as the image-costs of coming across as uncertain, incompetent, or

insecure.<sup>12</sup> Seeking feedback can foster a sense of control in the seeker,<sup>13</sup> and feedback that is actively solicited is more difficult to subsequently reject.<sup>14</sup> In other words, feedback is more likely to be taken-up if it was sought out to begin with.

- *Co-develop next steps*

The teachers we interviewed indicated that the feedback they find helpful is concrete and specific. They want an idea for change that they can remember and implement. A teacher said that, ideally, the principal and teacher would “create an actionable plan together.” Another teacher wished her feedback conversation had been more “interactive”—she had more insights about next steps than she felt comfortable sharing. The principal’s expertise and access to resources in combination with the teacher’s first-hand knowledge of her context, challenges, and strengths provide the information necessary to best identify next steps.

- *Putting it all together: Design principles at work*

A model for a successful feedback conversation might begin with a warm and clear opening in which the teacher reviews the aim of the lesson observed and articulates her aim for the feedback conversation. The principal would similarly state her aim for the conversation. Then the pair would focus on the positive aspects of the lesson. The teacher would be given the opportunity to talk about what she thought went well. The principal would reiterate and affirm what the teacher mentioned and then extend the positive focus by commenting on other things that went well in the lesson. Next, the teacher would seek feedback from the principal in areas of challenge where she could improve. The principal might help problem-solve these challenges with the



teacher or connect her with appropriate resources. The principal would then offer her ideas for improvement. Then, the two would generate and prioritize next steps together. Finally, the feedback conversation would end with revisiting the next steps and with a mutual appreciation for the time together. Throughout the conversation, the principal is paraphrasing the teacher's concerns and the teacher is prompting the principal for deeper clarification when necessary.

This project produced a representative feedback protocol that scaffolds a conversation of this nature. In developing the protocol, we tested many of the features of productive feedback discussed in this brief. A version of this protocol is available in the Appendix. Protocols are helpful by explicitly reminding users of the minimum steps necessary to ensure quality. While protocols can be criticized as overly prescriptive or over-specific, getting the steps right is hard, even when you know what they are. A protocol can cut through the noise surrounding feedback conversations (new expectations for principals and teachers, anxiety about judgment, unclear intentions,

high-stakes) and act as a grounding resource to help participants navigate the conversation and achieve its aim.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this brief we noted the relationship between feedback conversations and the anxiety a person can feel in any high-pressure performance setting. Drawing on long-standing psychological theories of how our minds and bodies mobilize to deal with stress, this discussion builds on the premise that teaching evaluations hold the potential to do both harm and good. If handled badly, feedback can threaten teachers, causing them to hunker down and cling to the familiar. Under rapidly proliferating teacher evaluation reforms, teachers of all abilities experience uncertainty and anxiety around the feedback experience. Yet as we've shown, feedback following a classroom observation can be a powerful resource for teacher improvement. Approached with the strategies outlined here, feedback conversations can challenge rather than threaten, encouraging teachers in pedagogical advancement and the steady improvement of practice.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Ting Yu, "The Measure of a Teacher," *One Day*, no. 15 (2012) 26-35.
- <sup>2</sup> Arkalgud, Ramaprasad, "On the Definition of Feedback," *Behavioral Science* 28, no. 1 (1983): 4-13.
- <sup>3</sup> Daniel Weisberg, Susan Sexton, Jennifer Mulhern, and David Keeling, *The Widget Effect* (Brooklyn, NY: The New Teacher Project, 2009) 2-42.
- <sup>4</sup> Jim Blascovich, Wendy Berry Mendes, Joe Tomaka, Kristen Salomon, and Mark Seery, "The Robust Nature of the Biopsychosocial Model of Challenge and Threat: A Reply to Wright and Kirby," *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 7, no.3 (2003): 234-243.
- <sup>5</sup> Joe Tomaka, Jim Blascovich, Jeffrey Kibler, and John M. Ernst, "Cognitive and Physiological Antecedents of Threat and Challenge Appraisal," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 73 (1997): 63-72.
- <sup>6</sup> Alice M. Isen, "Missing in Action in the AIM: Positive Affect's Facilitation of Cognitive Flexibility, Innovation, and Problem Solving," *Psychological Inquiry* 13, no. 1 (2002): 57-65.
- <sup>7</sup> Jeremy P. Jamieson, Matthew K. Nock, and Wendy Berry Mendes, "Mind over Matter: Reappraising Arousal Improves Cardiovascular and Cognitive Responses to Stress," *Journal of Experimental Psychology-General* 141, no. 3 (2012): 417-422. Also see Jeremy P. Jamieson and Stephen G. Harkins, "Mere Effort and Stereotype Threat Performance Effects," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 93, no. 4 (2007): 544-564.
- <sup>8</sup> Stephen P. Robbins and Phillip L. Hunsaker, *Training in Interpersonal Skills: TIPS for Managing People at Work* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1996).
- <sup>9</sup> David H. Barlow, "Awards for Distinguished Scientific Applications of Psychology Unraveling the Mysteries of Anxiety and Its Disorders from the Perspective of Emotion Theory," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 11 (2000): 1245-1265.
- <sup>10</sup> Stacey R. Finkelstein and Ayelet Fishbach, "Tell Me What I Did Wrong: Experts Seek and Respond to Negative Feedback," *Journal of Consumer Research* 39, no. 1 (2012): 22-38.
- <sup>11</sup> Tom Coens and Mary Jenkins, *Abolishing Performance Appraisals: Why They Backfire and What to Do Instead* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2002).
- <sup>12</sup> Susan J. Ashford, Ruth Blatt, and Don Vande Walle, "Reflections on the Looking Glass: A Review of Research on Feedback-seeking Behavior in Organizations," *Journal of Management* 29, no. 6 (2003): 773-799.
- <sup>13</sup> Susan J. Ashford and J. Stewart Black, "Proactivity during Organizational Entry: The Role of Desire for Control," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 81, no. 2 (1996): 199-214.
- <sup>14</sup> Daryl J. Bem, "Self-perception Theory," in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology: 6*, ed. Leonard Berkowitz (New York: Academic Press, 1972) 2-57.

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## FEEDBACK CONVERSATION PROTOCOL PRINCIPAL

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal \_\_\_\_\_

### Key

Green text: Teacher's prompt

Principal text: Principal's prompt

*Italicized gray text* indicate suggested talking points

Purple boxes indicate note-taking space

Check boxes as conversation progresses

### A. Warm and Clear Opening

- 1. **Principal Acknowledges Teacher's Time.**  
*Thanks for meeting with me.*
- 2. **Principal asks Teacher for the Lesson's Aim.**  
*What was the goal for the lesson plan?*  
**Teacher Clearly States Lesson Aim.**
- 3. **Principal asks Teacher for the Aim of this Conversation.**  
*What would you like to get out of this conversation?*  
**Teacher Clearly States Aim for this Conversation.**

#### NOTES ON THE TEACHER'S AIMS FOR THE LESSON PLAN AND CONVERSATION

*Prompts for clarification: Can you elaborate on that? Can you give me an example? Can you say more? What do you mean by...?*

- 4. **Principal Paraphrases and Affirms the Teacher's (1) Aim of the Lesson and (2) Aim for this Conversation.**  
*Your lesson aim was {LESSON AIM} and by the end of the conversation you would like to {CONVERSATION AIM}.*
- 5. **Principal Clearly States their Goal for this Conversation.**  
*That's helpful. For me, by the end of the conversation, I would like to {PRINCIPAL'S AIM FOR THE CONVERSATION}...*

### B. Focus on What's Going Well

- 6. **Principal Begins by Asking Teacher to Reflect on What Went Well.**  
*What do you think went well during the lesson plan? What were students doing well?*
- 7. **Teacher Reflects on What Went Well.**
- 8. **Principal Paraphrases What the Teacher Identifies as Going Well.**  
*It sounds like what you think went well were {POSITIVES TEACHER MENTIONED in Step 6}...*
- 9. **Principal Comments on Concrete, Specific Things That Went Well.**  
*In addition to what you mentioned, I noticed {POSITIVES}...*

## Appendix 1

### C. Identify Challenges Facing the Teacher

- 10. **Principal Transitions Conversation to Reflection of Areas for Improvement.**  
*What are some things you feel could have gone better? What were student actions that indicate a need for improvement?*
- 11. **Teacher Reflects on Areas for Improvement or Challenges.**

#### IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

*Prompts for clarification: Can you elaborate on that? Can you give me an example? Is this challenge important to you because...?*

- 12. **Principal Paraphrases Teacher's Challenges.**  
*It sounds like what's challenging you is X, Y, and Z., is this right?*

### D. Generate Ideas for Addressing Teacher's Challenges

- 13. **Principal Offers Ideas and Resources for Addressing the Teacher's Challenges from Step 11.**  
*Let's approach these challenges you mentioned one by one. Let's start with X. What do you think about {SUGGESTION}, etc...*

### E. Identify Other Areas for Improvement

- 14. **Principal Offers Ideas on Other Opportunities for Growth Grounded in Evidence.**  
*I observed {OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPROVEMENT} in your classroom. Help me understand what happened there. What do you think about trying {IDEA}?*

### F. Prioritize Next Steps

- 15. **Teacher and Principal Review Ideas for Change and Assign Priority.**

#### NOTES ON NEXT STEPS

ONE THING TEACHER WILL TRY  
DIFFERENTLY TOMORROW: \_\_\_\_\_

### G. End Positively

- 16. **Principal Asks if This Conversation Was Helpful?**  
**Teacher Gives Principal Feedback on What Worked.**
- 17. **Principal Make a Final Positive Statement/Recognizes Growth and Progress.**
- 18. **Thanks You for Time and Insights.**

## FEEDBACK CONVERSATION PROTOCOL TEACHER

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal \_\_\_\_\_

### Key

Green text: Teacher's prompt

Principal text: Principal's prompt

*Italicized gray text* indicate suggested talking points

Green boxes indicate note-taking space

Check boxes as conversation progresses

### A. Warm and Clear Opening

- 1. **Teacher Acknowledges Principal's Time.**  
*Thanks for meeting with me.*
- 2. **Principal asks Teacher for the Lesson's Aim.**  
**Teacher Clearly States Lesson Aim.**  
*My aim for the lesson was {LESSON AIM}.*
- 3. **Principal asks Teacher for the Aim of this Conversation.**  
**Teacher Clearly States Aim for this Conversation.**  
*In this conversation I am looking forward to {AIM FOR FEEDBACK CONVERSATION}.*
- 4. **Principal Paraphrases and Affirms the Teacher's (1) Aim of the Lesson and (2) Aim for this Conversation.**
- 5. **Principal Clearly States their Goal for this Conversation.**

#### NOTES ON THE PRINCIPAL'S GOALS FOR THE CONVERSATION

*Prompts for clarification: Can you elaborate on that? Can you give me an example? Can you say more? What do you mean by...?*

### B. Focus on What's Going Well

- 6. **Principal Begins by Asking Teacher to Reflect on What Went Well.**
- 7. **Teacher Reflects on What Went Well.**  
*I noticed students were...*
- 8. **Principal Paraphrases What the Teacher Identifies as Going Well.**
- 9. **Principal Comments on Concrete, Specific Things That Went Well.**

#### NOTES ON THE PRINCIPAL'S GOALS FOR THE CONVERSATION

*Prompts for clarification: Can you elaborate on that? Can you give me an example? Can you say more? What do you mean by...?*

## Appendix 2

### C. Identify Challenges Facing the Teacher

- 10. **Principal Transitions Conversation to Reflection of Areas for Improvement.**
- 11. **Teacher Reflects on Areas for Improvement or Challenges.**  
*Some areas for improvement I feel I could work on... I would like some help addressing student actions such as...*
- 12. **Principal Paraphrases Teacher's Challenges.**  
*It sounds like what's challenging you is X, Y, and Z., is this right?*

### D. Generate Ideas for Addressing Teacher's Challenges

- 13. **Principal Offers Ideas and Resources for Addressing the Teacher's Challenges from Step 11.**

#### IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

*Prompts for clarification: Can you elaborate on that? Can you give me an example? Is this challenge important to you because...?*

### E. Identify Other Areas for Improvement

- 14. **Principal Offers Ideas on Other Opportunities for Growth Grounded in Evidence.**

#### NOTES ON NEXT STEPS

ONE THING TEACHER WILL TRY  
DIFFERENTLY TOMORROW: \_\_\_\_\_

### F. Prioritize Next Steps

- 15. **Teacher and Principal Review Ideas for Change and Assign Priority.**

### G. End Positively

- 16. **Principal Asks if This Conversation Was Helpful?**  
**Teacher Gives Principal Feedback on What Worked.**  
*My goal for this conversation was {CONVERSATION AIM} and I appreciated your {SPECIFIC FEEDBACK}.*
- 17. **Principal Make a Final Positive Statement/Recognizes Growth and Progress.**
- 18. **Thanks You for Time and Insights.**

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