

## Conferencing Tips for Evaluators

### Begin with the End in Mind

- ❖ Prepare in advance by identifying for yourself the outcomes you want to achieve, as well as the messages you want to convey.

### Communicate Information Clearly

- ❖ Be thoughtfully courageous and don't "sugar coat" the information balancing the hard and the soft.
- ❖ Be precise, not vague, with your language and evidence.

### Focus on the Needs of the Students

- ❖ Do not lose sight of the fact that you must be focused on what's best for the student learning and growth.

### Acknowledge contributions/strengths as well as areas of growth/improvement

- ❖ Acknowledge positive contributions, assets, skills, and motives of the teacher so it's clear that the focus is on the behavior or practice and not a general attack on the educator ("Hard on the practice, not the person".)

### Respond with Calm

- ❖ Show emotion in a controlled way, do not get defensive or "hooked."
- ❖ Understand that emotions are a normal part of reflection and moving towards change or resolution. Be kind, but focused. If emotions become unproductive, end the conference and reschedule for another time.

### Listen and Refocus

- ❖ Objectively listen to the educator watching for non-verbal behavior.
- ❖ Pause, probe, and paraphrase to deepen understanding.
- ❖ Refocus discussion to the outcomes you identified if and when the talk moves off target for an extended period of time.

### Closure and Follow Up

- ❖ Check for understanding, agreement, and commitment to key points and next steps.

Adapted from *Leading the Learning, A Field Guide for Supervision & Evaluation* by Paul Rutherford - Just Ask Publications

### Research on the Benefits of Coaching

- Coached teachers and principals generally practice new strategies more frequently and develop greater skill in the new teaching strategy than did uncoached educators who had experienced identical initial training
- Coached teachers use their newly learned strategies more appropriately than uncoached teachers in terms of their own instructional objectives and the theories of specific models of teaching
- Coached teachers exhibit greater long-term retention of knowledge about and skill with strategies in which they had been coached and, as a group, increase the appropriateness of use of new teaching models over time
- Coached teachers are much more likely than uncoached teachers to explain new models of teaching to their students, ensuring that students understood the purpose of the strategy and the behaviors expected of them when using the strategy
- Coached teachers exhibit clearer cognitions with regard to the purposes and uses of the new strategies, as revealed through interviews, lesson plans, and classroom performance

-Marzano & Toth  
*Teacher Evaluation that Makes a Difference*