

Conference Matters

Region 6
CalStateTEACH



Conference Matters

What a Conference Does and Does Not Include

Instructional Conferencing identifies the cause and effect classroom decisions. When conferences are related to the Teacher Performance Expectations (TPEs), the site mentor is playing the role of a facilitator working for lasting change in the classroom.

analyzing the stream of decisions that are made in every lesson. Your video assists in reflection and organizing events into those that promote the objective and the events that got in the way.

The conference is about students and what they did and did not learn. The evidence is the work products of the students rather than your opinion as an observer. Instead of an evaluator, you are an instructional partner.

Instructional Conferences build on what is already working and strive to assist interns in expanding effective practices. Instead of looking for what needs fixing, we are focused on what decisions the teacher is making to maximize learning.

The conference is a chance for the teacher to have another set of eyes



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Points of Interest

- ◆ Engaging in the conference
- ◆ Questions that work and those that don't.
- ◆ Leaving the conference with a commitment.
- ◆ Difference between conferencing and evaluation.
- ◆ Action planning.

Preparing for the Conference

A natural apprehension and over-preparation are both positives, within reason. By explaining what to expect following each observation, the nervousness can be channeled into positive energy. The Pre conference can be the key. Some items and questions to include before the visit:

1. Clarify the difference between instructional supervision and evaluation.
2. Ask the expected student outcome of the lesson. (NOTE: It isn't a matter

of what will be taught, it is about what each student will demonstrate IN THE LESSON.

3. Ask what questions you can help answer after the observation:
EX: Equity in student participation, level of lesson difficulty, openness of questions, amount of time teacher is talking versus time students are engaged.
4. Encourage the intern to tie the preparation to a specific TPE. You will tie your feedback to the same concepts.

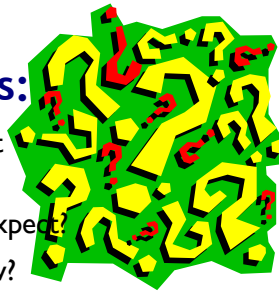


Conference Ingredients

- Introduce the cause and effect process and look for events you want to reinforce.
- Be specific. “When you waited for everyone to look at you, you reminded them of the expected behavior...”
- Tie reinforcement to elements of effective instruction (motivation, relevance, level of difficulty...)
- Discuss [TPE labels](#) that illustrate effective instruction.
- Limit your extension to ONE new idea. Don’t overdo. Use cause and effect language.
- Tell the objective of the teaching part of your conference. (EX: Today Justin was answering many questions. Let’s talk about strategies to give more students the same opportunity).
- Give outside and inside examples. EX: When driving to a new location, you follow directions. When teaching to an objective, you also follow the directions to the expected outcome.
- Generate conversation. Consider alternatives.
- Reconstruct today’s lesson to include the new idea (EX: increasing student participation).
- Plan the next lesson to also include the new idea.
- Get commitment
- Plan follow-up EX: “Email me and tell me how the next lesson goes,” or “We can talk about it at lunch on Friday.”

Conference Questions:

1. What happened in the lesson that you HOPED would happen?
2. What happened that you didn’t expect?
3. Who learned? How do you know?
4. What decisions did you make DURING the lesson?
5. Review the lesson events as they tie to the objective. Which ones supported the instructional expectation and which led in the other direction?
6. (EX: spending lots of time on behavior



Some work, some don’t

- management is not time on instruction).
7. You are most interested in CAUSE and EFFECT relationships. “When you did A, B happened.”
8. Don’t ask how the intern FELT about the lesson.
9. Don’t tell the intern how YOU felt because it does not really matter. Feelings do not create lasting effectiveness: recognizing cause and effect DOES.
10. Phrases to avoid, “You should have...” “Why didn’t you?” “If I had been teaching the lesson I would have...” “It would have been better if you had...”

Classroom Decisions and the TPE

1. What was the expected student outcome?
 2. What have the students done to let the teacher know they are ready for this lesson?
 3. What was taught?
 4. How did every student check for understanding?
How often did they do it?
 5. What adaptations would you make for the two students from the CalTPA, a language learner and a student with “other instructional challenges”?
 6. What performance assessment was included in the lesson?
 7. What did the students do to help themselves remember the learning until the next lesson?
(Closure)
 8. What follow-up was included?
 9. What lesson will come next?
- Activity
- List 5 decisions the teacher made during the lesson.
 - Identify the resulting student behavior. Label them.
 - Were the questions open or closed?

Strategy Building: Adding Involvement in Every Lesson

Don't encourage "dead-people" behavior. Thanking them for sitting quietly does not engage students in learning. Calling one person to come to the board and having everyone else watch does not address the TPE areas of [assessment](#) or [engagement](#).

New teachers need to consider ideas to make their students work harder than the teacher:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Number Fans | 2. Numbered Heads |
| 3. Partners | 4. Jigsaw Groups |
| 5. Question/Answer Cards | 6. Other Groups |
| 7. Mini Chalkboards | |

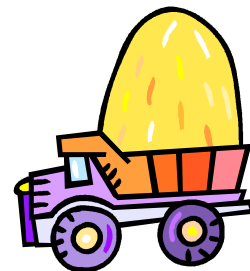
Extending Strategy

(Expanding the bag of useful instructional tricks)

The purpose of the instructional conference is twofold: identify and reinforce the teacher decisions that maximize learning and provide an additional strategy to increase student productivity.

Don't get carried away with recommendations. The conference is not about "fixing" lessons.

We are identifying what is effective in engaging students, presenting material at the [correct level of difficulty](#) and using appropriate assessment. Something worked for someone in the lesson. Give careful thought to selecting the topic for the extension part of the conference. Save the rest for next time.



Don't Judge: Refer to Student Action

Judgment doesn't teach new strategy.

Judgment gives the receiver the sense of what went wrong.

Keep making reference to cause and effect.

Don't ask the intern to judge: "How did you feel about your lesson?" leads nowhere.

Use lesson analysis opportunities:

1. What happened in the lesson that you HOPED would happen?
2. What happened that you didn't expect?
3. Respond to their responses. Include TPE label.

"When you called Rosa's name before asking the question, everyone else was off the hook."

"Use your number fan to place the decimal."

"When you previewed the lesson for your learners with special needs, you increased the ability of every class member to participate with success."

"When you use cooperative groups, you are building a community of learners and raising productivity. Talk about how you arranged your groups."



For Further
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Summary

INSTRUCTIONAL CONFERENCING is the opportunity to bring together all the events of your observation. It is non-judgmental, reserving evaluation for the administrator.

The process works when the intern shares the dialogue and reflection. The last step of the lesson calls for the teacher to look back at the end of the lesson. The instructional conference adds a dialogue to promote the reflective expected outcome.

Your job is to assist in the identification of the cause and effect events. You will be watching for how the open, body and close parts of the lesson are related to the stated objective and the California Content Standards.

Positive reinforcement points out specific events which promoted the objective. The extension idea, a growth area (recommendation) is phrased from the point of view of what was already working and how the same strategy "Tell your partner three uses of a comma."

"Use your number fan to place the decimal."

"When you previewed the lesson for your Using the same amount of Using the same amount of time, the question can be turned around to include everyone:

"Tell your partner three uses of a comma."