

LEADER'S TOOLKIT

Ten Powerful Coaching Questions for Post-Observation Conferences

Moving from Evaluation to Professional Growth

Purpose:

These coaching questions are designed to transform post-observation conferences from performance reviews into meaningful professional learning conversations. They encourage teacher reflection, instructional refinement, and collaborative problem-solving.

1. Looking Back

What aspects of today's lesson went particularly well, and what evidence leads you to that conclusion?

Why it matters

Begins with reflection on strengths, builds teacher confidence, and anchors the conversation in evidence rather than opinion.

2. Student Learning

What evidence did you observe that students understood the intended learning outcomes?

Look for

- Student responses
 - Classroom discussions
 - Assessment evidence
 - Student work
 - Exit tickets
 - Demonstrations of learning
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3. Learner Engagement

Which students were most actively engaged, and which students may have needed additional support? Why do you think that happened?

This question shifts attention from teaching performance to learner participation.

4. Instructional Decisions

Which instructional strategy had the greatest impact on student learning during this lesson?

Possible areas:

- Questioning
 - Cooperative learning
 - Demonstration
 - Discussion
 - Activity-based learning
 - Technology integration
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5. Unexpected Moments

Was there any moment during the lesson that surprised you? What did you learn from it?

Powerful coaching often begins with curiosity rather than judgement.

6. Differentiation

How effectively did today's lesson meet the needs of learners with different abilities, interests, or learning profiles?

Encourages reflection on:

- Inclusion
 - Differentiation
 - Student voice
 - Equity
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7. Assessment for Learning

How did you check for understanding during the lesson, and what did that information tell you?

Discussion may include:

- formative assessment,
 - questioning,
 - observation,
 - peer assessment,
 - self-assessment,
 - feedback.
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8. Professional Reflection

If you were to teach this lesson again tomorrow, what would you keep exactly the same, and what would you change?

One of the strongest reflective questions because it naturally leads to improvement planning.

9. Professional Growth

What professional learning or additional support would help you strengthen this aspect of your teaching?

Possible support:

- Coaching
 - Peer observation
 - Demonstration lesson
 - Collaborative planning
 - Workshop
 - Reading
 - Online learning
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10. Next Steps

What is one specific instructional goal you would like to focus on before our next classroom observation?

Every coaching conversation should conclude with one clear, achievable improvement goal.

The Coaching Conversation Model

Celebrate Success



Explore Evidence



Analyse Student Learning



Reflect Together



Identify One Priority



Plan Practical Actions



Provide Ongoing Support



Observe Again

Coaching Conversation Principles

Effective post-observation conferences should:

- ✓ Begin with teacher reflection before leader feedback.
- ✓ Focus on student learning rather than teacher performance.

- ✓ Use evidence instead of assumptions.
 - ✓ Celebrate strengths while identifying opportunities for growth.
 - ✓ Encourage professional dialogue rather than one-way evaluation.
 - ✓ Conclude with one achievable action step.
 - ✓ Include follow-up coaching and support.
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Common Questions to Avoid

Instead of asking...

✗ *"Why didn't you finish the lesson?"*

Ask...

✓ **"What factors influenced the pacing of the lesson, and how might we adjust it next time?"**

Instead of...

✗ *"Students were not listening."*

Ask...

✓ **"At which points did students appear most engaged, and what instructional moves contributed to that?"**

Instead of...

✗ *"Your questioning was weak."*

Ask...

✓ **"Which questions generated the richest student thinking, and how might we build on those?"**

Instead of...

✗ *"You need to improve classroom management."*

Ask...

☒ "What routines or strategies might increase student participation while maintaining a positive learning environment?"

The Bere Coaching Compass™

Every coaching conversation should balance five dimensions:

- ☐ **Purpose** — Was the intended learning clear?
- ☐ **Evidence** — What did students demonstrate?
- ☐ **Reflection** — What did we learn from today's lesson?
- ☐ **Growth** — What is the next improvement goal?
- ☐ **Support** — How will leadership help achieve it?

Editor's Reflection

"The quality of post-observation conversations often determines whether classroom observation becomes a source of anxiety or a catalyst for professional growth. Great instructional leaders ask questions that invite reflection, encourage ownership, and strengthen teachers' confidence to improve."

— Venugopal Bere