# Instructional Observation & Coaching Guide

This guide is designed to support teacher educators in observing and coaching teacher candidates around evidence-based Power Practices. It includes observation guides for each Power Practice that can be integrated into or used alongside any instructional observation tool or model. These guides feature exemplars to demonstrate full integration of each strategy and provide specific 'look-fors' to identify the implementation of the strategies during observations. Educators should use this guide to capture observation reflections and provide meaningful feedback during coaching. This coaching model illustrated within the guide promotes actionable feedback by generating incremental action steps aligned with relevant Power Practices that candidates can immediately implement.

## Holistic Knowledge Activation

Holistic Knowledge Activation is an engagement strategy that leverages the rich and varied prior knowledge students bring to the classroom. By identifying and building on what students already know, this approach values the full spectrum of their experiences, including academic and personal background knowledge, lived experiences, and social competencies. This strategy ensures students can access, apply, and adapt new content more effectively.

| Full Integration of Power Practice | Observation Look-Fors |
|---|---|
| Demonstrates a deep understanding of students' educational ecosystem, integrating their funds of knowledge[1] and lived experiences to tailor instruction, establish meaningful connections, and cultivate a sense of belonging and relevance for all.<br><br>Actively engages students in decision-making processes related to instructional content, activities, and assessments, ensuring that their prior knowledge, insights, and experiences are leveraged to enhance learning outcomes.[2] | • Integrates materials that represent students' ecosystem.<br>• Uses tools to connect content to prior knowledge and experiences (e.g., pre-course survey, significant circles, self-portraits).<br>• Integrates project-based learning centered around real-world problems.<br>• Provides opportunities for students to choose ways to demonstrate their understanding.<br>• Provides content in multiple formats (e.g., text, audio, video) to accommodate a variety of learning preferences.<br>• Collaborates with community organizations to arrange guided tours, hands-on workshops, or service-learning projects that align with learning objective(s).<br>• Makes explicit connections between new content and students' existing knowledge and experiences, while guiding students to reflect on these connections. |
| Observation Notes & Reflections: | |

[1] Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory Into Practice, XXXI*(2), Spring.
https://education.ucsc.edu/ellisa/pdfs/Moll_Amanti_1992_Funds_of_Knowledge.pdf
[2] Lovett, M. C., Bridges, M. W., DiPietro, M., Ambrose, S. A., & Norman, M. K. (2023). *How learning works: Eight research-based principles for smart teaching, 2nd Edition.* Josey-Bass. ISBN: 978-1-119-86169-0

# Eco-Scaffolded Learning

Eco-Scaffolded Learning is an engagement strategy that supports teachers in designing and delivering instruction by gradually transitioning students from teacher-led to independent learning. This approach builds student confidence, enhances problem-solving skills, and deepens understanding by integrating the educational ecosystem into the Gradual Release of Responsibility model, recognizing that learning is influenced by various external factors and environments.

| Full Integration of Power Practice | Observation Look-Fors |
|---|---|
| Models concepts and skills proficiently guiding students from teacher led instruction to independent learning.[3]<br><br>Integration of students' educational ecosystems into instructional design and delivery leveraging real-world examples, local contexts, and external influences relevant to the students' lives.[4]<br><br>Structured scaffolding that gradually shifts responsibility from teacher to students, encouraging them to take ownership of their learning and apply their knowledge in novel situations.[5] | • Explicitly models concepts and skills while guiding students through the learning process<br>• Instruction progresses from teacher-led instruction to student-centered learning<br>• Integrates of authentic examples, local contexts, or external influences in instructional materials and discussions<br>• Actively engages students in independent learning tasks, fostering confidence and autonomy as students apply learned concepts to solve problems or complete tasks relevant to their own lives or communities.<br>• Facilitates student inquiry and critical thinking, encouraging students to ask questions, explore ideas, and seek solutions independently or collaboratively.<br>• Provides opportunities for students to reflect on their learning processes, discussing their understanding of content |
| Observation Notes & Reflections: | |

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[3] Salisu, A., & Ransom, E. (2014). The role of modeling towards impacting quality education. *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences, 32*. 54-61.

[4] *Redding, S., Murphy, M., & Sheley, P. (2011). Handbook on family and community engagement.*

[5] Rosenshine, B. (2012). Principles of instruction: Research-based strategies that all teachers should know.

# Adaptive Inquiry

Adaptive Inquiry is an engagement strategy that enhances guided exploration and continuous learning through intentional questioning and discussion techniques tailored to individual student understanding. By fostering an inclusive environment and using probing questions, teachers guide students towards deeper thinking and understanding, empowering them to apply their learning in various contexts.

| Full Integration of Power Practice | Observation Look-Fors |
|---|---|
| Consistent and intentional use of open-ended questions aligned with each student's current understanding, encouraging active participation, prompting deeper thinking, and facilitating rich discussions to empower students in their learning process.[6]<br><br>Questioning matches each student's level of understanding, ensuring that all learners are appropriately challenged and engaged.[7]<br><br>Instruction is adjusted based on identified strengths and areas of need to ensure all learners receive the assistance they require.[8] | • Uses strategic questioning with ample wait time (i.e., 3-5 seconds) and discussion techniques adapted to individual students' levels of understanding, challenging them appropriately and encouraging deeper thinking.<br>• Facilitates students' active participation in discussions, asking questions, and contributing their thoughts and ideas.<br>• Provides support provided to students who require additional assistance, whether through targeted questioning, clarifications, or additional resources.<br>• Addresses common misconceptions or areas of confusion among students, providing clarification and guidance to ensure accurate understanding (e.g., examples/nonexamples).<br>• Provides opportunities for students to articulate their understanding of the topic and/or apply their knowledge to new situations or contexts.<br>• Uses questioning techniques and instructional approaches based on student understanding and needs. |
| **Observation Notes & Reflections:** | |

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[6] Salmon, A. K., & Barrera, M. X. (2021). Intentional questioning to promote thinking and learning. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, *40*, 100822.

[7] Tofade, T., Elsner, J., & Haines, S. T. (2013). Best practice strategies for effective use of questions as a teaching tool. American journal of pharmaceutical education, 77(7), 155.

[8] Walsh, J. A., & Sattes, B. D. (2011). *Thinking through quality questioning: Deepening student engagement*. Corwin Press.

# Proactive Monitoring

Proactive Monitoring is an engagement strategy that empowers teachers to provide timely, actionable feedback to students, fostering continuous learning and growth. By actively observing students, providing immediate feedback, and adjusting instruction in real-time based on individual needs, teachers create a learning environment tailored to each student's strengths and learning needs.

| Full Integration of Power Practice | Observation Look-Fors |
|---|---|
| Systematic observation of students to collect data, provide immediate feedback, and offer guidance and/or resources to enhance student understanding and progress.[9] [10]<br><br>Differentiated and asset-based feedback, tailored to individual needs, to engage students in continued learning. This includes specific academic and behavioral praise, delivered in a timely manner.[11]<br><br>Adaptation of teaching strategies, pacing, and resources to optimize student learning experiences in the moment.[12] | • Actively circulates around the classroom, attentively monitoring student progress and engagement with tasks or activities.<br>• Provides immediate, specific feedback to students as they work, addressing misconceptions, offering praise, and guiding next steps for learning.<br>• Adjusts instruction based on student understanding and needs, including modifying lesson delivery, pacing, or grouping strategies as necessary.<br>• Provides opportunities for students to actively engage in learning tasks and working productively.<br>• Engages in reflective practice, regularly reviewing and analyzing student progress data and feedback to inform ongoing professional growth and development. |

Observation Notes & Reflections:

[9] Anderson, J., & Taner, G. (2023). Building the expert teacher prototype: A metasummary of teacher expertise studies in primary and secondary education. Educational Research Review, 38, 100485.

[10] Attali, Y., & Powers, D. (2010). Immediate feedback and opportunity to revise answers to open-ended questions. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 70(1), 22-35.

[11] Selvaraj, A. M., & Azman, H. (2020). Reframing the Effectiveness of Feedback in Improving Teaching and Learning Achievement. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, *9*(4), 1055-1062.

[12] Poehner, M. E. (2008). Dynamic assessment: A Vygotskian approach to understanding and promoting L2 development (Vol. 9). Springer Science & Business Media.

# Power Practice Coaching Protocol

This coaching guide is designed to support teacher educators as they coach teacher candidates on evidence-based Power Practices. This protocol for coaching prioritizes actionable feedback and provides incremental "micro moves" aligned with relevant Power Practices empowering candidates to implement immediate improvements in their teaching practices.

***Using this guide:***

This protocol is designed to walk coaches though a feedback session that is aligned with Power Practices. The first column of the guide outlines the progression of coaching steps. Each step is accompanied by a description that summarizes its goal, providing clarity on what you aim to achieve at that stage. Start by reading the description to understand the purpose of the step, ensuring you know the outcomes towards which you are working. Then, refer to the right column, which contains an example of what the step might sound like in practice. This example serves as a practical reference to help you phrase your coaching interactions effectively.

As you prepare for your coaching session:

- Review your observation notes and identify bright spots and areas of growth.
- Select a Power Practice that would provide benefit and growth to the teacher's practice and note times that it was present in the lesson and/or where the lesson could have benefited from incorporation of the practice.
- Determine the 3 micro moves, aligned with the selected power practice, that you will highlight with the teacher during the session.

As you conduct your coaching session:

- Progress through the coaching steps using the provided example as a guide to facilitate the conversation.
- Remain flexible during your coaching session. If the teacher would benefit from additional reflection opportunities or more purposeful practice, adjust the steps and/or their sequence to be responsive and maximize the impact for the teacher.

This structured method ensures that your coaching session is organized, purposeful, and aligned with best practices, ultimately supporting the teacher's development and growth.

# Power Practice Coaching Protocol

| Coaching Step | Description | Example(s) | Coaching Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Greeting & Introduction** | Start the conversation with a warm and welcoming tone to set the stage for a positive coaching session. | I am excited to connect with you today to discuss your observation. Your commitment to your students is evident as they were eager to participate in the activity and actively were answering questions. | |
| **Initial Reflection** | Invite the teacher candidate to self-reflect on the lesson and surface areas of strength and growth | Reflecting on your lesson today, what aspects of your teaching do you feel went well and why?<br><br>Is there anything you would do differently if you taught this lesson again? | |
| **Actionable Feedback** | Provide specific, supportive, and constructive feedback on the lesson that facilitates improvement and growth | You did a fantastic job engaging the class in the discussion. I love how you moved around the room and knelt to speak with students at their eye level. I did notice that only 5 out of 22 students raised their hands to answer questions. To improve, consider asking more open-ended questions to encourage deeper thinking and help students explore the topic more thoroughly. For example, before you start reading you could ask students "What do you think would happen to the ocean if there were no more sharks?" Let's brainstorm a few open-ended, probing questions together now. | |

| Coaching Step | Description | Example(s) | Coaching Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Guided Instruction** | Review the selected Power Practice and collaboratively reflect on its presence in the lesson. Together discuss what to *continue* doing, what to *start* doing, and what to *stop* doing | Adaptive Inquiry would be a great Power Practice to focus on as you think about those open-ended questions. I believe by incorporating these additional probing questions and intentionally selecting questions based on students' understanding, you will see more student-led discussion. I would also focus on asking one question at a time and providing 3-5 second wait time to help your student process what you are asking. | |
| **Manageable Micro Moves** | Convey 3 small, but impactful actions that can be immediately implemented to improve the power practice. | • Prepare a wide variety of open-ended questions tailored to individual students' levels of understanding that you can draw from as you see where students are in their learning<br>• Prompt for elaboration<br>• Wait 3-5 second after each question | |
| **P³ *(Purposeful Power Practice)*** | Model what this Power Practice looks like in action and provide opportunities for the teacher candidate to purposefully practice the micro moves in "perfect world" and "less than ideal" conditions. | I want us to practice these micro moves together. I'm going to show you how I like to prompt students to encourage them to elaborate on their response.<br><br>*After modeling:*<br>It's your turn to try prompting for elaboration. This time, pretend that it's a perfect world and your student answers just like you thought they would. *(student practices)*<br>Now, I want you to practice your response if the student still does not elaborate on their answer. How might your question change? *(student practices)* | |

| Coaching Step | Description | Example(s) | Coaching Notes |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Reflect** | Invite the teacher candidates to reflect and integrate new information with existing knowledge. | As we wrap up, I want to ask you to think about your students and all that you have learned about them - how do you think adaptive inquiry and using more open-ended questions will strengthen and support their learning? | |
| **Summarize** | Celebrate successes and recap key insights and "micro moves." Provide an opportunity to clarify any misunderstandings or uncertainties that may have surfaced during the coaching session. | I have loved our discussion today. I believe what you shared in our practice time is really going to strengthen the way your students connect with the material you are presenting. We talked about preparing a variety of scaffolded questions in advance, prompting students for elaboration, and giving students more wait time after asking a question. I think this will translate to increased engagement with your students and will encourage more thoughtful answers. Is there anything about using open-ended questions or adaptive inquiry that still feels unclear or challenging for you?<br><br>Before we wrap up, are there any parts of our conversation today that you'd like to go over again or clarify? | |