

Elevating Coaching Effectiveness for Aspiring and Novice Teachers

Providing effective support is essential for putting new and aspiring teachers on the path to success as they enter the profession. At NIET’s 2022 National Conference, participants learned strategies for leading effective coaching conversations for new and aspiring teachers that result in clear next steps to improve instruction.

This document shares effective strategies for the pre-observation phase of the coaching cycle for new and aspiring teachers and provides insights that anyone supporting aspiring teachers could use and benefit from. By effectively coaching aspiring and novice teachers to strengthen instruction, student learning accelerates.

Pre-Observation Coaching Sets Teachers Up for Success

The pre-observation is the first opportunity to provide coaching to a teacher, and it is designed to come prior to visiting a teacher’s classroom to see them in action. Pre-observation coaching sessions set aspiring and novice teachers up for success and support the learning of their students. Below you will find an overview of the purpose of the pre-observation and how to effectively plan for it.

Purpose

Provides the teacher with the opportunity to engage in reflection on the upcoming lesson and receive support from the supervisor/coach for at least 30 minutes.

Builds rapport with aspiring teacher that fosters confidence and normalizes collaborative practice.

Allows the supervisor/coach to support necessary transformation of the instructional plan.

Planning

Schedule the pre-observation coaching 2-3 days prior to the lesson observation.

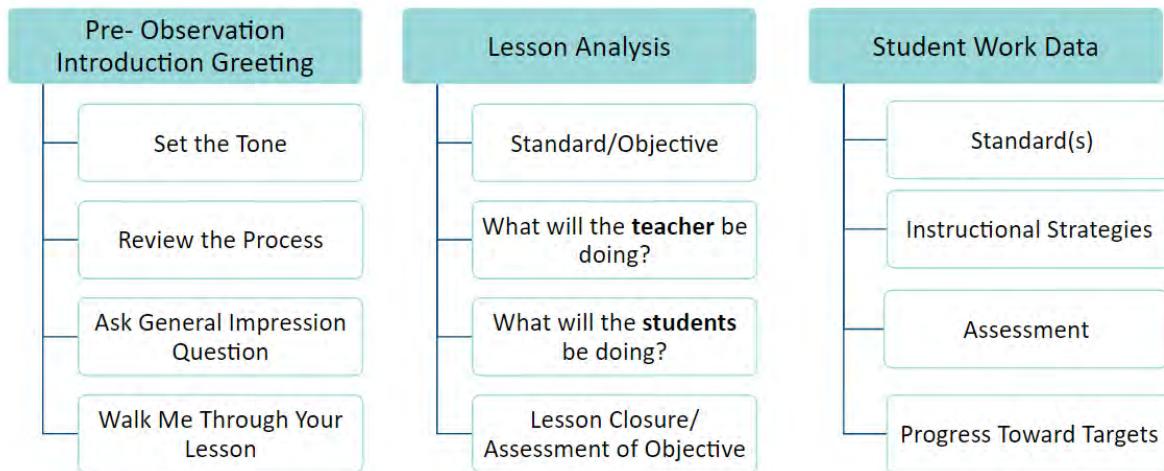
Analyze the instructional plan and any supporting documents (e.g., handouts, assessments, visuals) prior to coaching.

Complete the **Pre-Observation Coaching Template**.

Prepare for reflective questions and direct feedback to support a **proficient** instructional plan.

Protocol to Guide the Pre-Observation Coaching Phase

Review the protocol below. The inclusion of student data within pre-observation coaching sessions helps align teachers' practices to the focused work of their student learning objective. Coaching within the pre-conference protocol related to the standard, the strategies used to support students in meeting their goals, and the related assessments enhances alignment and positive impact on student achievement.



Pre-Observation Coaching Template

Complete this coaching template to prepare for your pre-observation session. This will help plan your conversation to maximize your time together, and it provides a sample script. Consider highlighting questions you would like to use during your pre-observation session, and add any questions you deem important that may not be included in this example.

Observation Coaching Introduction
Greeting/set the tone: Thanks for taking the time to meet with me. I'm really looking forward to coming to your class on _____.
Establish the length of the coaching session: The coaching session should take us about _____.
Review coaching session purpose and process: ...and the purpose of this coaching session is for you to have the opportunity to walk me through your lesson plan, student data, and provide a general idea about what I can expect to see happen during your lesson.
Ask a general impression question: Examples: What have you been working on with students in previous lessons? How does your analysis of your student data/student work impact this lesson?
Walk me through your lesson. What will you do at the beginning of the lesson?

Observation Coaching Introduction

What will you do during the middle of the lesson?

How will you close the lesson?

Possible general questions to ask during the pre-observation coaching session:

How is this lesson connected to what your students have learned in the past?

Where in the lesson will instruction be differentiated to address the students' varying learning needs (enrichment and/or intervention)?

How did you decide on your instructional grouping?

How will you and your students know they have mastered the objective by the end of the lesson?
What will be the evidence of this mastery?

Following your lesson and we sort your students' work, what will be the criteria you will use to sort your students' work? How will you communicate/share these criteria with your students?

Plan for direct feedback to improve instructional plan:

Putting the Protocol in Practice

After reviewing the protocol and pre-observation coaching template, consider the following questions:

How will you communicate with the aspiring or novice teacher to help them gather student data to support the pre-observation coaching session?

To ensure the aspiring or novice teacher has time to revise the lesson plan based on the coaching session, how far in advance should you schedule the conversation?