

13th Annual

Thinking & Learning Conference

DR JANE KISE

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**Addressing Difficult Issues in
Coaching Conversations**

Session 2

MELBOURNE

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ADDRESSING DIFFICULT ISSUES IN COACHING CONVERSATIONS

Jane Kise, EdD

Part 1: Conversation Strategy Role Plays

1. CONTRASTING STATEMENTS

Contrasting involves don't/do statements that:

- Allow you to address others' conclusions that you don't respect them or that you have a malicious purpose (the *don't* part)
- Confirms your respect or clarifies your real purpose (the *do* part)

Example: "I don't want you to think I'm saying that I can't count on you. I find you to be quite reliable. I do, however, have concerns over what happened with yesterday's deadline."

Role Play 1—The Lesson Plan

You arrive at your scheduled coaching session and the teacher shows you a lesson plan that consists of students filling out a worksheet.

- The teacher sharply states: *I do my best and it's never good enough for you.* (reply with a contrasting statement)
- The teacher complains: *I don't have time to prepare six different lessons a day. I only get one prep and I'm giving my prep up to meet with you.* (reply with a contrasting statement)
- The teacher defends the plan: *The kids don't know their facts and they need to practice them. This worksheet gives them plenty of practice.* (reply with a contrasting statement)

Role Play 2—The Pacing Calendar

The principal does a walk-through and notices that the teacher you are coaching is not on the correct lesson, according to the pacing calendar.

- The principal says: *We need to have everyone on the same page around here. I thought you were here to improve things.* (reply with a contrasting statement)
- The principal says: *I am in charge around here and I want everyone to follow the pacing calendar. I have to ensure that the kids get good test scores.* (reply with a contrasting statement.)
- The principal says: *I knew that teacher couldn't handle the math. She's behind everyone else on the grade. You need to fix this.* (reply with a contrasting statement)

Adapted by Lucy West, Lucywestpd.com from information on *Crucial Conversations* and *Crucial Confrontations* (by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, Al Switzler) at www.vitalSMARTS.com.

2. EXPLORE OTHERS' PATHS

When others become angry, share ugly stories, or go to silence, it often helps if you can encourage them to retrace their Path to Action and share their original observations—the facts. To do so, use your AMPP skills.

- **Ask** to get things rolling ((State aloud a question that will encourage her to say exactly what's going on.)
- **Mirror** to confirm feelings (Describe her apparent feeling and explain that you would like to understand her feelings.)
- **Paraphrase** to acknowledge the story (Restate in your own words what she said in order to keep the conversation alive.)
- **Prime** when you're getting nowhere (Take a guess at what you think has her so upset.)

ROLE PLAY 1—THE RESISTANT TEACHER

You arrive for your scheduled coaching session with a veteran teacher. She meets you at the door and tells you she is angry that the principal insisted upon her having a coach.

Ask: (State aloud a question that will encourage her to say exactly what's going on.
She comes back with: *"Never mind. Come in and do your thing. I'll take care of my paperwork."*

Mirror: (Describe her apparent anger and explain that you would like to understand her feelings.)
She responds: *"I don't want to talk about it. Sometimes it's better to just not say anything."*

Paraphrase: (Restate in your own words what she said in order to keep the conversation alive.)

Prime: (Take a guess at what you think has her so upset.)

ROLE PLAY 2—YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE OR CHOOSE ONE FROM BELOW

- My students can't do this stuff. They are second language learners and/or have special needs. You expect too much from them.
- This math lesson is not going to teach my students what they need to know for the test. We don't have time for all this problem solving.
- I am following what it says in the book. The kids that aren't getting aren't working at it. They are lazy and I don't see why I should coddle them.
- We have a pacing calendar to follow and I'm moving along. There's no time for reteaching.

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3. STATE YOUR PATH

The five skills for effectively sharing or stating your views (particularly controversial, touchy, or unpopular views) can be easily remembered with the acronym STATE:

- **S**hare your facts*—say what you think happened (Here’s what you’ve said and done...)
- **T**ell your story*—say what you believe may be the case (This is what I’m beginning to conclude...)
- **A**sk for other’s paths*—ask the person to share their facts and story
- **T**alk tentatively**
- **E**ncourage testing**

*The “What” skills

**The “How” skills

Role Play 1—Late Again

Joe, one of the people the principal has asked you to coach is 20 minutes late for a 40-minute coaching session once again. He comes running into the room explaining that he had to make a phone call to a parent. This is the third session that out of the four you have had that he is late for. He has told you that he wants to work with you, but you notice that he is often late and when he finally does show up he is under prepared for the conference. He has his textbook with him and has run off the worksheets when provided, but tells you he just hasn’t had time to think about the lesson more deeply than that. He does have four math classes after all.

- Share your facts (Here’s what you’ve said and done...)
- Tell your story (This is what I’m beginning to conclude...)
- Ask for your coworkers path

Role Play 2---What’s My Role?

You have recently been assigned to be a coach by your principal. The principal and you have agreed that your job is to improve student achievement through improved instruction. You are eager to work with teachers individually and in groups and have laid out a pretty ambitious schedule to at least touch base with every teacher during grade level/department meetings. You have thought about the teachers you think will work well as leaders and those who needs some support and realized you can’t fit them all in your schedule. Then your principal tells you that she wants you to work with small groups of students who are struggling and to prepare and distribute all of the test prep materials on a regular basis.

- Share your facts (Here’s what you’ve said and done...)
- Tell your story (This is what I’m beginning to conclude...)
- Ask for your principal’s path.

*In this case you might also want to seek or redefine mutual purpose.

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Part 2: Meeting Teacher Needs To Diffuse Difficult Conversations

Table 1: Type Preferences and Coaching Implications

Ways to use this handout:

- Ask the person you are coaching which seems more like them!
- Concentrate on Sensing vs. Intuition and Thinking vs. Feeling ways of learning

<p>Extraverted types may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to talk, not listen, to understand • Change their minds as they talk • Prefer act-reflect-act patterns of learning; for Extraverts, the doing gives them something to think about • Be stressed by too much lecture/inaction/quiet 	<p>Introverted types may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer to reflect on materials or experiences in advance • Take on a “deer in the headlights” feeling if the meeting focus changes from what they expect • Prefer a reflect-act-reflect pattern of learning, anticipating or reading about what might happen in advance of trying it • Be stressed by noise, changes without reflective time, being asked to self-disclose too much information
<p>Sensing types may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want immediate applications and relevant examples • Prefer step-by-step implementation strategies and details to take them from what they know to what you want them to do • View theory as beside the point; they want to know what will work in <i>their</i> classroom • Be stressed by removal of what is working with no proof that the change will be better 	<p>Intuitive types may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be less interested in isolated skills than in how they fit into overall goals and strategies • View curriculum or instructional practices as a starting place for innovation <i>unless</i> give clear reasons not to deviate from them • Respond more to metaphors or theories than to facts • Be stressed by details, structure, no room for creativity
<p>Thinking types may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want to know a coach is competent; tout your credentials and experience • Need logic and the rationale for changes • Distrust nonspecific praise • Be stressed by displays of emotion, assumption of a personal relationship, lack of fairness or equity 	<p>Feeling types may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take problems or critiques personally. Start with concrete positive reinforcement • Be concerned about the impact of practices on the <i>whole</i> person—teachers and students—not just academic achievement • Want students (and coaches) to like them • Be stressed by disharmony, not being listened to, or awareness that the needs of some teachers or students are not being met
<p>Judging types may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find good practices and stick with them. • Have things planned out and resist coaching interventions that interfere • Seem rigid without sufficient attention to their informational and timing needs • Be stressed by changes—they had it all planned! 	<p>Perceiving types may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid planning very far ahead—things could change! A coach needs flexibility regarding the when’s and what’s of interactions. • Resist deciding quickly about lessons or practices—or may easily change their minds with new information • Be more likely to over or underestimate how long activities will take • Be stressed by closure: something better or more appropriate may be revealed through waiting

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What is Your Natural Coaching Style?

Read through the following descriptions. Think back to how you viewed instructional coaching before you had any formal training. Which description is closest to how you would prefer to be coached? Note that you may like (or dislike) elements of each description. Choose the style that overall would be the best match for how you learn. And, note that all are just a tad exaggerated to illustrate the differences.

My Ideal Coach Would...

Useful Resource	Encouraging Sage	Collegial Mentor	Expert
<p>If you really want to help me improve instruction, give me hands-on, relevant lessons that I can use right away in my classroom—with tangible results!</p> <p>Take time to answer my questions on implementation, right down to the minutes each lesson element might take, what materials to use, how to group the students, etc.</p> <p>I might want to see someone use strategies in action, but often if you give me something ready-to-go, I'll test it out. If it <i>works</i>, believe me, I'll be back for more!</p>	<p>Instead of looking at theories or general ideas, let's set goals for trying one new, concrete task or strategy at a time. If you provide too many choices, I'll assume you want me to perfect all of them at once!</p> <p>Talk with me about what to expect, model it, and then watch me so you can provide feedback right away—including what I'm doing right, as I'm all too aware of what goes wrong. Coaches should be friends who are there to encourage me in working on new skills.</p>	<p>I get all kinds of creative ideas from books and workshops. Let's add my ideas to yours and together decide what's best for my students. I'd love your thoughts, then, on how to make it work well the first time.</p> <p>I don't think there are one-size-fits-all solutions for teachers or for students, so treat me uniquely, just as I treat my students as individuals.</p> <p>You're welcome to observe any time, but I only need modeling if a strategy requires more structure than I'd have needed as a student!</p>	<p>I do a fair amount of investigating, by reading or taking with colleagues, to stay on top of my field, so please bring only cutting-edge strategies. Have the theoretical background or research handy—I may want to look it over.</p> <p>Know that I often ask pointed questions. That may feel critical, but my questioning indicates that your ideas have merit and I want to understand them.</p> <p>While you're welcome in my classroom, and I will take your suggestions, much of my learning will come through our dialogues.</p>

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Small Group Discussion: Case Study

Read through the classroom observation notes and sample quiz on the next two pages. These are from a coach's first and second observations of an 8th grade algebra class, taught by a first-year teacher.

- Which coaching style might best fit this teacher?
- What one or two coaching issues might you focus on?
- With that focus, what might concern you as you plan for a productive coaching session with this teacher?
- What evidence would you use to launch a productive conversation?

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Classroom Observation Notes

8th Grade Algebra, 24 students

Read the following information based on actual classroom observations. Talk to your partner about the issue you would first focus on.

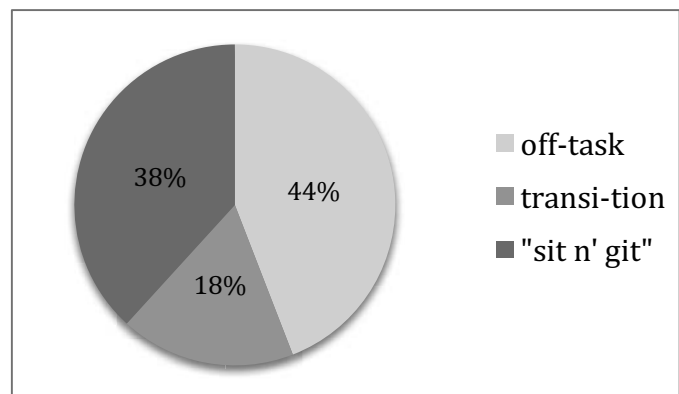
Day 1

55 mn. Review of test. More than 20% of class off task. Steady flow of students getting out of their desks, talking out of turn, making wise remarks, etc.

35 mn. Lecture on slope, using example of change in number of students in line for lunch

Quick coaching suggestion: 3 moves for more student engagement in discussions:

- “Turn and talk to neighbor”
- “Can you repeat what he/she said”
- “I’ll come back to you after you’ve had a chance to hear others”



Day 2

2 mn. Reminder of new daily homework quizzes, using “Turn and talk to neighbor” move

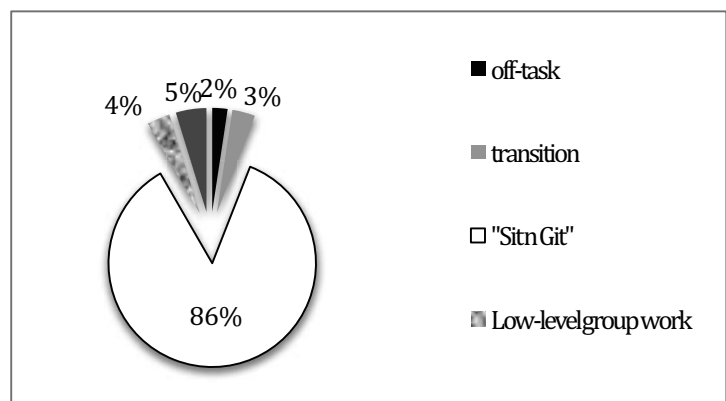
28 mn. Review of homework. Mostly call and response, teacher uses “Turn and talk” move one more time

23 mn. Homework quiz

- Many students don’t finish
- Many questions about, “Does this count toward test grades?”
- Two of six questions requires extensive reading before students can answer a straightforward question
- First problem, “The Dairy Queen serves 20 cones at 12:00 and 25 cones at 1:00” prompts questions from students about how many are sold between 12 and 1
- Two other questions are ambiguous
- Students are to graph 21 data points to answer 5 more questions; many students interpret data labeled “Rainfall” as rainfall per day rather than cumulative rainfall, resulting in incorrect graphs. Many don’t finish graphing
- One question requires synthesis—higher level thinking

27 mn. Review of homework quiz

- Students do not understand how they were to use the data points to graph rainfall—cumulative vs. per-day amounts—and therefore do not understand the answers to the questions about slope



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Homework Review Quiz: Rate of Change

Directions: This is an open book quiz. You may use your class notes and homework to answer the questions on this quiz. YOU MUST WORK ALONE!

1. Suppose you are sitting at the DQ with your friend enjoying a bit of ice cream and talking about how wonderful life is. While talking, you both notice that about every minute, the number of soft ice cream cones sold varies. For instance, in one minute the number of cones sold is 10, the following minute it is 14, and then in the third minute it is 16. In preparation for this quiz, you wonder out loud to your friend, what is the difference between the “rate of change” in cones sold and the “amount of change” of cones sold. Using your observation of the cones sold, explain in words the difference between these two concepts: “rate of change” and “amount of change.” [2]
2. What is the mathematical definition for the rate of change? [1]
3. True or False. The steeper the line the greater the rate of change. If False, explain why.
4. Suppose at 12:00 pm the number of cones DQ sells is 20 and at 1:00 pm the number of cones DQ sells is 20. (a) What is the amount of change of cones sold? (b) What is the rate of change of cones sold? Show your work! [2]
5. True or False. At a Minnesota Twins game last year, the “rate of change” of runs from the end of the first inning to the end of the game was 0. From this you can conclude that the number of runs the Twins scored for the game was 0. If False, explain why [1].

Use the table below for questions 6-12

Day	Total rainfall (“)
0	
1	0
2	0
3	.1
4	.5
5	.7
6	.7
7	.7
8	.7
9	.7
10	1.1
11	2
12	2
13	2.1
14	2.1
15	2.1
16	2.1
17	2.4
18	2.6
19	2.6
20	2.6

6. Make a line graph for the total rainfall in Lake Zurich, Switzerland
7. In which 1-day time period did it rain the most?
8. Is the rate of change from day 16 to day 19 positive, negative, or zero?
9. What is the rate of change from day 19 to day 20?
10. What was the average rainfall per day for the first 20 days in September?
11. Which is steeper, the segment joining (3, .0) and (4, .5) or the segment joining (9, .7) and (10, 1.1)?
12. Between which days was there no change in rainfall?

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“What if They Say???” Possible Responses

Adapted, with permission, from Chapter 5 of Hard Conversations Unpacked: The Whos, the Whens, and the What-ifs by Jennifer Abrams. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2016.

“And if you can say nothing else, say, “Ouch.” My colleague, Letitia Burton, always said, “Ouch” when she felt triggered or hurt or angry and didn’t have the next word ‘at the ready.’ “Ouch” truly says so much in so little space, allows for a pause in the conversation, doesn’t let someone off the hook, and helps you to feel like you did speak up.”

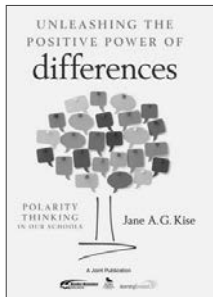
Few of us can generate perfect responses in the moment to hurtful comments, attacks, displays of emotion, or blatant biases or misinformation. Consider mastering some “controlled confrontation” responses, as they are called by Mark Goulston, author of a Harvard Business Review blog, “Don’t get Defensive: Communication Tips for the Vigilant.” What would you say in these situations?

- When you are intimidated by someone shouting, name-calling, swearing, threatening
- When someone attacks your personality or identity instead of trying to solve the problem
- When someone brings something up that is valid, but a completely different topic
- When someone refuses to listen and acts as if this issue isn’t worth talking about
- When someone says, “They always make us...” (“they” might be school leadership, parents, government, etc.)
- When someone says, “They don’t give us enough time”
- When someone has really triggered you
- When someone says, “You have it out for me. You want me to fail!”
- When someone says, “You know I have a point! I am right.”
- When someone makes a racist, sexist or homophobic comment

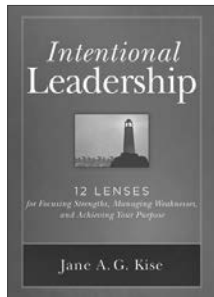
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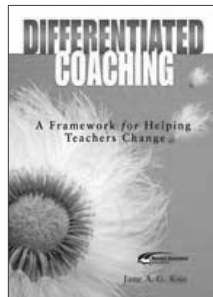
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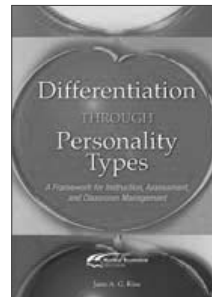
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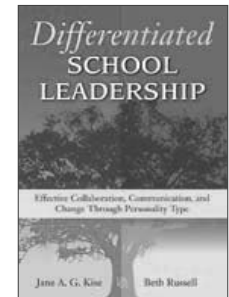
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