

Coaching Sentence Stems

Transformational Coaching Stems

Here are some important considerations regarding coaching sentence stems:

- **The categories are fluid.** A clarifying question can also be a question that coaches a way of being, and it can be a cathartic question.
- **How you classify the question has a lot to do with the coach's intention when using it.** That means that you can use these questions for different purposes. So don't get stuck on how sentence stems are classified.
- **You must make these questions sound like you**—you have permission to modify them (in fact you probably should) so that they feel authentic. It's unsettling when someone sounds like they're reciting a script in a coaching conversation, so modify.
- **Your tone of voice, pitch, pace, volume, and nonverbal communication will be just as important in how your question is received as the words that you say.**

All-Purpose Questions

<i>Active Listening Stems</i>	<i>Clarifying Stems</i>
• So... • In other words... • What I'm hearing, then... Is that correct? • What I hear you saying is... Am I missing anything? • I'm hearing many things... • As I listen to you, I'm hearing... Is there anything else you feel I should know? • I'm curious to hear more about... • What would be most useful for us to talk about right now?	• Let me see if I understand... • I'd be interested in hearing more about... • It would help me understand if you'd give me an example of... • So, are you saying/suggesting...? • Tell me what you mean when you... • Tell me how that idea is like (or different from)... • To what extent is...? • I'm curious to know more about... • I'm intrigued by... • I'm interested in... • I wonder...

* The labels for these categories—cathartic, catalytic, supportive, informative, prescriptive, and confrontational—are from the work of John Heron.



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Facilitative Coaching Stems

Cathartic Stems	Catalytic Stems	Supportive Stems
- I'm noticing that you're experiencing some feelings. Would it be OK to explore those for a few minutes? - What's coming up for you right now? Would you like to talk about your feelings? - Wow. I imagine I'd have strong emotions. What are you feeling?	- Tell me about a previous time when you... How did you deal with that? - I hear you're really struggling with... How do you intend to start? - It sounds like you're unsatisfied with... What would you do differently next time? - You've just talked about five different things you want to work on this week. The last thing you mentioned is... How important is this to you? - How do you want your students (or a particular student) to remember you? - How do you want to remember this time or situation in fifteen years?	- I noticed how when you...the students really... (To identify something that worked and why it worked) - It sounds like you have a number of ideas to try out! It'll be exciting to see which works best for you! - What did you do to make the lesson so successful? - I'm interested in learning (or hearing) more about... - Your commitment is really inspiring to me. - It sounds like you handled that in a very confident way. - You did a great job when you... - I'm confident that you'll be successful.

Directive Coaching Stems

Informative Stems	Prescriptive Stems	Confrontational (Interrupting) Stems
- There's a useful book on that topic by... - An effective strategy to teach __ is... - You can contact __ for that resource... __ is very effective at teaching that skill; maybe you could observe him.	- I would like you to discuss this issue with your supervisor. - You need to know that the school's policy is... - Have you talked to __ about that yet? Last week you said you planned on doing so. - Would it be ok if I share some advice that I think might help you? You're welcome to take it or leave it, of course. - I'd like to suggest...	- Would you be willing to explore your reasoning (or assumptions) about this? - I'd like to ask you about... Is that okay? - What's another way you might...? - What would it look like if...? Is there any other way to see this situation? - What do you think would happen if...? - What sort of an effect do you think... would have? - I'm noticing (some aspect of your behavior)...What do you think is going on? - What criteria do you use to...? - Who do you want to be in this situation? - How do you want others to see you in this situation?



Coaching Sentence Stems

General Coaching Sentence Stems

<i>Active Listening Stems</i>	<i>Nonjudgmental Responses</i>
• So... • In other words... • What I'm hearing, then... Is that correct? • What I hear you saying is... Am I missing anything? • I'm hearing many things... • As I listen to you, I'm hearing... Is there anything else you feel I should know?	• I noticed how when you...the students really... (to identify something that worked and why it worked) • I'm interested in learning (or hearing) more about... • I'd love to hear more about... • Thank you for sharing your thoughts. Can you tell me more about...?
<i>Clarifying Stems</i>	<i>Probing Stems</i>
• Let me see if I understand... • I'd be interested in hearing more about... • It would help me understand if you'd give me an example of... • So, are you saying/suggesting...? • Tell me what you mean when you... • Tell me how that idea is like (or different from)... • To what extent is...? • I'm curious to know more about... • I'm intrigued by... • I'm interested in... • I wonder...	• What's another way you might...? • What would it look like if...? • What do you think would happen if...? • How was...different from (or similar to)... • What's another way you might...? • What sort of an impact do you think...? • What criteria do you use to...? • When have you done something like...before? • What do you think...? • How did you decide...(come to that conclusion)? • I'm curious to know more about... • I'm intrigued by... • I'm interested in... • I wonder...

Survival Phrases

1. Tell me more about... or I'm curious about...
2. What would be most useful for us to talk about right now?
3. So what I'm hearing you say is...Did I get that right? It sounds like...Is there anything else you want to add?
4. What do you hear yourself saying?
5. Is there a question that you can think of, that I could ask you right now, that would be helpful?



Coaching Sentence Stems

More Coaching Sentence Stems*

FACILITATIVE	DIRECTIVE
<i>Cathartic Stems</i>	<i>Informative Stems</i>
- I'm noticing that you're experiencing some feelings. Would it be OK to explore those for a few minutes? - What's coming up for you right now? Would you like to talk about your feelings? - Wow. I imagine I'd have strong emotions. What are you feeling?	- There's a useful book on that topic by... - An effective strategy to teach __ is... - You can contact __ for that resource... __ is very effective at teaching that skill; maybe you could observe him.
<i>Catalytic Stems</i>	<i>Prescriptive Stems</i>
- Tell me about a previous time when you... How did you deal with that? - I hear you're really struggling with... How do you intend to start? - It sounds like you're unsatisfied with... What would you do differently next time? - You've just talked about five different things you want to work on this week. The last thing you mentioned is... How important is this to you? - How do you want your students (or a particular student) to remember you? - How do you want to remember this time or situation in fifteen years?	- I would like you to discuss this issue with your supervisor. - You need to know that the school's policy is... - Have you talked to __ about that yet? Last week you said you planned on doing so. - Would it be ok if I share some advice that I think might help you? You're welcome to take it or leave it, of course. - I'd like to suggest...
<i>Supportive Stems</i>	<i>Confrontational (Interrupting) Stems</i>
- I noticed how when you...the students really... (To identify something that worked and why it worked) - It sounds like you have a number of ideas to try out! It'll be exciting to see which works best for you! - What did you do to make the lesson so successful? - I'm interested in learning (or hearing) more about... - Your commitment is really inspiring to me. - It sounds like you handled that in a very confident way. - You did a great job when you... - I'm confident that you'll be successful.	- Would you be willing to explore your reasoning (or assumptions) about this? - I'd like to ask you about... Is that okay? - What's another way you might...? - What would it look like if...? Is there any other way to see this situation? - What do you think would happen if...? - What sort of an effect do you think...would have? - I'm noticing (some aspect of your behavior)...What do you think is going on? - What criteria do you use to...? - Who do you want to be in this situation? - How do you want others to see you in this situation?

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