

Opportunities Protocol Number 2 (Instruction)

The purpose of this conversation is to gain a deeper understanding of how we do our best work as teachers in supporting students as thinkers and learners. With this understanding and heightened awareness, we can more consciously design instruction that supports the development of students' thinking.

1. Individual writing (8 minutes)

Write about a time you felt you very were successful in creating an opportunity that really pushed your students to think and helped them develop the dispositions of thinking you value and are trying to cultivate in your classroom. This should be a time where you felt, "yeah students are really engaged and thinking. This is the kind of learning behavior I really want to see more of in my classroom." Describe that time. Use the following *guiding questions* to help you fully describe your efforts:

- What was it that you did?
- Why were you doing it? What was your motivation for the lesson/activity?
- What was your preparation and planning like?
- Were you consciously aware of the kinds of thinking you wanted your students to do?
- Was this lesson hard? Risky? Safe? (for you and/or your students?)
- How did you support and push students' thinking in the moment?
- How did you know your lesson was effective? What specifically did you notice that gave you this impression?
- Did you know you "nailed it" immediately or did that knowledge come to you later?

2. Small Group Sharing (30 minutes)

In a small group (usually 3), share your reflections on your successful promotion of students' thinking. As you talk, the rest of the group will be listening for "supporting conditions." Supporting conditions are those aspects of the lesson that seemed to be prime factors in making the learning situation a success. They can be the structures, scaffolds, atmosphere, purpose, standards, risk level, content, etc. that you describe as aspects of your situation that led to your success.

Listeners may ask clarifying and probing questions to gain a better sense of your "supporting conditions."

Listeners take notes and then tell you what "supporting conditions" they heard you describe. Check for accuracy and agreement. Put these conditions on butcher's paper to be shared later with the larger group.

Switch roles and repeat the sharing process (10 minutes for each person).

3. Full Group (10 minutes)

- Post butcher's paper lists of "supporting conditions."
- Review and React — What do we see? Any surprises?
- What does this mean for our work as teachers interested in supporting student thinking and understanding?
- How can we cultivate these supporting conditions so that they happen more regularly?

4. Debrief the protocol experience (5 minutes)