



Louisiana Department of Education Mentor Teacher Training

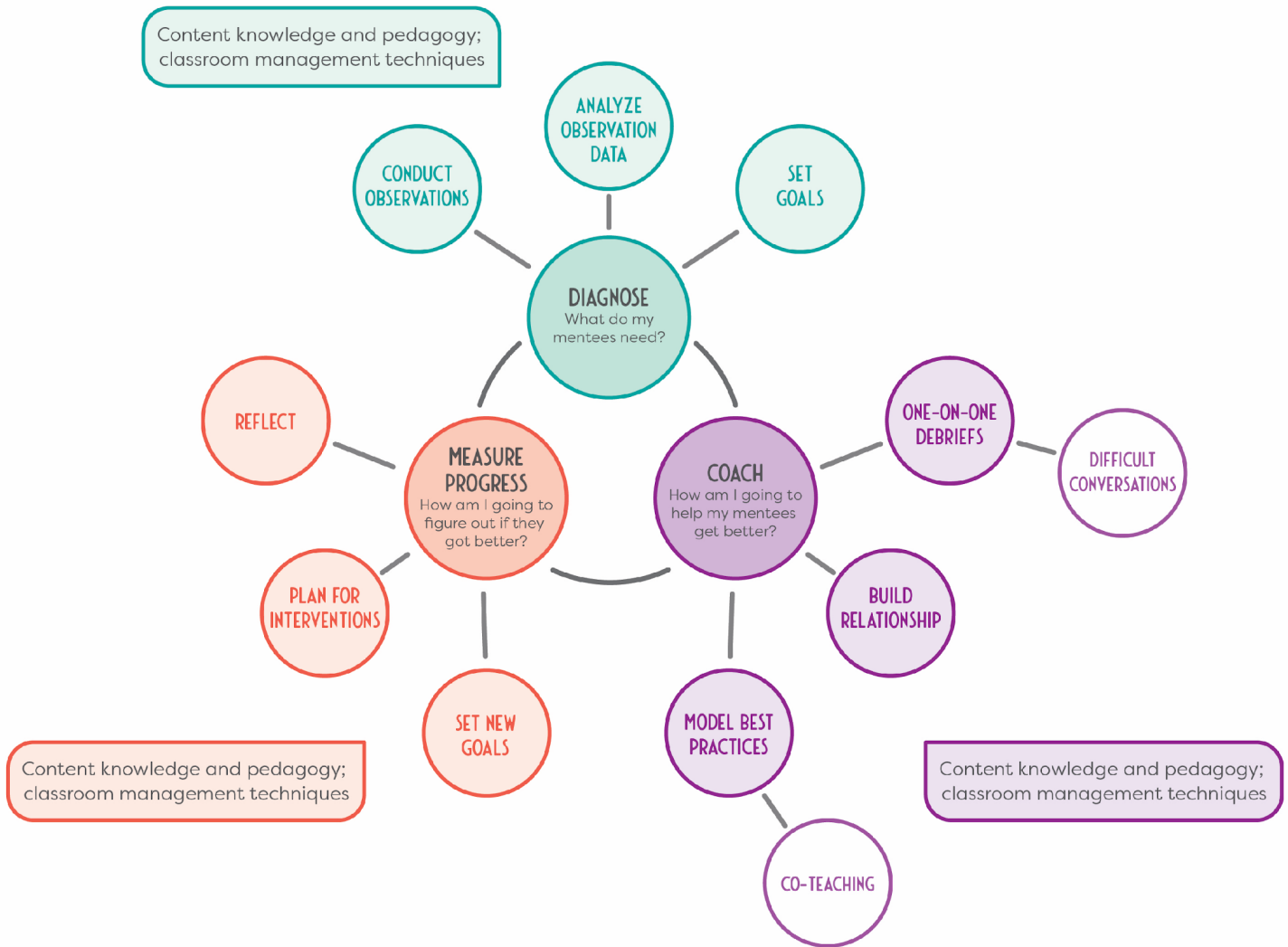
Module 7:
Text-Dependent Questions and Writing

Elementary Cohort
November 2019

Facilitated by Learning Forward



The Mentoring Cycle



Mentor Training Course Goals

Mentors will:

- Build **strong relationships** with mentees.
- **Diagnose and prioritize** mentee’s strengths and areas for growth.
- Design and implement a **mentoring support plan**.
- Assess and deepen **mentor content knowledge and content-specific pedagogy**.

Module 7 Outcomes

- Describe the role of text dependent questions in building knowledge of grade-level complex texts.
- Explain the Guidebooks approach to writing instruction, including an overview of the three types of writing called for by the standards and included in the curriculum.
- Engage mentee in reflection on practice.
- Facilitate difficult conversations using the “Opportunity Conversation” protocol.

Module 7 Agenda

Morning (8:30-11:45 a.m.)

Welcome and outcomes
The role of text-dependent questions
Writing in the Guidebooks

Afternoon (12:30-4 p.m.)

Reflection
Difficult conversations
Connection to assessments
Wrap-up

Agreements

Make the learning meaningful
Engage mentally and physically
Notice opportunities to support the learning of others
Take responsibility for your own learning
Own the outcomes
Respect the learning environment of self and others

Building on Our Learning So Far

Three big ideas standing out to me about mentoring for ELA instruction:

1.

2.

3.

Two questions I have about mentoring for ELA instruction:

1.

2.

One takeaway from our mentoring practice so far:

1.

Criteria for a Strong TDQ

- Can only be answered by reading the text
- Requires the reader to use evidence from the text to support their answer
- Is worded in a way that is accessible to all students
- Addresses important ideas, concepts, details, and structural elements in the text
- Is aligned to grade-level standards

NON-Text-Dependent	Text-Dependent
<p>In "Casey at the Bat," Casey strikes out. Describe a time when you failed at something.</p>	<p>What makes Casey's experiences at bat humorous?</p>
<p>In "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," Dr. King discusses nonviolent protest. Discuss, in writing, a time when you wanted to fight against something that you felt was unfair.</p>	<p>What can you infer from King's letter about the letter that he received?</p>
<p>In "The Gettysburg Address" Lincoln says the nation is dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Why is equality an important value to promote?</p>	<p>"The Gettysburg Address" mentions the year 1776. According to Lincoln's speech, why is this year significant to the events described in the speech?</p>
<p>Why are the questions on the left non-examples and the questions on the right strong examples of TDQs?</p>	
<p> </p>	

Compare Student Responses	
Example #1	Example #2
<p>Jupiter refuses to give humans fire because he is afraid of losing control. He says to Prometheus "...if men had fire they might become strong and wise like ourselves, and after a while they would drive us out of our kingdom....It is best for them to be poor and ignorant, so that we Mighty Ones may thrive and be happy." This quote tells us that Jupiter realizes that knowledge means power and that he wants to keep the humans "ignorant" so that they don't become more powerful than us. It also reveals a lot about Jupiter's character and motivations. He looks out only for himself and wants to maintain complete control over the kingdom.</p>	<p>Jupiter refuses to give humans fire because he tells Prometheus not to give them fire. This tells us he is in charge of Prometheus. I think he doesn't want the humans to have fire because he doesn't want them to be warm. I think he could also be worried that they could set too many fires and damage the world, like when we see fires out of control on the news and they destroy buildings and forests. I think Jupiter is smart not to give them fire and this tells us he is careful.</p>

3 Criteria for Strong Student Responses

- Responds directly to the question asked with a valid assertion drawn from the text.
- Selects evidence provided from the text that is **relevant** (evidence supports the assertion) and **sufficient** (enough evidence is given to support the assertion).
- Is able to clearly articulate a relevant and valid connection between the evidence given and the assertion.

Student Look Fors:

Why does Jupiter refuse to give humans fire?
What does this reveal about Jupiter's character?

Student Look-Fors (from Grade 8: *Flowers for Algernon* Unit, Lesson 3):

- Students should understand that Jupiter doesn't want to give humans fire because he is worried about losing control. Students should explain that Jupiter fears that humankind will gain knowledge and take over the Mighty Ones. While the humans are poor and ignorant, Jupiter and the Mighty Ones thrive and are happy. This reveals that Jupiter is worrisome and not overly confident. The Mighty Ones are also very lazy and are squandering everything. As a result, the world has turned into a terrible place for humans.
- Students can use the following quotations to support their responses:
 - "Why, if men had fire they might become strong and wise like ourselves, and after a while they would drive us out of our kingdom. Let them shiver with cold, and let them live like the beasts. It is best for them to be poor and ignorant, so that we Mighty Ones may thrive and be happy."
 - "He found them living in caves and in holes of the earth, shivering with the cold because there was no fire, dying of starvation, hunted by wild beasts and by one another--the most miserable of all living creatures."

Student Look Fors:

What motivates Prometheus to defy Jupiter?
What does this reveal about Prometheus' character?

- **Student Look-Fors (from Grade 8: *Flowers for Algernon* Unit, Lesson 3):**
 - Students should understand that Prometheus is upset that humankind is in such a bad condition. He remembers what it was like when Saturn was king of the gods, and Jupiter, the tyrant, is ruling in a way that is ruining humankind. Prometheus wants to help humans and return happiness and health to them as it was when Saturn was king. Prometheus wants to leave the world in a better condition--he wants humans to be better and wiser. Prometheus detests the laziness of the gods and that the gods are benefitting from the ignorance of humankind.
 - Students can use the following quotations to support their responses:
 - “While the Mighty Folk were spending their time in idleness, drinking nectar and eating ambrosia, he was intent upon plans for making the world wiser and better than it had ever been before.”
 - “He went out amongst men to live with them and help them; for his heart was filled with sadness when he found that they were no longer happy...”
 - “‘If they only had fire,’ said Prometheus to himself, ‘they could at least warm themselves and cook their food; and after a while they could learn to make tools and build themselves houses. Without fire, they are worse off than the beasts.’”
 - “‘Mankind shall have fire in spite of the tyrant who sits on the mountaintop,’ he said.”

What motivates Prometheus to defy Jupiter?
 What does this reveal about Prometheus' character?

Evaluate Student Responses	
Student Response	Evaluate: Does the response capture the key look fors? Does it meet the three criteria? Explain.
<p>Prometheus gives fire to the humans, even though Jupiter forbid him to do it. He did this because he felt bad for the humans, who were cold and starving and miserable. He saw that they weren't as happy as they used to be and he wanted to make their lives better by giving them fire. This tells us that Prometheus is very opposite of Jupiter in that he cares about the people and thinks of others before just thinking of himself.</p>	<p><i>Continued on next page</i></p>

Prometheus defies Jupiter because he was deeply saddened by what he saw down on Earth and wanted to make life better for the humans. When he went down to spend time with the humans he noticed "...how very poor and wretched they are...shivering with cold." We know this made him sad because in the text it says "his heart was filled with sadness when he realized they were no longer happy." He thought that fire would make their lives better because they would no longer be cold and could also cook their food. Paragraph 4 sums up Prometheus's intentions and motivations by saying, "he was intent upon plans for making the world wiser and better than it had ever been before." This tells us a lot about Prometheus's character. Prometheus was not like the other Gods (or the Mighty Folk) because instead of just spending his time enjoying the good life up in the clouds, he was more concerned with making the world a better place.

Continued on next page

<p>Prometheus defies Jupiter because in the text it says “If they only had fire, ‘they could at least warm themselves and cook their food; and after a while they could learn to make tools and build themselves houses. Without fire, they are worse off than the beasts.”</p>	
<p>Prometheus defies Jupiter because he wants to take Jupiter’s place as the king. Prometheus didn’t like the way Jupiter was ruling and thought he could do a better job ruling the Earth. The only way to take over is to defy him and to get the people to follow him instead. That is Prometheus’s motivation and it tells us that he is brave and strong like a leader, but also maybe a little bit greedy because he wants to be the ruler. And in the text it says “he went boldly to Jupiter.” And that’s why he is brave.</p>	

Capture Your Learning	
Question	Response
What is a text-dependent question?	
How do text-dependent questions and tasks support students in understanding complex texts?	
What are the criteria for a strong student response?	

Connect the Learning	
Understanding the role of strong text-dependent questions and student responses will impact my instruction by...	Understanding the role of strong text-dependent questions and student responses will impact how I support my mentee by...

Culminating Writing Task Directions

Consider how Charlie has changed from the beginning of “Flowers for Algernon.” How does the surgery improve or worsen his quality of life?

To answer these questions:

- Describe the changes in Charlie over the course of the text as a result of the surgery.
- Examine how the author’s choices (e.g., difference in Charlie’s point of view and that of the audience (*dramatic irony*) and the structure of the text as a series of journal entries) reveal Charlie’s changes.
- Evaluate whether the changes had a positive or negative impact on Charlie.
- Determine how the author’s choices impact the way the reader views the changes in Charlie.
- Locate evidence to support your claim and acknowledge evidence that supports an opposing claim.

Write an argument in which you state and logically support a claim about the impact of the surgery on Charlie’s life and distinguish your claim from opposing claims. Be sure to use proper grammar, conventions, spelling, and grade-appropriate words and phrases. Cite several pieces of relevant textual evidence, including direct quotations with parenthetical citations.

Culminating Writing Task Exemplar Student Response

Charlie Gordon is motivated and hardworking, but he isn't very smart. What Charlie lacks in smarts, he makes up for by getting along with others and being kind. Charlie is selected for an experiment to triple his intelligence which works at first. While it could be said that Charlie is better off from the surgery because he did become smart for a little bit, he didn't stay smart. In the end, Charlie doesn't benefit from the surgery because he realizes his friends make fun of him and then he ends up completely isolated and feeling incredibly lonely.

Charlie doesn't benefit from the surgery because he realizes that others have been making fun of him and taking advantage of him. For example, Charlie's friends, Joe and Frank, aren't every kind to him and they keep Charlie around to make fun of him. Charlie is not aware of how his "friends" invite him to parties to get him drunk, and then laugh at him. Also, Charlie isn't aware at first that at work, when someone makes a mistake, they all say that person "pulled a Charlie Gordon." As Charlie gets even smarter, he realizes what Joe, Frank, and his other friends at work are doing. When Charlie realizes this, he says "Now I know what it means when they say 'pull a Charlie Gordon.' I'm ashamed." (April 20). Having more intelligence doesn't make Charlie better. It makes him feel embarrassed.

Charlie also doesn't benefit from the surgery because he ends up isolated and lonely. Charlie wants to be smart more than anything, but it doesn't end up being good for him. As he gets smarter, Charlie learns that being smart isolates him from his friends and loved ones. Charlie says, "This intelligence has driven a wedge between me and all the people I once knew and loved" (April 30). Once Charlie becomes intelligent, people like Ms. Kinnian cannot understand him or follow his logic because it is so advanced. When he loses his intelligence, Charlie admits, "I don't want Miss Kinnian to feel sorry for me. Every body feels sorry at the factory and I don't want that eather so I am going someplace where nobody knows that Charlie Gordon was once a genius and now he can't even read a book or rite good." (July 28). Charlie decides to leave New York because he doesn't want people to feel sorry for him. He ends the short story in an even worse situation than he began. Whereas he may not have been that smart at the beginning of the story, at least he had friends and a home. As a result of the surgery, Charlie is isolated from his friends, his teacher, and his home.

Charlie changes throughout the story. He goes from being not very smart to incredibly intelligent to not very smart again. He learns lots of information about people and the world when he is smart, but he doesn't keep any of it. While Charlie does become smart at first like he wants, it doesn't benefit him in the end because he loses his intelligence, his friends, and his home.

Stop and Jot: What are the five “stages” of the traditional writing process?

The Guidebooks Approach to Writing Instruction	
What do you notice about the Guidebooks Writing Process? What’s different?	Why is this important?

Examine The Writing Process in the Guidebooks

Unit	Culminating Writing Task
Flowers for Algernon	Consider how Charlie has changed from the beginning of “Flowers for Algernon.” How does the surgery improve or worsen his quality of life? Write an argument in which you state and logically support a claim about the impact of the surgery on Charlie’s life and distinguish your claim from opposing claims. Be sure to use proper grammar, conventions, spelling, and grade-appropriate words and phrases. Cite several pieces of relevant textual evidence, including direct quotations with parenthetical citations.
Grade	
8	

The Writing Process	
<p>Step 1: Building Understanding</p> <p>Students engage in reading, writing and discussing to build their knowledge on the text and/or topic that is central to the writing task. How do the Guidebooks lessons support students in building their understanding before this Culminating Writing Task?</p>	
1. Look back at the exemplar for this task. What key content understanding about the text will students need to know in order to write a piece like this?	
2. Which sections of lessons in the unit are devoted to building knowledge and understanding of content prior to the Culminating Writing Task?	
3. What texts will students use in these sections? How will this text set build knowledge for the Culminating Writing Task?	

Step	Lesson #	What are students doing at each stage of the writing process? What do you notice about each lesson/stage of writing?
<p>2: Brainstorming <i>Students gather their ideas about how they might respond to the specific task.</i></p>	28	
<p>3: Drafting <i>Students decide on an approach to the task, and write a first draft. This may be done in one sitting, or over several days.</i></p>	29	
<p>4: Revising <i>Students get feedback on their ideas (from peers, teacher, exemplar, or themselves). They then write another draft based on that feedback.</i></p>	30–31	
<p>5: Editing <i>Using a second draft (after revision), students work with the language, grammar, and mechanics aspect of the piece. Is the punctuation correct? How about the spelling? Does the sentence structure work?</i></p>	32	
<p>6: Publishing <i>Students write a final draft, which may “go public.” It might be shared in its final form with an audience, or it might be displayed in some way.</i></p>	32	

What did you notice about how each of these stages lives in the Guidebooks?

What surprised you?

What questions do you have?

Key Takeaways:

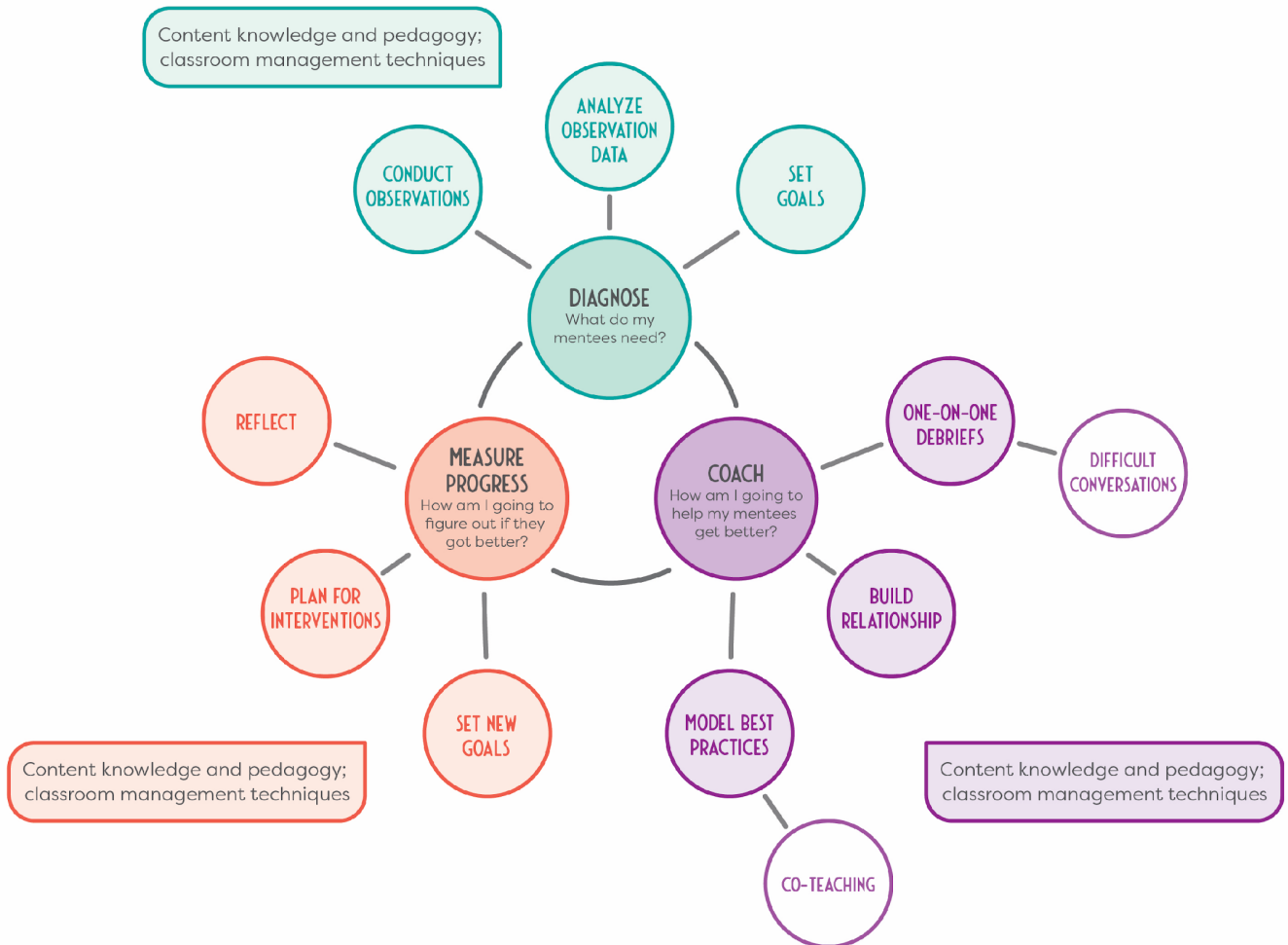
The Guidebooks writing process supports students in learning how to express their understanding of a text through writing.

Having a strong understanding of the role of text dependent questions and writing instruction increases the mentor's ability to coach their mentee's ELA instruction.

Capture Your Learning	
Question	Response
<p>A colleague who has heard the term “writing process” – but is new to the Louisiana Guidebooks – wants to know what the “writing process” means in the Guidebooks.</p> <p>Briefly describe The Writing Process in the Guidebooks and explain how this is different from the traditional “writing process.”</p>	

Connect the Learning	
How will you apply your understanding of the Writing Process in Guidebooks to your role as a teacher?	How will you apply your understanding of the Writing Process in Guidebooks to your role as a mentor?

The Mentoring Cycle



Reflect

- Facilitate reflective conversation
- Engage in self-reflection
- Celebrate wins and determine areas of growth

Three Levels of Text Protocol

1. Get together in a group of three (2 minutes)
2. Assign one person to be the timekeeper (1 minute)
3. Independently read the pieces on reflection and identify several passages that stand out to you because they have implications for your mentor practice (10 minutes)
4. One person shares the following three levels of thought about the text (3 minutes)
 - a. LEVEL 1: Read aloud a passage you have selected
 - b. LEVEL 2: Say what you think about the passage (interpretation, connection to past experiences, etc.)
 - c. LEVEL 3: Say what you see as the implications for your work
5. The group responds to what has been said (2 minutes)
6. Repeat steps 4 and 5 for the remaining group members, not duplicating a passage that has already been shared (10 minutes)
7. Summarize the implications for your work (2 minutes)

Reflecting on Work Improves Job Performance

Published May 5, 2014 by Harvard Business School. Retrieved from HBS website at: <https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/reflecting-on-work-improves-job-performance>

by Carmen Nobel

New research by Francesca Gino, Gary Pisano, and colleagues shows that taking time to reflect on our work improves job performance in the long run.

Many of us are familiar with the gentle punishment known as "time-out," in which misbehaving children must sit quietly for a few minutes, calm down, and reflect on their actions.

New research suggests that grown-ups ought to take routine time-outs of their own, not as a punishment, but in order to improve their job performance.

In the working paper [Learning by Thinking: How Reflection Aids Performance](#), the authors show how reflecting on what we've done teaches us to do it more effectively the next time around.

"Now more than ever we seem to be living lives where we're busy and overworked, and our research shows that if we'd take some time out for reflection, we might be better off," says Harvard Business School Professor [Francesca Gino](#), who cowrote the paper with [Gary Pisano](#), the Harry E. Figgie Professor of Business Administration at HBS; Giada Di Stefano, an assistant professor at HEC Paris; and Bradley Staats, an associate professor at the University of North Carolina's Kenan-Flagler Business School.

The research team conducted a series of three studies based on the dual-process theory of thought, which maintains that people think and learn using two distinct types of processes. Type 1 processes are heuristic—automatically learning by doing, such that the more people do something, the better they know how to do it. Type 2 processes, on the other hand, are consciously reflective, and are often associated with decision making.

Essentially, the researchers hypothesized that learning by doing would be more effective if deliberately coupled with learning by thinking. They also hypothesized that sharing information with others would improve the learning process.

Reflection, Sharing, And Self-efficacy

For the first study, the team recruited 202 adults for an online experiment in which they completed a series of brain teasers based on a "[sum to ten](#)" game. A round of problem solving included five puzzles, and participants earned a dollar for each puzzle they solved in 20 seconds or less.

After recording the results of the first problem-solving round, the researchers divided participants randomly into one of three conditions: control, reflection, and sharing.

In the control condition, participants simply completed another round of brain teasers.

In the reflection condition, participants took a few minutes to reflect on their first round of brain teasers, writing detailed notes about particular strategies they employed. Then they, too, completed a second round of puzzles.

In the sharing condition, participants received the same instructions as those in the reflection group, but with an additional message informing them that their notes would be shared with future participants.

Results showed that the reflection and sharing group performed an average of 18 percent better on the second round of brain teasers than the control group. However, there was no significant performance difference between the reflection and the sharing group. "In this case sharing on top of reflection doesn't seem to have a beneficial effect," Gino says. "But my sense was that if the sharing involved participants actually talking to each other, an effect might exist."

Next, the researchers recruited 178 university students to participate in the same experiment as the first study, but with two key differences: One, they were not paid based on their performance; rather, they all received a flat fee. Two, before starting the second round of brain teasers, they were asked to indicate the extent to which they felt "capable, competent, able to make good judgments, and able to solve difficult problems if they tried hard enough."

As in the first study, those in the sharing and reflection conditions performed better than those in the control group. Those who had reflected on their problem solving reportedly felt more competent and effective than those in the control group.

"When we stop, reflect, and think about learning, we feel a greater sense of self-efficacy," Gino says. "We're more motivated and we perform better afterwards."

A Field Experiment

The final study tested the hypotheses in the real-world setting of Wipro, a business-process outsourcing company based in Bangalore, India. The experiment was conducted at a tech support call center.

The researchers studied several groups of employees in their initial weeks of training for a particular customer account. As with the previous experiments, each group was assigned to one of three conditions: control, reflection, and sharing. Each group went through the same technical training, with a couple of key differences.

In the reflection group, on the sixth through the 16th days of training, workers spent the last 15 minutes of each day writing and reflecting on the lessons they had learned that day. Participants in the sharing group did the same, but spent an additional five minutes explaining their notes to a fellow trainee. Those in the control condition just kept working at the end of the day, but did not receive additional training.

Over the course of one month, workers in both the reflection and sharing condition performed significantly better than those in the control group. On average, the reflection group increased its performance on the final training test by 22.8 percent than did the control group. The sharing group performed 25 percent better on the test than the control group, about the same increase as the reflection group.

This was in spite of the fact that the control group had been working 15 minutes longer per day than the other groups, who had spent that time reflecting and sharing instead.

Gino hopes that the research will provide food for thought to overworked managers and employees alike.

"I don't see a lot of organizations that actually encourage employees to reflect—or give them time to do it," Gino says. "When we fall behind even though we're working hard, our response is often just to work harder. But in terms of working smarter, our research suggests that we should take time for reflection."

Win your life by harnessing The Power Of Reflection

Published January 15, 2017 by Thrive Global/Medium. Retrieved from:

<https://medium.com/thrive-global/why-you-should-harness-the-power-of-reflection-4a8f6d7710d4>

By Rybo Chen

We are all learners, at any and every stage and role in life. We need to learn as students, learn as parents, learn as employees, learn as managers. The list goes on forever. One important thing is that reflection is the most important part of the learning process, and whatever is not reflected is usually not learned and retained. The only way for us to grow and improve is to take a good look at what's working and what's not for us.

"We do not learn from experience, we learn from reflecting on experience." —
John Dewey

At least once a day, and more often several times a day, I reflect and journal on my day, on my life, on what I've been doing right, and what isn't working. I reflect on every aspect of my life, and from this habit of reflection, I am able to continuously improve. Oftentimes, I learn much more about myself unexpectedly. For example, I was reflecting on my fitness habits, and I realized some of my work was affecting my fitness habits, I think reflected on my work as well. I was able to come up with a change than affected both of my fitness and work aspects positively.

Why should we reflect?

Great question to ask. We may all have different answers because every one of us is so unique. However, I believe the fundamental reason is because deep reflections really empowers us to gain self-awareness and to improve and become better humans.

Benefits of reflection

1. It helps you learn from your mistakes.

We are on route to repeat our mistakes and failures, if we don't reflect on our mistakes and failures. We can be smarter and choose to reflect on those mistakes and failures, figure out what went wrong, see how we can prevent them in the future. Mistakes and failures are valuable learning tools because we can use them as stepping stones to get better, instead of something to feel embarrassed or upset about. Reflection is an important way to do that.

2. It gives you great ideas.

Every blog post so far are from my reflections. I reflect on things that I am currently doing or that are going on in my life, and share my learnings and reflections in the

articles I write. If I reflect on something that works well for me, I think about the “why” behind it and share that too. Same goes with my failures and mistakes. I look forward to growing together with my readers.

3. It helps you help others.

I realized by reflecting upon myself, I have gained a lot of insights which I find it may be a valuable learning experience for others as well. I can share what I’ve learned to help others going through the same things. I began the year with the hope that some of the things I’ve learned in the past couple years can help others. Only two weeks into my blogging career, I have people telling me how little tips, like how to wake up early, or how to start the exercise habit, have changed their lives. It’s an amazing feeling. I’m simply humbled that I could help people or/and inspire them.

4. It makes you happier.

When we reflect on the things we did right, the things and relationships that we have, it allows us to celebrate on the little things and little successes in life. It allows us to realize how much we’ve done right, the good things we’ve done in our lives and empower us to do even more. Without reflection, it’s too easy to forget these things, and focus instead on our failures.

5. It gives you perspective.

Oftentimes we are caught up in the troubles in our busy daily lives. A mistake, a failure, a stressful project or anything similar can seem like it means all the world. It can be extremely overwhelming. However, if we take a minute to step back, and reflect on these problems, and how in the grand scheme of things they don’t mean all that much, it can calm us down and lower our stress levels. We gain perspective, and empower us to focus on what’s more important to us.

6. It helps you understand yourself better

When we reflect, we are having conversations with ourselves. Those self conversations are a great way to understand ourselves better. We can gain more insights of ourselves to further learn about our strengths, weaknesses, fears, and might even discover something unexpected.

How to do it?

Here comes the fun part. How should we actually reflect? I may have a different method and approach from you, and I’d love to share mine as a guideline. You are more than welcome to follow and/or even build your own reflection method.

I usually set aside some time at night after my bedtime reading, and think over the events that happened that day, think about the people I met that day and the

interactions I had with them. I would ask myself one simple question and journal down my answers. “If I were to re-live today again, what 3 things would I change to make today better?” and from that question I may continue onto deeper reflective questions as follows.

1. Did I live up to my core values and personal mission today?
2. Did I act as a person others can respect today?
3. Did I respect my body the way I should today?
4. Did I make a positive impact on the world today?
5. Did I perform at my best today?
6. Did I have negative emotions today? Why?
7. Did I use my time wisely today?

Furthermore, think about the reasons behind the answers to the above questions to explore and gain more insights about yourself. When you’re able to learn more and more about yourself, you have harnessed the power of reflection!

Mentee Self-Reflection

What is a specific skill or area that your mentor has helped you improve in? How do you know that you have improved in this skill or area?

Which supports were most critical in meeting your needs as a new or resident teacher?

What are your goals to continue to improve in this area?

Plan: Engage Your Mentee in Reflection

Independent plan: When and how will you engage your mentee in self-reflection?

Table discussion: Share your plan. How will engaging in self-reflection at the end of a coaching cycle help you to be a more effective mentor to your mentee?

Reflect Key Takeaway:

Engaging in self-reflection is an effective strategy for consolidating, understanding, and celebrating learning and for determining where to focus learning next.

Difficult/Opportunity Conversations

- See difficult conversations as important opportunities
- Use the “Opportunity Conversation” protocol to structure difficult conversations
- Plan for engaging in Opportunity Conversations with your mentee

Guiding questions:

1. What is a difficult/opportunity conversation?
2. What kinds of topics might be difficult for mentors to talk about with mentees?
3. How do mentors prepare for a difficult/opportunity conversation?
4. What process can mentors use to structure difficult/opportunity conversations?
5. How are my views about difficult /opportunity conversations changing as I learn more about how to engage in them?

Difficult Opportunity conversations are . . .

those you’d rather not have because they are uncomfortable.

Name some example topics related to mentoring

What difficult conversations have you experienced so far as a mentor?	What other kinds of topics might be difficult for mentors to talk about with mentees?

Why bother?

Difficult conversations are opportunities for:

1. Speaking your truth contributes to an environment of trust
2. Expressing your concerns reduces your level of stress
3. Saying what’s on your mind increases your sense of self-efficacy
4. Addressing issues when they arise builds and maintains a productive, trusting relationship
5. Having these conversations models for mentees
6. Tackling issues simply handles them instead of letting them linger and get more difficult to address

Reflect

How are difficult conversations an opportunity to tackle important issues, build self-efficacy, and maintain trust?

What does this mean to you as a mentor?

“Opportunity” Conversation Protocol 1

Use this protocol when there is a specific, uncomfortable, yet necessary issue to address between individuals.

Step	Sketch a doodle or symbol to help you remember what happens in this step
1. Prepare mentally. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reframe your thinking. b. Consider what your interests are. c. Consider the other person’s interests. 	
2. Identify the issue or situation. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Name the issue. b. Consider if it is your issue alone or if you both share responsibility. c. Clarify if addressing it is likely to alleviate or prevent future issues. 	
3. Provide a specific example that exemplifies what you think is necessary to change. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Give one specific example. b. State it neutrally without interpretation, assumptions, or judgment. 	
4. Describe your feelings about the issue. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Name your response. b. Own that it is yours. 	
5. Clarify what is at stake. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. State the potential immediate and long-term consequences. b. State them neutrally and clearly. 	
6. Identify your contribution to this situation. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Own responsibility for contributing to the situation. b. Name how you contributed. 	

<p>7. Indicate your desire to resolve the issue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Be truthful. b. Name what is at stake for you if the situation is not resolved. 	
<p>8. Invite the other person to respond.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Listen fully and without interruption. b. Paraphrase to demonstrate understanding. c. Probe if necessary, although silence, acceptance, and acknowledgement may be best. 	
<p>9. Plan next actions together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Be clear on the criteria for moving forward. b. Generate possible next actions together. c. Choose the action(s) that most closely meet the criteria. d. Seek agreement and commitment to implement the action(s), even if temporarily. 	
<p>10. Set a time to revisit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Come back to review how things are going. b. Listen and assess viability of continuing or if new agreements must be reached. 	

Transcript of the Protocol in Action

This mentor and mentee have been working together around teaching writing. They've made plans several times for the mentor to come into the classroom during lessons that focus on the students' writing skills, but each time the mentor has visited the mentee's classroom, the mentee hasn't followed through on the plan and has skipped over and rushed past those parts of the lessons. The mentor wants to figure out why the mentee is doing this. The mentor feels that this is important because she is worried the students' writing skills are going to stagnate. She also wants the mentee to feel like they are partners - not someone who the mentee should just say "yes, yes" to and then ignore. The mentor thinks that maybe the mentee is just telling her what she thinks she wants to hear, but is ready to hear her point of view.

Mentor Hi, _____. Thanks for meeting up with me...I was hoping we could talk some more about what it looks like to teach writing skills in the Guidebooks lessons. Does now still work to talk?

Mentee Yeah, I've got about 20 minutes.

Mentor Got it. So last Wednesday I popped by your classroom like we had planned, and while you focused on the knowledge and understanding the students needed, you skipped over the section of the lesson that focused on writing skills and said you didn't "have time".

I was disappointed that you skipped this part of the lesson because we had talked about that part of the lesson and you said you were ready to teach it.

I take some responsibility because we haven't done any coaching around writing skills instruction. I made an assumption that you were ready to teach those parts of the lessons, and I should have asked if you wanted me to model or co-teach it with you.

The impact of you skipping those parts of the lessons is that your students' writing will stagnate. They may have the knowledge and understanding of the texts, but won't have the skills to express this knowledge and understanding.

I want you to feel like you can let me know that you're not ready or comfortable teaching something when I ask you if you are or when I assume that you are. Being your mentor is important to me and I'd like to make sure I'm supporting you in all the areas you want and need support.

So...I just talked a lot. I really want to hear your perspective on this.

Mentee Wow, yeah, the writing parts of the lessons are uncomfortable for me. I don't think you've noticed this, but even though I enjoy reading, I'm not a strong writer - this was always hard for me in school and I don't find it fun to teach.

Mentor Thank you so much for letting me know this about you. It sounds like writing doesn't come easy to you, and so teaching writing isn't coming easy for you either.

Mentee Yeah, I think so. And then you kept asking me, "You've got that part, right?" and I felt like I had to say yes.

Mentor I am so sorry about that - that is definitely my responsibility to not make assumptions.

Mentee Thanks, yeah. So then, it was kind of easy, you know, to let the first part of the lesson take too long and then I don't have time to teach writing.

Mentor So would you like to work on writing skills together?

Mentee If this is something specific that you can focus on with me, that might help. You mentioned modeling or co-teaching. Could you come model a lesson for me and then maybe if we can co-plan and then co-teach the next few writing skills sections that are coming up, that will help me start to build my comfort.

Mentor That sounds great. Let's do that and after we do that for the next three lessons, let's revisit and see how you're feeling.

Take Notes on the Protocol in Action

What do you notice about each step?

What do you want to keep in mind for when you try the protocol?

Step	Notes
1. Prepare mentally.	
2. Identify the issue or situation.	
3. Provide a specific example that exemplifies what you think is necessary to change.	
4. Describe your feelings about the issue.	
5. Clarify what is at stake.	
6. Identify your contribution to this situation.	
7. Indicate your desire to resolve the issue.	
8. Invite the other person to respond.	
9. Plan next actions together.	
10. Set a time to revisit.	

“Opportunity” Conversation Practice

Use the protocol to practice having an opportunity conversation with the first scenario, with one partner playing the mentor, and one partner playing the mentee. Then switch roles for the second scenario.

Scenario 1:

Your mentee hasn't been wanting to show you their students' writing pieces. You've wanted to help him analyze his students' writing, but he keeps making excuses not to show you, and it's starting to get awkward. You're tempted to just stop asking and avoid the topic of writing all together.

Scenario 2:

You are starting to feel like your mentee sees you as unhelpful to him. When you offered suggestions during your last debrief conversation that were exactly what you would do in your classroom, the mentee gave a lot of reasons why the suggestions wouldn't work in his classroom, which made you feel disrespected as a professional. You don't understand why he's not valuing your experience and agreeing with your teaching practices.

Addressing a Conflicting/Difficult Issue Protocol 2

Use this open-ended protocol with an individual or within a team when there are differences in perspectives about, proposed actions for, approaches to, etc. a situation that requires cooperation. It is less structured and leaves the results wide open to the individuals or team to generate. It requires all parties to engage actively in finding an appropriate resolution.

1. What are the core issues about which we have differing views?	
2. How will the final decision to resolve our differences be made?	
3. On a continuum representing student needs at one end and teacher needs at the other, where do our current practices fit?	
4. What assumptions and information are currently influencing our thinking?	
5. What additional information do we need?	
6. What does each of us need in order to feel that our issues have been acknowledged and addressed?	
7. How is our conversation about these issues honoring our feelings, as well as our substantive needs?	

Your Turn: Plan an “Opportunity” Conversation

You will now have a chance to practice your own personal opportunity conversation. Choose an authentic situation so your practice can be beneficial. It might be something you anticipate coming up soon. It might even be a conversation that you have been postponing. You will share your conversation plan with a partner so it is best to choose a situation that is not too personal or confidential. Plan what you would say.

Step	Notes
1. Prepare mentally.	
2. Identify the issue or situation.	
3. Provide a specific example that exemplifies what you think is necessary to change.	
4. Describe your feelings about the issue.	
5. Clarify what is at stake.	
6. Identify your contribution to this situation.	
7. Indicate your desire to resolve the issue.	
8. Invite the other person to respond.	
9. Plan next actions together.	
10. Set a time to revisit.	

Reflection on “Opportunity” Conversations

How are my views about difficult/opportunity conversations changing as I learn more about how to engage in them?

Difficult Conversations: Key Takeaway

The “Opportunity Conversation” protocol is an effective method for facilitating difficult conversations with a mentee.

Please complete the Module 6 & 7 Survey

<http://tinyurl.com/y5kyoz9c>