



Academic Advisement

Whole Group Academic Conferencing

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDE



NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR

This professional development session will provide participants with an opportunity to explore how group academic conferencing is an effective way to influence all students to reflect on their academic performance. In this session, participants will study the role of reflection and its relationship to student learning and achievement. A Whole Group Academic Conferencing model can be a way to maximize student academic support. This type of academic support takes very little teacher preparation time and allows students the opportunity to practice and develop critical skills, including self-monitoring and problem solving. In addition, an academic culture is established when students regularly engage in conversations around academics with a cohort of peers. Over time, this intentional culture helps support students to feel more empowered and connected to school; research shows this directly impacts student engagement (NRCIM, 2004).

Please refer to the **Facilitation Tips and Strategies** handout for detailed instructions on any underlined strategies.



MEET AND GREET

1. Stand at the door and welcome participants as they arrive.



FACILITATOR PREP LIST

- Room Setup: circle, oval, or horseshoe
- Agenda, session goals, and essential question posted
- Academic Advisement PowerPoint (2.2)
- Why Reflect? graphic organizers
- Reflection Research handouts
- Chart paper and markers
- Whole Group Academic Conferencing Protocol
- Academic Reflection Form sample
- DVD 2: Chapter 2
- Practicing Reflective Thinking advisory session plans (optional)



AGENDA

1. Gathering
2. Why Reflect? Exploring the Research
3. Video: Whole Group Academic Conferencing
4. Advisory Session: Practicing Reflective Thinking (Optional)
5. Closing



FRAMING THE SESSION (2 MIN)

1. Welcome and introduction: Today we will look at ways to support our students toward becoming more self-directed and self-monitoring through Whole Group Academic Conferencing.
2. Preview Agenda and review Posted Session Goals.
 - **Goal 1:** Explore how reflection is essential to learning
 - **Goal 2:** Examine practices and protocols for Whole Group Academic Conferencing

Essential Question: How do we create an academic culture where students consistently reflect on their academic performance leading to increased student self-direction and self-monitoring?



GATHERING: Fist-to-Five (10 MIN)

1. Explain to participants that you will be starting the session with a silent Gathering that can be used with their advisory groups.
2. Say: The gathering is called Fist-to-Five and it offers a protocol for silently and quickly responding to a question or for giving feedback on a statement. When individuals want to indicate a strong positive or high response, or strong agreement to the statement, they hold out their hands with their five fingers spread. In contrast, holding out a fist indicates a strong negative or low response, or strong disagreement to the statement. All the numbers/fingers in between offer a range for responding. With adolescents, it is always important to point out that they need to use the thumb for a 1, and the index finger for a 2, etc.
3. Let the participants know how many questions/statements they will be responding to and remind them that it is a silent protocol so thank them in advance for their silence. (Once students are familiar with the protocol, advisors and teachers can use it to take a quick pulse on anything where they want immediate feedback.)
4. Questions/Statements: (Pause in between each question and encourage everyone to look around the room and glance at participants' hands/votes.)
 - What is your energy level like right now?

- My students are skilled at being reflective and analyzing their own performance.
 - How are you feeling about ____? (Fill in the blank with one of the following: the upcoming weekend, the semester so far, etc.)
 - I regularly conference with my students in advisory.
5. Debrief/Reflection: In what ways did this silent Gathering serve the group? What did you notice? What are some benefits of using this gathering? (Participants might say or you could offer: It is an extremely quick way to get a read on individuals and the group. It tends to quickly quiet people down and bring focus to the session. For some students it can feel safer than expressing feelings or opinions aloud.)
 6. Say: What are some possible questions or statements you could use with your advisory group? Turn & Talk: Ask each pair to come up with two ideas and then do a quick Whip so people hear a variety of options.



ACTIVITY: Why Reflect? Exploring the Research (15 MIN)

1. Think-Pair-Share: Pair up participants and distribute the **Why Reflect?** graphic organizer. Give pairs three minutes to brainstorm and jot down some responses to the prompts. (If it is a challenge to get your faculty to participate in group discussions, let them know ahead of time that you are expecting at least one person to share out from each group.)
2. Distribute **Reflection Research** handouts to each pair. Ask each partner to silently read two research pieces, summarize for their partner, and then collaboratively decide what to add to their graphic organizer. (As you circulate, identify a group to start things off and let them know they will be speaking first.)
3. Whole Group Debrief/Reflection: On chart paper write **Why Reflect?** Ask each pair to share a reason for reflecting. Record the responses on the chart paper.
4. Segue Statement: Knowing that reflection is critical to learning and behavior changes, let's now move to look at a model for motivating students to be self-reflective around their academic progress in a Whole Group Academic Conferencing model.



DVD VIDEO ACTIVITY: Whole Group Academic Conferencing (15 MIN)

1. Distribute the **Whole Group Academic Conferencing Protocol** and the **Academic Reflection Form** sample. Ask participants to read and jot down any initial questions they have in the margin.
2. Introduce Video: We are about to see student and advisor testimonials related to Whole Group Academic Conferencing followed by a live Whole Group Academic Conferencing session. As you watch the video, consider the following question, jot down some notes, and be ready to share your observations in the debrief discussion.

Focus Question:

- What evidence do you see and hear that Whole Group Academic Conferencing supports students being self-aware, self-monitoring, and self-directed?



OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: Practicing Reflective Thinking (15 MIN)

1. Distribute the **Practicing Reflective Thinking** advisory session.
2. Review and discuss following the **Advisory Session Dissecting Protocol**.



CLOSING: A Take-away (5 MIN)

1. Our essential question for this session was: How do we create an academic culture where students consistently reflect on their academic performance, leading to increased student self-direction and self-monitoring?
2. Display the following sentence stems. Say: Think about these sentence stems and choose one to respond to in Go-Round format.
 - One action I can take to create an academic culture in my advisory is to...
 - Creating an academic culture in my advisory will support students in...
 - A next step I see for our school in the area of academic advisement is...



Why Reflect?

WHY REFLECT?	WHAT DOES REFLECTION LOOK/SOUND LIKE?
WHAT ARE SOME OBSTACLES TO BEING REFLECTIVE?	
FOR US?	FOR OUR STUDENTS?



Quote #1: Learning Through Structured Reflection

widespread misconception about structured reflection is that it entails simply sharing feelings or voicing opinions. Many people mistakenly see reflection as a “feel-good” experience that may be useful for building community but does not contribute to intellectual development. In fact, poor-quality reflective activities do sometimes fit this description. In contrast, in well-conceived reflective activities, emotional responses and initial opinions may serve as starting points but not as ends. High-quality reflection calls for well-developed intellectual skill and perceptiveness richly grounded in knowledge and expertise. Because students are no more experts in the process of reflection than they are experts in the subject matter they are studying, well-conceived and well-structured assignments can help them to develop greater expertise in the intellectual processes of reflection, analysis, and interpretation. (Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, & Corngold, 2007)

Quote #2: Why Reflect?

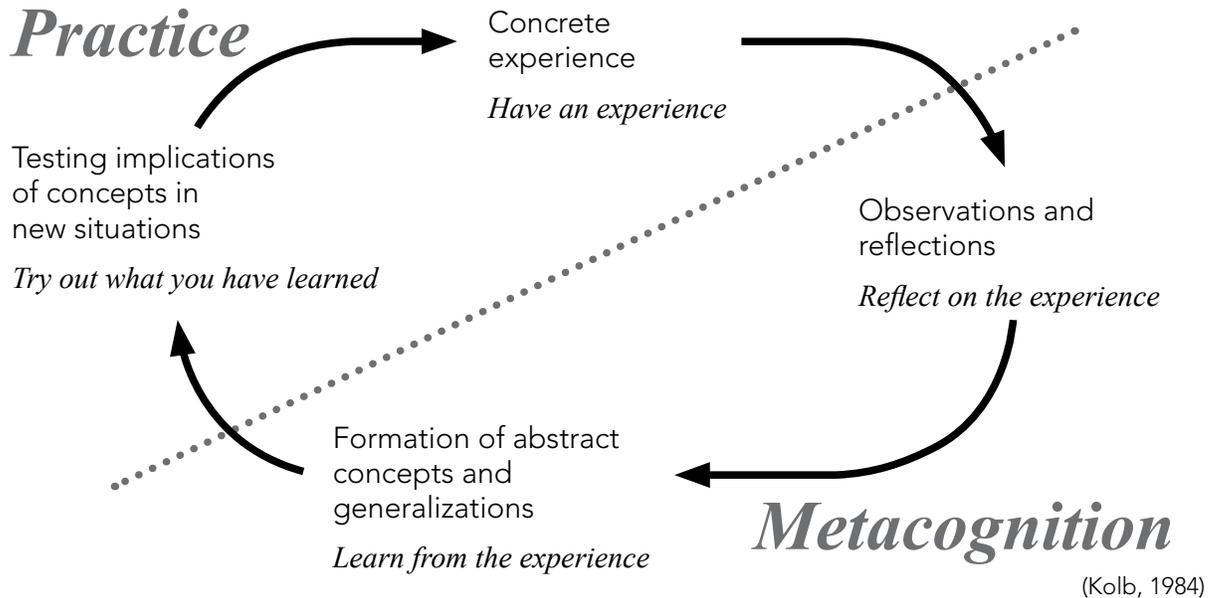
Reflection is a form of mental processing—like a form of thinking—that we use to fulfill a purpose or to achieve some anticipated outcome. It is applied to relatively complicated or unstructured ideas for which there is not an obvious solution and is largely based on the further processing of knowledge and understanding and possibly emotions that we already possess (Moon, 1999).

Moon points out that one of the defining characteristics of surface learning is that it does not involve reflection (p.123). She outlines the conditions for reflection: time and space, a good facilitator, a supportive curricular or institutional environment, and an emotionally supportive environment. (Barrett, 2007)





Quote #3: Kolb's Theory of Experiential Learning



Quote #4: Getting into the Habit of Reflection

Collaborative dialogues held between teachers, between a teacher and students, or among students cause participants to share their reflections and outline their progress toward the mastery of learning tasks (Lee & Barnett, 1994). Time should be set aside at the end of a learning sequence—lesson, unit, school day, or year—for participants to question one another about what they have learned and how they can apply their knowledge and skills in future settings.

In an atmosphere of trust, well-crafted questions allow participants to reveal their insights, understandings, and thought processes. The resulting dialogue allows staff and students to model and practice listening habits characterized by understanding and empathy, to communicate clearly, and to compose powerful questions. (Costa & Kallick, 2000)





Whole Group Academic Conferencing Protocol

Note to Advisor: A primary goal of academic advisement is to create a culture where students are comfortable and practiced in reflecting and talking about their academic performance. Ultimately, we want to create a cohort of peers who support and advocate for each other, share strategies, problem solve together, and celebrate each other. Reflection and dialogue are foundational skills that need to be taught, modeled, and practiced. Whole group academic advisement will have its greatest impact on student achievement and student efficacy when it is implemented consistently, when students have access to accurate data, and when there is trust within the group.

Frequency: Weekly, biweekly, monthly, or once per grading period.

Materials: Student grade reports, pens or highlighters, a piece of chart paper titled "ACTION PLAN," Post-it notes, a student sample academic reflection form, and academic reflection forms or academic journals.

Room Design: Circle, horseshoe, or chairs wrapped around tables or the perimeter of the room. Students need to see each other.

STEP 1: REFLECT ON A SUCCESS

- Distribute student grade/progress reports.
- Ask students to review and identify a course where they feel successful: a class where they are learning something and/or feeling a sense of accomplishment or a class where they have made some sort of improvement. Remind students that there are all kinds of skills required in a given class.
- Have students mark a * by that course.
- On a Post-it note, academic journal, or school-specific reflection form, have students write the name of the course and at least 2–3 sentences that explain what exactly it is that they are doing well.
- Circulate and check in with students.
- Whip: Have students share their "success." ("I'm feeling good about Biology"; "For me, it is Algebra II"; etc.).

STEP 2: IDENTIFY A CHALLENGE

- Ask students to think about a class where they struggle or feel some challenge. Make a statement that normalizes that we all struggle—at some point—in some class or subject area. For example, “It is natural and normal to have struggles and it is often through our struggles that we grow and learn the most.”
- Have students mark a ✓ by that class.
- On a Post-it note, academic journal, or school-specific reflection form, have students write the name of the course and at least 2–3 sentences that explain some of the reasons for the struggle in that class.
- Circulate as students reflect and write. This is an opportunity to listen, paraphrase, and question to help the student be thorough and specific about his/her struggle.
- Optional: Ask for volunteers to share a particular task in a course where they feel challenged and some of the reasons for the struggle.

STEP 3: MAKE A PLAN

- On a final Post-it note, ask students to think of something they could do (this week/over the next 2 weeks/this quarter/etc.) that would make a positive difference in the class or subject. Be sure they know that they will share their plans with the group and that their Post-it notes will be posted on the “ACTON PLAN” poster.
- Explain that what they write on their final Post-it note must be a specific action that includes “what” and “how.” You might need to reiterate that students cannot simply write, “I’m going to bring my grades up.”
- Circulate and identify a few action plans to share out with the rest of the group. (Be sure to ask permission from students to read example plans.) As students get more comfortable with the protocol, encourage more sharing of their plans.

STEP 4: CLOSING:

- In Go-Round style, have a few students share their action plan. Post their Post-it notes on the chart paper and encourage students to check in with and support each other to meet their plans/goals.



Academic Reflection Form \pm

Name: Jamal

Date: 11/10/11

After examining my data and reflecting on my academic performance, I identified the following course/subject/skill area as a place where I am successful.

US History—unit projects

This is because:

I got a B+ on the last unit project. I switched seats and now I sit in the front. It makes it easier for me to pay attention now that I don't sit by my friends in the back. I think I am also doing well in this class because the teacher always shows us lots of examples of the type of work she is expecting and mine usually looks right.

After examining my data and reflecting on my academic performance, I identified the following course/subject/skill area as a challenge:

English—writing thesis statements and essays

This is because:

My teacher said my thesis statement wasn't a thesis statement and I have no idea what he is talking about. He also said my paper wasn't "focused." Last year my English teacher told me I was a good writer. Writing stories is so much easier for me. I don't understand how you are supposed to "organize" a paper.

My plan to improve:

I'm going to ask my friend Jenna (who got an A on the last English paper) to show me her thesis statement and essay. Maybe seeing her paper will help me understand what I am supposed to be doing. I'm going to tell my teacher that I am frustrated and ask him for help Thursday after school.

Academic Reflection Form

Name:

Date:

After examining my data and reflecting on my academic performance, I identified the following course/subject/skill area as a place where I am successful:

This is because:

After examining my data and reflecting on my academic performance, I identified the following course/subject/skill area as a challenge:

This is because:

My plan to improve:



Academic Advisement

ADVISORY SESSION: Practicing Reflective Thinking

Please refer to the **Facilitation Tips and Strategies** handout for detailed instructions on any underlined strategies.

1 GATHERING: Mirror, Mirror... (8 MIN)

1. Meet and Greet students at the door, then ask them to take a seat in the circle and respond to one of the two posted questions on a scrap piece of paper.
2. Gathering prompts: Why do people use mirrors? What is the first thing people do after they look in a mirror?
3. Go-Round: Have everyone respond aloud to one of the questions. Chart their responses on the poster entitled, "Looking in the Mirror."

2 AGENDA CHECK (2 MIN)

Suggested Script: We started talking about mirrors today because the concept of a "mirror" ties into the skill we will be practicing and fine-tuning in today's lesson—reflective thinking. (Add the words "REFLECTIVE THINKING" to the top of the "Looking in the Mirror" chart.) Mirrors provide a reflection, a way of looking closely at ourselves. Recently, we have begun tracking our grades and attendance and you have been asked to take a very close look at your academic performance and reflect on your strengths and your challenges. When we reflect, we consider, we analyze our work, and we evaluate it. Today we are going to look at four examples of students who reflected on their grades. Let's see how they analyzed and evaluated their work.



ADVISOR PREP LIST

- Room setup: circle, oval, or horseshoe
- Grouping: whole group and pairs
- Poster paper and markers
- Mirror (optional for a prop)
- Student Reflective Thinking Samples handouts
- Individual Student Data Reports (ideally they would include current grades and attendance details)
- Advisory journals, grade reflection form, or paper for written reflections



LEARNING OUTCOME

Students will develop and practice reflective thinking skills



40-MINUTE AGENDA

(Optional: This can be split into two shorter lessons)

1. Gathering: Mirror, Mirror...
2. Agenda Check
3. Activity: What does reflective thinking look like?
4. Activity: Reflecting on Academic Performance
5. Closing

3 ACTIVITY: What Does Reflective Thinking Look Like? (15 MIN)

1. Distribute the **Sample Student Reflections** handout. As a GROUP—go through the handout by Modeling, THINKING ALOUD with the group, providing Think Time, and asking students to reflect on and analyze the student samples. Then have them answer the questions.
2. Key ideas: Reflecting/thinking is never a waste of time. Being reflective is what successful people do. You increase your ability to be reflective by writing. A good reflection often leads to identifying an action plan.

4 ACTIVITY: Reflecting on Academic Performance (10 MIN)

1. Explain to students that it is their turn to do some reflective thinking.
2. Distribute their grade reports and whatever documents or materials you use for students to write their reflections (e.g., advisory journals, school grade reflection forms).
3. Circulate and provide support as students complete written reflections.

5 CLOSING (5 MIN)

Suggested Script: Being reflective helps us improve. I know that your grade reports are a snapshot of your skills, habits, and efforts. It is my job and yours to take a close look and analyze how you are doing.

Have students choose one of the closing questions to respond to in Go-Round style:

- How might reflective thinking help me?
- How might reflective thinking be a challenge for me?

6 EXTENSION

When engaging in One-to-One Academic Conferencing, make a link back to this advisory lesson and continue to use the language of reflective thinking.



Sample Student Reflections

Grade Reflection: Jonathan

I am so excited about my English grade! I spent three hours writing and editing my 5-paragraph essay in English and improved my grade from a D to a B. I don't know why my grade in Science is so low. The quiz last week was really hard. I need to talk to my teacher and try to get some help. I know Jessica is really good at science, maybe I could ask her to help me study for the next quiz.

In your own words, what does "reflective thinking" mean? _____

In which sentence(s) is Jonathan being most reflective? Explain. _____

How is Jonathan's reflective thinking going to help him do better in school? _____

Grade Reflection: Sandra

I have an A in drama because it is so easy. Social Studies is boring and I don't like the teacher anyway.

Is this reflective thinking? Explain _____

What would you suggest to Sandra to help her improve her reflections so that they actually help her improve her grades? _____

More Practice Identifying Reflective Thinking

HOW REFLECTIVE ARE THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLES?

1. In partners or as a group score each reflection between 1–4.

4=Very reflective, student analyzed their grade/situation

3=Reflective

2=Somewhat reflective, but not enough of an explanation

1=Not reflective

2. Explain the reason for your score.

(Example: Sierra analyzed her problem and identified a plan of action.)

3. Then think of how the reflection could be improved.

(Example: James should have tried to analyze why he is having such a hard time in math.)

EXAMPLE A - JAMES

My math grade is a joke. I have never been any good at math.

EXAMPLE B - SIERRA

I am not very happy with my grades. I was sick last week and I fell behind in all my classes. Before that I was doing OK. I don't even know what I'm missing. I'm going to talk to all my teachers today and get a list of missing assignments.

EXAMPLE C - JUAN

My grades ROCK! I can't wait to tell my mom. 'Nuff said!

EXAMPLE D - MARISSA

I have B's in all my classes. I never seem to be able to get A's. I do all my work. I don't know why my teachers are so picky. At my middle school I used to get all A's.

