

Professional Reflection Journal



Collaborative Conversations Series

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Introduction

Welcome to the Professional Reflection Journal for **30 Days to Improving Instruction: Collaborative Conversations**. This tool is designed to be used in tandem with the videos and assignments for each day's content in the series. As Dr. Fisher shares expert strategies that are proven to impact student outcomes, you will learn how to facilitate collaborative conversations in your classroom, and much more. His approach can be integrated with your daily instruction right away.

Using the Professional Reflection Journal

This journal is intended to capture reflections and evidence throughout the entire series as you strengthen your instructional practices with strategies to implement collaborative conversations. It is designed so that you may use it digitally or in print as a place to record what you have learned and reflect each day.

As you work through the series, consider engaging with colleagues in team meetings or professional learning community sessions. You can use the reflections from this Reflection Journal to promote professional dialogue around best practices in collaborative learning.

There is a page in this Reflection Journal for each day of the series includes the day's assignment from Dr. Doug Fisher and space to take notes and record your reflections.

Session Resources

The following linked resources are referenced in specific assignments and videos, but they can be used throughout the entire series as you expand your repertoire of strategies for facilitating collaborative conversations.

[Sentence Frames](#)

Use these sentence frames with your students to jumpstart their conversations as they agree, disagree or have mixed feelings. *For use with the videos and assignments for Days 5 and 26.*

[Think Pair Share Graphic Organizer](#)

Use this graphic organizer to help your students organize their thoughts as they prepare to share out to the whole group. *For use with the video and assignment for Day 7.*

[Alternate Ranking \(Video\)](#)

Watch Dr. Doug Fisher demonstrate how to create student groups using alternate ranking. *For use with the video and assignment for Day 12.*

T-Chart Organizer

Keep track of all the collaboration strategies introduced in this series with this organizer, and use it with your students, too. *For use with the video and assignment for Day 16.*

Rotation Model

Explore using Achieve3000 in Station Teaching, or a Rotation Model in your classroom. *For use with the videos and assignments for Days 17-19.*

Rotation Model Planning Tool

Use this planning tool to plan out your instructional day using Station Teaching, or the Rotation Model. *For use with the videos and assignments for Days 17-19.*

Productive Group Work Rubric

Use this tool to self-assess productive group work in your classroom. *For use with the videos and assignments for Days 23 – 29.*

Debate Graphic Organizer

Use this debate graphic organizer to help your students construct their argumentation conversation. *For use with the video and assignment for Day 25.*

Additional Readings

The following articles and books can be used to provide additional background information about collaborative conversations and collaborative learning. The additional readings are listed by topic in the order they occur in the series.

General Understanding of Collaborative Conversations

Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Rothenberg, C. (2008). *Content-Area Conversations: How to Plan Discussion-Based Lessons for Diverse Language Learners*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Nelson, J. (2013). It's all about the talk. *Kappan*, 94(6), 8 - 13.

Collaborative Learning

Frey, N., & Fisher, D. (2008) Releasing Responsibility. *Educational Leadership* 66(3) 32 – 37.

Frey, N., & Fisher, D. (2013) Points of Entry. *Educational Leadership* 71(3) 34-38

Alternate Ranking

Hattie, J., Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Moore, S.D. (2016). *Visible learning for mathematics, grades K-12: What works best to optimize student learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin (specifically, pages 155-156).

Productive Group Work

Vaca, J., Lapp, D., & Fisher, D. (2011). Designing and assessing productive group work in secondary schools. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 54(5), 372-375.

Frey, N., Fisher, D., & Allen, A. (2009). Productive group work in middle and high school classrooms. In S.R. Parris, D. Fisher, & K. Headley (Eds.) *Adolescent Literacy, Field Tested* (pp. 70-81). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Frey, N., & Fisher, D. (2010) Motivation requires a meaningful task. *English Journal* 100(1), 30 – 36.

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DAY 1: Welcome to 30 Days to Improving Instruction: Collaborative Conversations

After viewing today's video, reflect on the following:
What has worked in the past as you've asked students to work together?
What hasn't worked for you?
How comfortable are you with collaborative conversations in your classroom?
What do you need to know to create opportunities for students to talk to each other?

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DAY 2: Observing the Classroom Environment

After viewing today's video, reflect on the following:

- What did the teacher do to create that classroom environment?
- What actions should she have taken?
- What actions did she take?
- How did she create opportunities that students are taking to interact with their peers?

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DAY 3: Identifying What Gets in the Way

After viewing today's video, reflect on the following:

Think about your reservations around including collaborative conversations in your instructional routine. Make a list of your concerns. What do you think is the barrier for your students and their success in collaborative conversations?

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DAY 4: Starting Small with Paired Activities

Assignment After Viewing the Video

Try out one of the two partner experiences in your classroom by adding it to a lesson. Explain the experience to your students in advance. Once they participate in it, watch how the students respond.

Reflection

Reflect on the experience and jot down your thoughts.

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DAY 5: Using Language Supports for Interactions

Assignment After Viewing the Video

Try out the opposite partner experience from yesterday's task in your classroom by adding it to a lesson. Explain the experience to your students in advance. Once they participate in it, watch how the students respond. If you used Response Cards yesterday, then use the Silent Interview today. If you practiced facilitating the Silent Interview yesterday, then use the Response Cards today.

Reflection

Reflect on the experience and jot down your thoughts. Did you use any language supports? Reflect on whether those supports helped your students express themselves.

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DAY 6: Reciprocal Questioning

Assignment After Viewing the Video
Select a piece of text and identify 3 stopping points. Explain the ReQuest activity to your students. Model the roles of questioner and responder for your students. Pair up your students and assign roles. The questioner will ask a question at each stopping point and the responder will respond.
Reflection
Reflect on the ReQuest experience with your students:

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DAY 7: Empowering Students with Think-Pair-Share

Assignment After Viewing the Video

Conduct a Think-Pair-Share with your students. Pair up your students and ask them a question. Give students think time and then have them talk with their partners about the question and their responses. After their partner time, bring them back together as a whole-class to present and discuss their answers.

Reflection

Reflect on the Think-Pair-Share activity. How did your students respond? Was this a good use of instructional time?

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DAY 8: Practicing Using Academic Language

Assignment After Viewing the Video
Practice a strategy you've been using with your students to help them express their ideas with academic language. You can do a ReQuest, Think-Pair-Share, a variation on that, or any other strategy we've explored in this series.
Reflection
Watch how your students respond. Reflect on their response to having increased time to talk to each other.

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DAY 9: Using a Noise Meter in the Classroom

Assignment After Viewing the Video
Create a Noise Meter to use to teach your students the appropriate levels of noise for different activities. Teach a lesson that includes one of the strategies for collaborative conversations and use the Noise Meter to provide feedback on the noise level in the room.
Reflection
Reflect on your students' response to using the Noise Meter during their conversations.

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DAY 10: Movement and Conversations

Assignment After Viewing the Video

Try out either Four Corners or Novel Ideas with your students. They will get up out of their chairs and talk to their peers. Watch how your students respond to this newer approach.

Reflection

Reflect on how your students responded to this new activity.

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DAY 11: Practicing with Variations

Assignment After Viewing the Video
<p>Try out the variation to either Four Corners or Novel Ideas with your students; adding the seated students or splitting or folding the line. If you'd like, you can practice the activity that you didn't use yesterday.</p> <p>Watch how your students respond.</p>
Reflection
<p>Reflect on their response to the variation or the new activity.</p>

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DAY 12: Using Alternate Ranking to Form Groups

Assignment After Viewing the Video

Today's task is to form groups. Intentionally form groups based on your assessment information. You can use Lexile reading levels, or any other current information you have about student performance. List them by name, cut the list in half and form the groups across. Try out any strategy we've used in the past to observe how intentionally grouping students impacts the quality of their interactions.

Reflection

Reflect on the activity you facilitated with the new groups of students.

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DAY 13: Practicing a Strategy

Assignment After Viewing the Video
Practice any of the collaborative conversations strategies that we've been learning about in this series.
Reflection
Reflect on your practice. As your repertoire grows, how are you feeling about making collaborative conversations a regular part of your instructional day?

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DAY 14: Student Accountability and Conversation Roundtable

Assignment After Viewing the Video
<p>Introduce Conversation Roundtable to your students and model how to fold the paper. Select a piece of text, such as a Stretch Article, and have students read the article in their groups. Then have them take notes and have a conversation with their peers for which they are accountable.</p>
Reflection
<p>Reflect on this new strategy and how it added accountability to your students' collaborative conversations.</p>

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DAY 15: Collaborative Posters

Assignment After Viewing the Video
<p>Introduce Collaborative Poster to your students. Give each group of students, created with the Alternate Ranking method, a large sheet of paper and give each student a marker, assigning them the color that you want them to use. Assign the task and then survey the room, encouraging students to clarify their thinking.</p>
Reflection
<p>Reflect on this new instructional activity and how it helped make students accountable for their conversations.</p>

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DAY 16: Reflecting on the Strategies You Have Learned

Assignment After Viewing the Video
Create a T-Chart and identify the collaborative conversation strategies that are working for you and the strategies that are not working for you.
Reflection
Reflect on whether you will practice the ones that you are currently not using and eventually move them over to the “To Use” category.

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DAY 17: Station Teaching

Assignment After Viewing the Video
Plan the stations to use with your students. What are familiar tasks and activities that your students can engage in? You can plan some stations where the activities are independent tasks, and others that include collaborative tasks.
Reflection
Reflect on your thoughts about implementing Station Teaching in your classroom. Do you have any concerns?

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DAY 18: Observing Station Teaching

Assignment After Viewing the Video
Analyze what you saw in the video. What did you notice about the students and their ability to work together? What did you notice about the teacher and his time with a small group of students? Finalize your plans for Station Teaching in your classroom.
Reflection
Reflect on the process of planning for Station Teaching.

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DAY 19: Practice Station Teaching

Assignment After Viewing the Video
Practice Station Teaching with your students. Make sure that the students know what the expectations are. Move the students through at least one rotation and have them complete two different tasks.
Reflection
Reflect about how it worked, and about the changes you would will make next time.

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DAY 20: Using Jigsaw to Spark Conversation

Assignment After Viewing the Video

Select a text, such as an article from Achieve3000. Then identify sections for the groups of students to read. Have the "expert groups" independently read and discuss their part of the text. Then, the students will meet with their "home groups" to discuss each part of the text. The students then return to their expert groups so they can reflect on how their part of the text fit in with the rest of the text.

Reflection

Watch your students and reflect on the process. Did your students enjoy the Jigsaw activity? If so, this may be a strategy you want to use in your classroom regularly.

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DAY 21: Implementing Reciprocal Teaching

Assignment After Viewing the Video
Select a text, such as an article from Achieve3000. Identify the stopping points in the text. Model or teach summarizing, clarifying, predicting and questioning. Assign roles and have your students engage in a reciprocal teaching conversation.
Reflection
Watch your students and reflect on this strategy. Did it work for your students?

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DAY 22: Reflecting About What You Have Learned

Assignment After Viewing the Video

Today's task has several parts. Update the T-chart of the "Useful" and "Not So Useful" strategies. Revisit your first reflection, your "Yes, but" reflection. Are there things you thought about earlier that weren't going to work for you that are now working? Are there still areas that are concerns for you?

Reflection

Reflect on all of the strategies that you've learned about so far. What's working? What do you need to practice with your students?

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30 TO IMPROVING
DAYS INSTRUCTION
with Dr. Doug Fisher

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DAY 23: The Importance of Task Complexity

Assignment After Viewing the Video

Using the first indicator on task complexity, observe your students and think about the complexity of the task you've assigned them. Do they need each other in order to succeed? Do they have to interact to be successful?

Reflection

Reflect on this and the steps you can take to plan lessons where students make mistakes and learn from them.

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DAY 24: Joint Attention to Tasks and Materials

Assignment After Viewing the Video

Using the rubric and focusing on the joint attention to the task materials indicator, observe your students. How are the groups performing? Do they understand what joint attention looks like? Are they a 4, 3, 2 or 1 on the rubric?

Reflection

Reflect on this and the steps you can take to take your students to the next level.

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DAY 25: Using Argumentation, Not Arguing

Assignment After Viewing the Video

Use the rubric and focus on Argumentation, Not Arguing. Do your student engage in this type of conversation or do they simply give each other information? Look for deeper conversations that use argumentation. You can use any strategy you choose for collaborative conversations as you observe your students.

Reflection

Reflect on this and the steps you can take to facilitate conversations where your students agree and disagree.

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DAY 26: Providing Language Supports to Your Students

Assignment After Viewing the Video
Using any strategy that you've learned so far, observe your students at work. Use the 4, 3, 2, 1, rating system of the rubric to determine the type of support your students currently have.
Reflection
Reflect on the kind of language support your students may benefit from as they continue practicing their collaborative conversations.

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DAY 27: Forming Productive Student Groups

Assignment After Viewing the Video
Engage your students in a collaborative learning opportunity and think about group size and composition. Use the indicators 4, 3, 2, and 1 to determine the success your students are having in their groups. How did you form the groups? Are they working?
Reflection
Reflect on that and think of ways to help your students be more successful in their group work.

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DAY 28: Understanding the Role of the Teacher

Assignment After Viewing the Video
Analyze your own behavior and consider your role in the classroom while students work productively with their peers. Take a look at the indicators on the rubric and determine the level of support you currently provide for students while the others work productively.
Reflection
Reflect on areas of growth. Where can you improve your instruction as your students engage in collaborative conversations with their peers?

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DAY 29: Bringing in a Colleague

Assignment After Viewing the Video
Have a conversation with a colleague to introduce them to the Productive Group Work rubric and review each of the indicators. Then, follow through with your plan and complete your observation session.
Reflection
Reflect on this experience and how you will continue to grow in the collaborative conversations work you are doing with your students.

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DAY 30: Reflect on Your New Instructional Practices

After viewing today's video, reflect on the experience of participating in this series:
Review all of your reflections in this journal. Then, focus on the final reflection questions below.
Revisit your "Yes, but" list. Have your concerns been resolved? Are there things you still need to learn?
Review your T-Chart of "Useful" and "Not So Useful" strategies. Which ones do your students regularly engage in? Which ones are still not so useful to you?
Reflect on your original goal for including time for students to talk to each other with academic language. Did you achieve that goal?
Make a commitment to including time for collaborative conversation in your daily lesson plans. Continue to invite colleagues into your classroom to give you updates on how you're progressing in meeting the quality indicators for productive group work.