

Questioning for Clarity

Probing for specificity, therefore reducing vague language, will clarify focus. This supports precision in language and thinking and fosters a shift from overwhelming to manageable.

Vague Nouns/Pronouns

Examples: *classroom management, my students, we, us*

"My students don't understand fractions."

Coaches will need to probe to know where to target during the problem solving process.

Probing questions to narrow the focus:

Which students? What piece of fractions are they having difficulty with?

Universal Quantifiers

Examples: *everyone, all, no one, never, always*

"These kids are never on time."

These statements possess a *universal truth*. Probing guides the conversation with measureable details and supportable data.

Probing questions to narrow the focus: *Never?*

Has there been an instance when most of them were on time?

Comparators

Examples: *better, best, larger, slower, more, less, least*

"Today's lesson was much better"

Specify the speaker's criteria and standards for comparison.

Probing questions to narrow the focus: *In*

what ways was it better? What was it better than?

Rule Words

Examples: *I have to, I must, I can't, I should have, I shouldn't have*

Creating a safe environment to explore in this area is important. The intonation in the voice should be nonthreatening.

Probing questions to narrow the focus: *Who*

says you "have to"? What would happen if you didn't?, What stops you from doing that?

Clarifying questions elicit details, specifics, clarifications, or examples. These questions can help clarify a teacher's own thinking and are asked for the benefit of the teacher.

Clarifying Questions

Tell me more about that...

Let me see if I understand...

I'd be interested in hearing more about...

It would be help me understand if you'd give me an example of...

So, are you saying that...?

Would you like to talk more about that?