

Become an Effective Communicator

Four Listening Strategies that Create Connections
(an excerpt from “Connecting through Conversations: Short activities for mentors. Click for full resource)

1. **Paraphrase**, or play back what you’ve just heard from your mentee: “So it sounds like you’re concerned about the upcoming test”
2. **Open a door** for the student to tell you more: “That’s interesting! Tell me more about how it happened!” or “How did you react when she said that?”
3. **Ask open-ended questions** that encourage students to give you more than a a “yes” or “no” answer: Instead of “Did you have a good weekend?” ask “What did you do this weekend?” Instead of “Did it go okay with your teacher?” ask “What’s one thing your professor suggested?”
4. **Actively listen**: Show that you are listening using the listening skills below:





Conversation Starters

A challenge faced by any electronic mentoring relationship is getting conversations started. As a mentor, you have the initial responsibility to engage mentees in conversations - they won't always be social-able at first! Consider preparing some questions to get the conversations going. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

- Introduce yourself and ask mentees about themselves.
 - favorite high school course
 - what did they learn in ACE
 - What was their end of year presentation
- Talk about your hobbies, favorite movies, books, music, family, community where you live, etc. Ask Mentees about theirs.
- Talk about your education (favorite classes, teachers, school).
- Talk about your first job or what college was like for you.
- Talk about how you secured your current job. What steps did you take to get the job?
- Share some details about your family - how many siblings and what they do, where you grew up, etc.
- You can tell them about your first job - how old you were, what you did and how you liked it.
- Share books, podcasts or websites you think mentees might find useful or interesting.

Some kick off Questions:

- How is/are your roommate(s)?
- What subject are you are most interested in? It doesn't matter if you are good at it or not.
- What are some challenges you've had this semester? Or in high school. How did you overcome them. If you didn't, why not?
- What clubs or activities are you involved in at school? What clubs or activities do you want to get involved in at school?
- What is your most challenging subject?
- Tell me about your family or friends?
- What do you do when you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed?
- What is one thing that you have enjoyed that has nothing to do with school?
- What campus activities have you enjoyed?
- What do you do when you're feeling (e.g. homesick, nervous, anxious, down, etc.)?
- What is your favorite course this semester and why?
- Who is your toughest professor?
- What can we do to navigate difficulties?
- What has been the best or worst assignment so far?
- What do you love about being in college?
- What do you not love about being in college?
- How many times do you get asked what is your major? How do you feel about that?

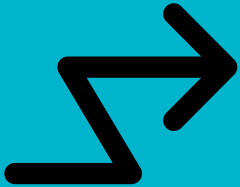


CONVERSATION BLOCKERS



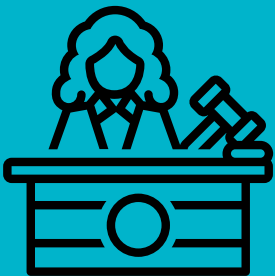
Ordering & Preaching

You must...Go do...It will only work if you...
You should do...if you don't do it then...



Minimizing and diverting

It's not a big deal...You'll get over this
quickly...let's talk about something else



Judging and criticizing

You shouldn't have done that...that was a terrible
idea...



Sarcasm and Teasing

Well that was pretty dumb...you are such a newbie

Impactful ACE Praise & Feedback

TIPS FOR DEVELOPING RESILIENCE IN ACE STUDENTS

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PRAISE THE PROCESS?

MAKING AN INTENTIONAL EFFORT TO FOCUS ON THE PROCESS THAT WENT INTO A STUDENT'S FINAL PRODUCT, RATHER THAN JUST ON THE FINAL OUTCOME. DOING THIS HELPS STUDENTS UNDERSTAND THAT LEARNING IS A PROCESS, AND INTELLIGENCE IS NOT A NATURAL GIFT. IMPACTFUL PROCESS PRAISE WILL COMBINE POSITIVE PHRASES WITH REFERENCE TO A SKILL AND SPECIFIC BEHAVIORS.

EXAMPLE: GREAT JOB ON THE ESSAY YOU ASKED ME TO READ. I REALLY LIKE HOW YOU CREATED A SOLID ARGUMENT IN YOUR OPENING SECTION AND USED THE ADVICE FROM YOUR PROFESSOR. THAT MUST HAVE TAKEN SOME TIME, YOUR HARD WORK REALLY SHOWS!



Say this instead...



THIS IS A GREAT ESSAY...YOU'RE REALLY GOOD AT THIS...A NATURAL!

TRY SAYING

- MY FAVORITE PART OF THIS ESSAY IS...
- I LIKE HOW YOU ACCOMPLISHED....
- I CAN SEE THAT THIS TOOK A LOT OF EFFORT, GREAT WORK!
- I CAN SEE YOU USED SOME REALLY GOOD STRATEGIES HERE, SUCH AS...
- YOU REALLY DID ____ WELL, I CAN SEE THAT YOU USED ____ SKILLS WE DISCUSSED.
- YOU WORKED REALLY HARD TO INCORPORATE WHAT YOU LEARNED INTO THIS ESSAY
- YOUR HARD WORK IS EVIDENT IN THIS FINAL VERSION!

YOUR FIRST ESSAY DRAFT ISN'T REALLY A SOLID PRODUCT...

TRY SAYING

- YOU REALLY PUT GREAT EFFORT INTO THIS. I KNOW IT'S NOT THE FINAL PRODUCT YOU WANTED, BUT I SEE THE FOLLOWING SUCCESS IN YOUR WORK...
- CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK WENT WELL IN THIS ESSAY?
- WHERE DO YOU SEE OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT IN THIS PAPER?
- I LIKE THAT YOU STUCK WITH IT, LOOKING FOR NEW SOLUTIONS. LET'S SEE HOW WE CAN IMPROVE YOUR SECOND DRAFT
- YOU'VE MADE GREAT IMPROVEMENT ON YOUR SECOND DRAFT!
- ONE THING THAT HELPS ME WHEN I'M WORKING ON A SOMETHING LIKE THIS IS...
- DID YOU HAVE FUN WORKING ON THIS?



DON'T FORGET THE NON VERBAL RESPONSES TOO...

- AVOID MAKING OVERLY NEGATIVE OR POSITIVE FACIAL EXPRESSIONS WHEN LOOKING AT A STUDENT'S WORK PRODUCT...KEEP A STRAIGHT FACE....YOUTH READ BODY LANGUAGE SOMETIMES BETTER THAN THEY LISTEN!
- AVOID LAUGHING OR JOKING ABOUT A MISTAKE (UNLESS IT REALLY IS FUNNY). SOMETIMES A STUDENT WILL LAUGH TO COVER UP OTHER REACTIONS, AND WE WANT TO LEAVE SPACE FOR ALL EMOTIONS

