



## Double Check Classroom Check-Up Teacher Interview

*Getting to Know You Interview Guide*

Preparation dialogue with teacher. "I wanted to meet with you today to ask you a few questions. These questions will allow me to get to know you better and give me an idea of your classroom management style and teaching practices. We will also talk about any past coaching experiences you have had in receiving feedback and support to improve your classroom practices. Finally, I'll provide you with an opportunity to share any difficulties you would like support with. Following the interview, we will discuss what the rest of the coaching process will look like. Before we start, do you have any questions?"

### I. General Teacher Experience

1. What was it that made you want to become a teacher?

2. How long have you been a teacher? Have you always taught this grade level?

3. What do you think is the best thing about being a teacher?

4. What do you find to be the most challenging thing about being a teacher?

\*5. What was your own education like? What role did education have in your family?

*\* Remove if short on time.*

Provide a brief summary of the discussion so far. You can also build rapport by connecting personally and normalizing the challenges faced by the teacher.



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### II. Card Sort Activity

*“One thing that has been found to be helpful in working with teachers is this next activity I want us to do together. I have a set of cards here (show the teacher the cards). Each card has a value or quality written on the front. There are also three category cards: Very Important, Important, and Less Important. I would like you to go through these values cards and sort them into these three categories as it pertains to you and your practice as a teacher. There are no right or wrong answers to this. I know this can sometimes be a bit difficult so just go with your gut.” (Give the teacher some time to complete the first part of the sorting activity.) “Now that all cards are sorted into these three categories, I want you to take all of those in the Very Important pile and choose three. Again, I know it can be difficult to only choose three values, and I also understand that these values can change over time. Just do your best to pick the three that resonate most with you right now.”*

**Note to Coach:** Refer back to these three values from the card sort activity throughout the rest of the Interview when relevant. Also, remember to note anything that might be important to explain why the teacher chose these values below.

Three Most Important Values Selected:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Provide a brief summary of the values discussion.

### III. Classroom Management Style / Positive Behavioral Supports

*“Thank you for doing the card sorting activity. That is going to help me understand some of what is most important to you as I come and visit your classroom. I’m going to switch gears now and ask you some questions about how you manage student behavior in your classroom.”*

1. How would you describe your current classroom management style? What do you consider to be areas of strength with regard to your management style? What are some challenges that you face?

2. What are some of the characteristics of your most challenging students? Why do you think they are challenging?

3. What is your protocol for handling misbehavior in your classroom?



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\*4. When working with a student with difficult behavior, what strategies have you found to be most effective for you? What strategies have you found to be ineffective?

*\* Remove if short on time.*

Provide a brief summary of the discussion in this section. You can also connect to the teacher by giving examples of shared experiences (if brief and appropriate) and by normalizing difficulties.

### IV. Understanding Culture in School Settings

*"Now we're going to talk about the culture in your school and classroom. I'm going to ask a range of questions and if you need any clarification as we move along, just stop me and ask."*

**Note to Coach:** While it is not stated until the end of this portion of the interview to provide summary of this section, it may be helpful to provide several instances of at least brief summaries and reflections throughout.

1. How do the students in your classroom differ from you and from each other? What characteristics do they share?

#### **Authentic Relationships:**

\*\*2. How would you describe your relationship with your students?

*\*\* Suggested priority item to be asked.*

3. In what ways do you develop and keep these relationships going throughout the school year?

\*4. What specific strategies do you use to engage your students' families in your classroom or school-based activities?

*\* Remove if short on time.*



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### Reflective Thinking:

5. How would you describe the culture of your school (i.e., what do school staff value, how do staff engage with one another, what different groups are there among staff)?

**\*\*6.** How would you describe the culture of your classroom? For example, if someone came into your classroom and had to use just a few words or a short phrase to describe your classroom, what would they say? Is this what you would want them to say?

*\*\* Suggested priority item to be asked.*

7. What are some student behaviors that you know trigger a very emotional response in you? How do you react when students engage in these behaviors?

### Sensitivity to Students' Culture:

**\*\*8.** In what ways do you help bridge any gaps between the behavioral expectations in your classroom and in your school as compared to your students' homes? If you're not sure, do you see any cultural mismatches between expectations at school vs. home? Do you feel like you know how to address any mismatches?

*\*\* Suggested priority item to be asked.*

9. How do you demonstrate to your students that you appreciate (or enjoy) the different backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences that they bring to the class?

### Effective Communication:

10. Knowing that most of our communication is nonverbal, tell me about any situations where your actions or your students' actions may have been misinterpreted by you or others?



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\*\*11. How do you tailor your communication to meet the different communication styles of your students? (i.e., reframe questions, provide more wait time for some students, etc.) How do you ensure that all of your students are contributing equitably?

*\*\* Suggested priority item to be asked.*

### Connection to the Curriculum:

12. Prior to teaching new material to your students, how do you ensure that students will connect with it (e.g., revising the curriculum so it doesn't reinforce cultural stereotypes or integrate examples that better reflect student experiences)?

\*13. What kinds of examples do you use within your lessons and/or curriculum materials that may be familiar to students from diverse backgrounds?

*\* Remove if short on time.*

Provide a brief summary of the discussion in this section before moving on to the final questions.

### V. Past Coaching Experiences

1. It is important that I am as helpful as I can be to you as a coach. What has been your past experience with coaching or mentoring? What have you found helpful or not so helpful?

### VI. Specific Areas of Support

1. What are some of the challenges related to behavior in your classroom for which you would like support?

2. What are some of the challenges related to the five Double Check Elements (Connection to the curriculum, Authentic relationships, Reflective thinking, Effective communication, Sensitivity to students' culture) for which you would like support in your classroom?



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### Summarize Session

*"The purpose of our meeting today was for me to learn more about you and your classroom, as well as some of the goals you have for our time together..."*

- Some of your most important values are: \_\_\_\_\_
- Some things that you would like to be different are: \_\_\_\_\_
- Add anything else that is important to reiterate here. \_\_\_\_\_
- Does that sound about right? Is there anything else I should know?"

### Prepare for Classroom Visits

*"Let me briefly explain what we'll be doing together after this. The first thing I would like to do is to come and visit your classroom a few times to observe student behavior. During my visits, I will be gathering information in regards to student level of engagement, classroom disruptions, your use of praise and reprimands, and how students interact with you and each other. **Any of the information I gather will only be shared with you and not used to evaluate you in any way.** After I gather this information, we will meet again to review it together to identify any areas of improvement with regard to classroom climate and culture and to choose new strategies you might want to try in your classroom. I will also come back to visit to see how things are going. Do you have any questions or concerns?"*