

## **CREATING REFLECTIVE CONVERSATION**

When considering the introduction of reflective conversations into their teaching practice, teachers will find themselves debating the type of conversational framework that will best suit their students. The following questions will be helpful in determining that framework:

- How will the reflective conversations, that will inevitably take time, fit into the timetable?
- How long should I/we expect these conversations to be, or indeed allow them to be?
- Would it be appropriate to group students together to make conversations more lively and to share their relevance?
- How can the very different nature of these coaching conversations be most effective when accommodating the very different needs of different students?
- How will students react to their learning profiles and how can I ensure that they will seek to pursue their learning journeys?

## **Planning Conversations that Inspire Students to make their Learning Journeys**

By questioning the student profile shapes you begin to gain an understanding of what they might imply about each student. Your interrogation will help you to shape a series of questions that you could profitably pursue with each student or group of students. Remember not just to look at the strengths and weaknesses demonstrated by scores for individual dimensions but at the pattern as a whole. This is important because you will be able to use personal strengths to support the development of appropriate interventions as you work on the weaknesses. Apart from that by thinking through each profile carefully you can learn a great deal more about your student's approach to learning than perhaps you already knew.

### **Where the dimensional profile shows 'a lot like me' or high scores**

#### **Ask yourself:**

- Do these profiles reflect my students as I know them?
- Do I agree with the profiles?
- Has each student provided a realistic view of themselves?
- Is there some over-confidence being exhibited here?
- How well does the student understand the dimensions?
- Do I think that this is a true representation of what the students are like most of the time?
- Are there times when they are nothing like this? When?
- Will the students see themselves as they are portrayed?
- Which of the dimensions are worthy of a closer look?
- Is the balance of strengths and weaknesses as I would expect?

#### **When approaching your students with their profiles you might try the following openers to prompt early conversation:**

- Your profile is really interesting. Do you think that it properly reflects how you learn?
- What do you think about this record of your strengths and weaknesses?
- Let's now go through your scores for each dimension/behavior?

- What do you think this profile says about you?
- Are you like this most of the time?
- What about when you are at home or out with your friends?
- Are there times when you know that you are not behaving like this? Share them with me.
- So, let's talk about a dimension in which you have a particular strength ... you choose
- Now. What about your weaknesses? Let's examine one of those ... your choice

### Where the dimensions tend to show 'a bit like me' or middling scores

#### Ask yourself:

- Is this student really like this or have they played safe?
- Would I agree with this profile or is this student showing me a lack of confidence in his or herself?
- Does the student actually fully understand the dimensions?
- Are there times when I overlook this student rather than trying to understand who they really are?
- Which of the dimensions do I think should have come through more strongly, or perhaps scored more weakly?
- Will the student see themselves like this?
- Perhaps I might try using a blank profile to get this student to draw a pattern that they think best represents them?

#### In this instance you might think about trying the following openers:

- Before we look at your actual profile, how about drawing it for me ... how you think the questionnaire will have drawn its picture of you from the questions you answered?
- Now let's compare what you have said about yourself ... remembering that in both cases it is you that has spoken!
- Why do you think that many of your scores are in the middle with relatively few as 'peaks' or strengths and equally few as 'troughs' or weaknesses?
- So, how about us tackling one dimension in which you have a strength together? You choose.
- Now, one in which you feel you might be weaker than in some of the others. Again your choice.

### Where the dimensions exhibit 'not like me' or particularly low scores

#### Ask yourself:

- Is this a profile I would expect for this student or have I missed something that I should have picked up?
- What, if anything, should now be worrying me about this student? Does this profile reflect what I already know? Is there something more that I can do about it?
- Does this student fully understand the dimensions? Maybe I should use the blank profile here, put the actual profile to one side and get them to draw what they think their profile should have said about them?
- Are there times when I know this student isn't like this?

- I think that I might begin here by getting the student to talk about their scores in one of each of the stringer and weaker dimensions.

**You might try the following openers:**

- Before we look at your actual profile, how about drawing it for me ... how you think the questionnaire will have drawn its picture of you from the questions you answered?
  - Now let's compare what you have said about yourself ... remembering that in both cases it is you that has spoken!
  - Why do you think that many of your scores are so low with relatively few as 'peaks' or strengths?
  - So, how about us tackling one dimension in which you have a strength together? You choose.
  - Now, one in which you feel you are weaker than in some of the others. Again your choice.
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