



**Ambition
Institute**

ECT

**Clinic 3: Working with
others**

Participant Workbook

**KEEP
GETTING
BETTER**

Name:

Session date:

Introduction

The purpose of clinics

Clinics are designed for you to:

- > **Focus on a typical teaching problem** that will apply across contexts
- > **Apply** knowledge to scenarios
- > **Evaluate** teaching practice
- > **Collaborate** with colleagues

Clinics are NOT designed to:

- > **Discuss specific problems** from your own contexts
- > **Repeat** self-study content

ECT Clinic 3 aims and outcomes

1. To understand the **components of an effective professional conversation**
2. To know how **effective conversations** look in a **range of contexts**
3. To reflect on **current practice** when holding conversations with others

This clinic will focus on a teaching problem:

How can teachers hold effective conversations with a range of people to support pupil well-being, motivation and progress?

Paired discussion

Task: In your pair, discuss the following:

Reflect on your experience of holding conversations with others so far in your career. This might include conversations with parents, colleagues, TAs, SENCOs, DSL or external agencies.

Questions:

- > What did you feel contributed to the success of the conversations?

Notes:

- > Which aspects of the conversations did you find challenging?

Notes:

Effective conversations

'Relational trust is grounded in the social respect that comes from the kinds of social discourse that take place across the school community. Respectful exchanges are marked by genuinely listening to what each person has to say and by taking these views into account in subsequent actions. Even when people disagree, individuals can still feel valued if others respect their opinions.'

(Schneider, 2003)

What are underlying features?

Underlying features are the components of an approach that can be applied across all subjects, phases or settings. They serve as a guide for what good practice is likely to look like.

Underlying features in this clinic

Underlying Feature	Description
Establish purpose	Identify conversation aims, ensuring that these focus on pupil well-being and progress. Consider the intended outcomes of the conversation, though be aware that these may change. Depending on the context, the purpose may be to gather further information or insight, to raise and resolve a specific issue or to celebrate success.
Plan	Gather the relevant information, data and/or examples needed to build a comprehensive picture of the pupil's well-being, motivation and progress. This process may include speaking to colleagues (e.g. teachers, TAs, SENCOs, pastoral leaders, careers advisors and other specialist colleagues), consulting school policies and engaging in wider reading and research.
Communicate clearly	Establish conversation aims then state ideas, views and attitudes clearly, concisely and frankly, using the supporting evidence collated during the planning stage, where relevant. Views should be delivered in a way that allows them to be open to discussion and, to varying degrees, revision.
Engage other people and actively listen	Create an environment where contributions and diverse beliefs are valued through a process of respectful inquiry. Invite other parties to share their views and treat this as an opportunity to learn. Employ strategies such as summarising, paraphrasing and asking follow-up questions and use these to actively check your own assumptions.
Set action steps	Identify specific and realistic actions, built into a clear review timeline where relevant.

I do

Task: Read the scenario.

Scenario 1

'I Do' scenario

Miss Andrews is a secondary history teacher. One of her year 10 pupils, Natalie, has missed three consecutive homework deadlines this term. Last term, Natalie only received one late mark for homework, but Miss Andrews

knows pupils do sometimes struggle to keep up to date in the second term of the GCSE course, when workload increases. She also knows that the department have worked hard to mitigate for this, by collating a booklet full of 15-minute weekly homework activities, designed to consolidate in-class learning.

According to department policy, Miss Andrews must now ring home to let Natalie's parents know that she will need to attend an after-school detention later in the week. She would like to use the conversation as an opportunity to discuss any barriers Natalie is currently facing when completing work at home, as well as hopefully gaining their support in encouraging the completion of future tasks.

Before the call, Miss Andrews emails Natalie's form tutor to check whether homework deadlines have been an issue for her in other subjects and, if so, whether any support strategies have already been put in place. The form tutor quickly responds to say she is not aware of a wider problem. Miss Andrews then spends 5 minutes reviewing the missed homework tasks and noting down how each piece feeds into pupil learning across the unit.

Miss Andrews calls home and has the following conversation with Natalie's father.

Miss Andrews: *Hello, my name is Miss Andrews. I'm calling from Hartland's Academy to talk to you about Natalie's history homework. Is this a convenient time for you to speak?*

Natalie's father: *Hi. Yes, that's fine.*

Miss Andrews: *Great, thank you for your time. I'm calling to let you know that Natalie has missed three consecutive homework deadlines this half term. Department policy in this case is to set a detention and follow this up with a call home, to check in and see whether there is anything we can do to support the completion of homework in the future. I have already spoken to Natalie about this, who said that she simply forgot about the homework tasks and is trying to be more organised with work moving forward. Are you aware that this is something Natalie is struggling with, or of any other barriers she might currently be facing?*

Natalie's father: *I know that Natalie has found the volume of homework this term a challenge and has therefore fallen behind in history and English. To be honest, I think she sometimes feels that the homework for these subjects is less valuable than the work she is receiving from science or maths. I appreciate that it's important to complete all homework but I'm also trying to manage Natalie's stress levels, so I'm encouraging her to prioritise the most important tasks.*

Miss Andrews: *Thanks for this information – it's useful to gain some insight into how Natalie's feeling about the work. I can understand completely that helping her manage her stress levels is your priority. Do you know why she feels that the recent history tasks haven't been that useful?*

Natalie's father: *I think there was a task a few weeks ago that involved revising some content from a previous unit. Natalie knows that revision is important but didn't feel that this was the best use of her time as the mock exam isn't until after Easter. Then, most recently, there was a source analysis task, which she said wouldn't come up in the exam anyway, so it felt a bit pointless.*

Miss Andrews: *Thank you. So, do you think it would be fair to say that Natalie is sometimes struggling to see how the homework tasks she's receiving for history support her learning, or at least perhaps not in the same way as the tasks she receives from other subjects?*

Natalie's father: *Yes.*

Miss Andrews: Great. I can see why Natalie feels this way, so it might be useful to have a bit of context on why we're setting these tasks and how they're supporting pupil learning. The first activity you mentioned was taken from a booklet of retrieval activities designed to support pupil revision of prior units. We know that returning to this learning regularly will boost retention, so whilst it seems that this is not a priority when Natalie has a lot on, it will in fact be much more effective than cramming her revision in during the Easter holidays. Likewise, whilst Natalie is right to say that the source included in the analysis task is unlikely to feature on the exam, it's important that pupils practise this style of question so that they become confident with analysing a range of sources. This question would take about 5 minutes in the exam, so Natalie should be spending no more than 15 minutes thinking about and responding to this type of homework task.

Miss Andrews gives Natalie's father the opportunity to ask any follow up questions. The two then agree that the most recent homework will be completed during detention and that both she and Natalie's father will talk to Natalie about how future homework tasks will support progress in the subject. Miss Andrews also lets Natalie's father know that she will summarise the content of their conversation in an email to Natalie's form tutor and English teacher, so that they too can support with any misconceptions around homework purpose.

Questions:

- a. Where can you see the underlying features in the scenario?
 - Establish purpose
 - Plan
 - Communicate clearly
 - Engage others and actively listen
 - Set action steps
- b. What difference do you think the underlying features make to the conversation?

Task: Take notes while the facilitator models how the underlying features appear in the first scenario.

Underlying feature	Response/suggestion
Establish purpose	
Plan	

Communicate clearly	
Engage others and actively listen	
Set action steps	
Other notes:	

We do

Read and analyse

Underlying features for scenario 2 and 3

The underlying features you need to have in mind as you read these scenarios are below. They are the same as for scenario 1:

Underlying Feature	Description
Establish purpose	Identify conversation aims, ensuring that these focus on pupil well-being and progress. Consider the intended outcomes of the conversation, though be aware that these may change. Depending on the context, the purpose may be to gather further information or insight, to raise and resolve a specific issue or to celebrate success.
Plan	Gather the relevant information, data and/or examples needed to build a comprehensive picture of the pupil's well-being, motivation and progress. This process may include speaking to colleagues (e.g. teachers, TAs, SENCOs, pastoral leaders, careers advisors and other specialist colleagues), consulting school policies and engaging in wider reading and research.
Communicate clearly	Establish conversation aims then state ideas, views and attitudes clearly, concisely and frankly, using the supporting evidence collated during the planning stage, where relevant. Views should be delivered in a way that allows them to be open to discussion and, to varying degrees, revision.
Engage other people and actively listen	Create an environment where contributions and diverse beliefs are valued through a process of respectful inquiry. Invite other parties to share their views and treat this as an opportunity to learn. Employ strategies such as summarising, paraphrasing and asking follow-up questions and use these to actively check your own assumptions.
Set action steps	Identify specific and realistic actions, built into a clear review timeline where relevant.

Task: Read both of the following scenarios.

Scenario 2

Miss Thompson is a reception teacher. This week, she is conducting home visits, giving her the chance to meet her new class members before they start next term.

During one of Miss Thompson's visits, the parents raise concerns about their daughter, Leah. Leah's parents describe finding her behaviour challenging and say that they are worried that this might impact her engagement with activities and ability to make friends at nursery. They explain that Leah seems to become frustrated easily and that this frustration regularly escalates into tantrums, leaving them 'at their wits end'. Later in the visit, Miss Thompson has the chance to speak to Leah herself. She says hello and asks questions such as 'how are you feeling about starting nursery?' and 'what are you most looking forward to?'. She notices that Leah does not fully engage with these questions and observes that, when her parents try to elicit an answer, Leah becomes cross, pushes at her mother, and moves away to play with a toy elsewhere in the room.

Miss Thompson feels that it is important to discuss the information gathered at the visit with a colleague, so that the school can be proactive in creating the right conditions for support when Leah arrives. She thinks it

likely that the school SENCO will need to assess Leah at some point but decides that, as the visit has raised potential safeguarding issues, contacting the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Mrs Yeboah, is her priority. In an email to Mrs Yeboah, Miss Thompson briefly outlines her observations from the visit, and arranges to meet with her later that day.

At the meeting, Miss Thompson explains that her primary concern is addressing any safeguarding issues. Mrs Yeboah agrees that it is important to investigate the issue further and asks some follow-up questions based on the details in Miss Thompson's email.

Mrs Yeboah: *You say here that the parents described being at 'their wits end'. How would you describe their interactions with Leah when you were there?*

Miss Thompson: *Both parents seemed relaxed and positive in their interactions. Leah was playing independently when we discussed her behaviour, but her mother then invited her over to meet me and Leah sat happily on her knee at first. When she didn't answer my questions, her father prompted her, saying 'Leah, Miss Thompson asked how you're feeling about starting reception. Can you answer her?'. But his tone was kind and he didn't seem to be placing any pressure on her.*

Mrs Yeboah: *Great, that's helpful. And how did the parents react when Leah still did not engage?*

Miss Thompson: *When Leah became frustrated, they let her leave the conversation and explained that this response is quite typical. They didn't seem cross. It was more that they were worried about how this might affect her ability to make friends, which they'd already commented on earlier in the visit.*

Mrs Yeboah: *Ok thank you. It sounds as though it's worth me following this up with a phone call, but I'm also confident that Leah is not at risk of harm.*

Miss Thompson: *I also wondered whether Leah might have undiagnosed speech and language issues. She was happy enough to engage when I said 'hello' and 'how are you?' but became frustrated when I asked how she was feeling about school. Could her behaviour be caused by difficulties with receptive language?*

Mrs Yeboah: *That sounds likely, though I'm not an expert. It would certainly be useful to speak to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), Mr Frim, about this.*

Miss Thompson: *Ok, thank you. Are you happy for me to contact Mr Frim right away, or would you like to speak with the parents first?*

Mrs Yeboah: *Yes, that's fine. Assessments can take time to organise, so do get in touch with Mr Frim and I will take the on the safeguarding concerns from here. Please let me know of any developments regarding the language needs.*

Scenario 3

Mr Spence has been contacted by the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) to let him know that a teaching assistant (TA), who has until now been supporting a year 11 pupil, has been re-allocated to his year 8 group for the start of the summer term. He arranges a meeting with the TA, Mr Khan, so that he can provide an overview of the class's upcoming unit. He is also keen to discuss the needs of the pupils Mr Khan will be supporting, offering his reflections based on their work so far this year and giving Mr Khan the opportunity to offer his insights from his previous work supporting them.

This year, the school has been reviewing its use of TAs in lessons. At the beginning of the spring term, the SENCO and Deputy Head of Teaching and Learning led a training session in which they introduced a useful framework for TA-pupil interactions, aimed at supporting pupil independence and use of meta-cognitive strategies. Mr Spence has not worked with a TA since this training, so takes some time to review the framework and corresponding training, then consider how this might apply to the upcoming year 8 unit. He also prints the unit overview and ensures that the lesson resources are clearly labelled and easy to access in the shared area.

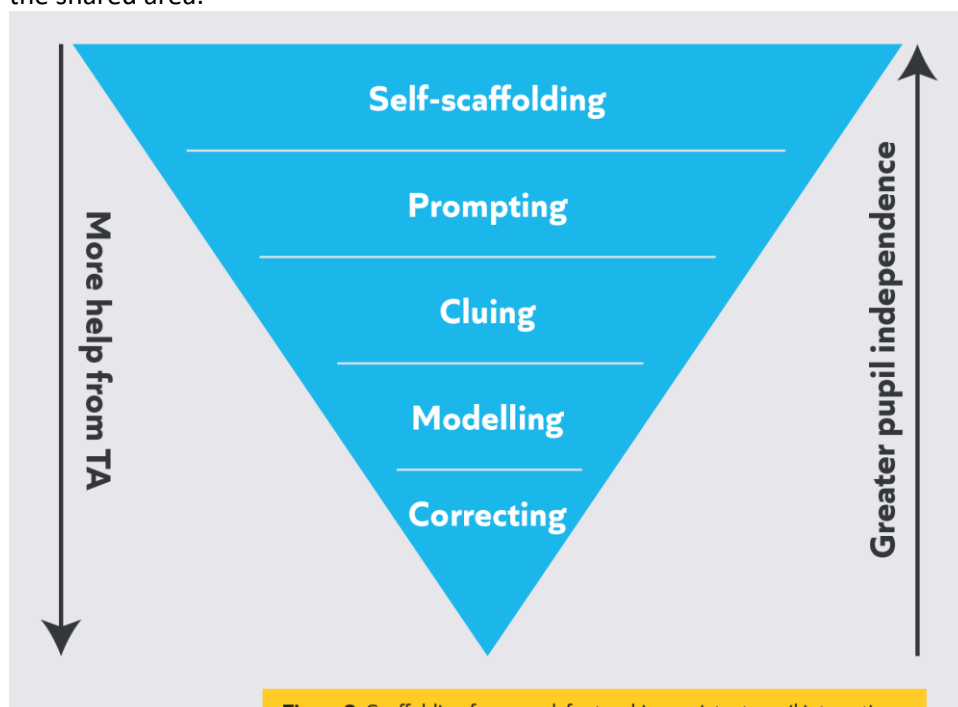


Figure 2. Scaffolding framework for teaching assistant-pupil interactions.

At the meeting, Mr Spence starts by talking Mr Khan through the unit. He explains that he will start by introducing pupils to the decimal multiplier method for solving percentage of amount problems, then move on to applying the method to word based problems. At this point, Mr Spence checks whether Mr Khan has any questions about the content he has just covered.

Mr Spence explains that the two pupils Mr Khan will be supporting are capable mathematicians, but that they can find it difficult to focus and become easily distracted when stuck. He tells Mr Khan that helping these two pupils develop strategies to work through problems more independently should be his priority for the unit and suggests that the new TA-pupil interactions framework seems like a great starting point for this. Mr Spence asks Mr Khan how he has found the framework so far and how easily he feels it would apply to this content. Mr Khan has already been working with one of the pupils in English and explains that, with some practise, the pupil has responded well to prompting and cluing and that correcting has become increasingly unnecessary. He adds that consistently employing a 10 second thinking time strategy has also been effective. This provides enough time for the pupil to think independently before Mr Khan intervenes, whilst also offering a clear enough structure to keep him on task. Mr Spence thanks Mr Khan for sharing the strategy and agrees to use this with the pupil himself, to maintain consistency.

Mr Spence and Mr Khan agree to meet for a 10-minute check in during breaktime in two weeks, to discuss the efficacy of the strategies they are putting into place and allow Mr Khan to ask any questions he has after some time in the class.

Task: Respond to the following questions independently.

Questions:

a. Where can you see the underlying features in the two scenarios?

- Establish purpose
- Plan

Underlying feature	Response/suggestion
Establish purpose	
Plan	
Communicate clearly	
Engage others and actively listen	
Set action steps	

Task: share in pairs.

Notes:

Task: share with the group.

Notes:

Reflect and record: Take a few minutes to reflect on the group discussion and record your final thoughts on scenarios 2 and 3.

Notes:

Non-example

Read and analyse

Underlying features for scenario 4

The underlying features you need to have in mind as you read these scenarios are below. They are the same as the previous scenarios:

Underlying Feature	Description
Establish purpose	Identify conversation aims, ensuring that these focus on pupil well-being and progress. Consider the intended outcomes of the conversation, though be aware that these may change. Depending on the context, the purpose may be to gather further information or insight, to raise and resolve a specific issue or to celebrate success.
Plan	Gather the relevant information, data and/or examples needed to build a comprehensive picture of the pupil's well-being, motivation and progress. This process may include speaking to colleagues (e.g. teachers, TAs, SENCOs, pastoral leaders, careers advisors and other specialist colleagues), consulting school policies and engaging in wider reading and research.
Communicate clearly	Establish conversation aims then state ideas, views and attitudes clearly, concisely and frankly, using the supporting evidence collated during the planning stage, where relevant. Views should be delivered in a way that allows them to be open to discussion and, to varying degrees, revision.
Engage other people and actively listen	Create an environment where contributions and diverse beliefs are valued through a process of respectful inquiry. Invite other parties to share their views and treat this as an opportunity to learn. Employ strategies such as summarising, paraphrasing and asking follow-up questions and use these to actively check your own assumptions.
Set action steps	Identify specific and realistic actions, built into a clear review timeline where relevant.

Task: Read the following scenario.

Scenario 4

Miss Andrews is a secondary history teacher. One of her year 10 pupils, Natalie, has missed three consecutive homework deadlines this term. Last term, Natalie only received one late mark, but Miss Andrews knows pupils do sometimes struggle to keep up to date with homework in the second term of the GCSE course, when workload increases. She also knows that the department have worked hard to mitigate for this by collating a booklet full of 15-minute weekly homework activities, designed to consolidate in-class learning.

According to department policy, Miss Andrews must now ring home to let Natalie's parents know that she will need to attend an after-school detention later in the week.

Before the call, Miss Andrews emails Natalie's form tutor to check whether homework deadlines have been an issue for her in other subjects. The form tutor quickly responds to say she is not aware of a wider problem. Miss

Andrews then makes a note of the missed homework tasks so that she will be able to refer to these during the call.

Miss Andrews calls home and has the following conversation with Natalie's father.

Miss Andrews: *Hello, my name is Miss Andrews. I'm calling from Hartland's Academy to talk to you about Natalie's history homework. Is this a convenient time for you to speak?*

Natalie's father: *Hi. Yes, that's fine.*

Miss Andrews: *Great, thank you for your time. I'm calling to let you know that Natalie has missed three consecutive homework deadlines this half term. Department policy in this case is to set a detention and follow this up with a call home. I have already spoken to Natalie about this, who said that she simply forgot about the homework tasks and is trying to be more organised with work moving forward. The tasks I've recently set are designed to support Natalie with her revision and consolidate some of the key skills we've been developing in lessons, so it's important that she completes them.*

Natalie's father: *Thanks for calling. I am aware that Natalie has been struggling to keep up with her English and history homework recently. I appreciate that it's important to complete these tasks but I'm also trying to manage Natalie's stress levels, so I'm encouraging her to prioritise the ones she feels are most important.*

Miss Andrews: *I can understand completely that helping Natalie manage her stress levels is your priority. We're very aware that pupils sometimes struggle with the increase of homework in year 10 and did think about this when designing our tasks. The three tasks that Natalie has missed, for example, shouldn't have taken more than 15-20 minutes each.*

Natalie's father: *Ok, Natalie hadn't mentioned that they were such short tasks. I'll have a chat with her this evening and see if we can draw up a homework schedule that helps her fit in all subjects.*

Miss Andrews: *Thank you, that would be great. To reassure you, Natalie is not the only one struggling to manage homework across all subjects. I'd like to support her as well so do let me know if there's anything I can do to help.*

Natalie's father: *I will do.*

Miss Andrews and Natalie's father agree that the most recent homework will be completed during detention. Miss Andrews also lets Natalie's father know that she will speak to Natalie about the length of time pupils are expected to spend on each task, to reassure her that her history homework should not be taking up huge amounts of her evening.

Task: Respond to the following questions independently.

Questions:

- A. Which of the underlying features are not present in the scenario? (There may be one or multiple)
- Establish purpose
 - Plan
 - Communicate clearly
 - Engage others and actively listen
 - Set action steps
- B. What impact does the lack of these features have on the conversation?

Missing underlying feature	Impact of feature not being present

Task: share in pairs.

Notes:

Task: share with the group.

Notes:

Reflect and record

Take a few minutes to reflect on the group discussion and record your final thoughts on scenario 4.

Notes:

Reflections and action planning

- > Of the underlying features, which do you already use to help you hold effective conversation?
- > Which of the underlying features do you think would be useful to discuss with your mentor or another experienced colleague?
- > Any questions?

Record your next steps:

Appendix

I do (2)

Task: Read the scenario.

Scenario 5

Mr Walker is a year 3 teacher in a two-form entry primary school. He and Mrs Santos, the other year 3 teacher, split the lesson planning for different subjects between them. Mr Walker has recently planned a six-lesson geography unit for this half term. Last term, Mr Walker worked with his mentor to apply his knowledge of working memory and retrieval practice to the planning of this unit.

Mr Walker's mentor has suggested that he ask to observe Mrs Santos, to see his planning in action. Mr Walker does this and arranges to follow the observation with a brief meeting, in which he aims to gather Mrs Santos' reflections on the planning so far. He lets Mrs Santos know that he will be asking what she feels has been effective about the lessons and whether she can think of any areas for improvement.

Mr Walker observes Mrs Santos teaching the fourth lesson in the sequence. During the observation, he notices that in place of the retrieval activity he had planned, Mrs Santos instead recaps the key learning from the previous lesson herself. Mr Walker is a little taken aback: he thought hard about the design of this activity and how it would enable pupils to make connections between prior learning and the content of this lesson. He makes a note to ask Mrs Santos about this, in addition to the two questions he has already planned.

Mr Walker opens the conversation by thanking Mrs Santos for letting him observe her lesson and emphasising how useful it has been to see his planning delivered by a different teacher, to a different set of pupils. He then asks Mrs Santos how she and the pupils has found the first four lessons.

Mrs Santos: *I think that the class has found the content of the lessons engaging. I think the sequencing of the lessons has worked well – it's really helping pupils to build a deep and varied knowledge of the UK and this has been embedded with regular retrieval practice.*

Mr Walker: *Great, thank you. The sequencing seems to be working well with my class too. They particularly enjoyed the second lesson on cities and counties. I'm pleased that you think the retrieval activities have been effective; I worked on retrieval with my mentor last term, so it's been useful thinking about how to embed opportunities for this in each lesson. On that, I noticed in my observation that you didn't use the retrieval activity I'd planned for lesson four. Was there a reason for this?*

Mrs Santos: *Yes, my only area for improvement with the unit so far is that we're trying to cover a lot! The writing task in lesson three felt a bit rushed and when I looked at my class's books, I could see that they hadn't really understood the success criteria. For this lesson, I decided to skip the retrieval task to create time for me to model the writing more thoroughly, before the pupils worked independently.*

Mr Walker: *That's really useful feedback. Do you think that developing high quality writing is the priority? My class were also tight on time for this, but I still included the retrieval task, as I wanted pupils to recap on prior knowledge.*

Mrs Santos: *I think the most important factor to consider is your class's needs. I felt that I could connect the content of the lesson you observed with previous lessons as I was going, without compromising pupil*

understanding. The evidence from the class's books revealed that supporting writing was more of a priority this lesson. I certainly wouldn't say that writing skills are more important than retrieval, just that across the unit I needed to strike more of a balance.

Mr Walker: *Okay, thank you. It sounds as though it's useful to keep the retrieval tasks in the resource pack, though I will add a note to it summarising our discussion, for reference when using the resources next year. It would be great to add the 'we do' model you wrote in your lesson today to the resources, so that this is available to use again next year. Would that be okay?*

Mrs Santos: *Of course.*

Mr Walker and Mrs Santos then agree to meet again in a couple of weeks to review the final two lessons of the unit and decide whether any content needs to be removed to allow for independent writing time.

Questions:

- a. Where can you see the underlying features in the scenario?
 - Establish purpose
 - Plan
 - Communicate clearly
 - Engage others and actively listen
 - Set action steps
- b. What difference do you think the underlying features make to the conversation?

Task: Take notes while the facilitator models how the underlying features appear in the first scenario.

Underlying feature	Response/suggestion
Establish purpose	
Plan	

<p>Communicate clearly</p>	
<p>Engage others and actively listen</p>	
<p>Set action steps</p>	
<p>Other notes:</p>	

References

Robinson, V., 2015. *Open to Learning Conversations: Background Paper*. Auckland: The University of Auckland

Schneider, B., 2003. Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for School Reform. Available at: [Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for School Reform \(ascd.org\)](#) (Accessed: 24 February 2023).

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