Designing and Sharing Resources to Support More Educators

With the start of the pandemic, NIET began developing resources to support educators with high-quality instruction in virtual and hybrid learning environments. These resources, which have been viewed tens of thousands of times, both supported current partners and helped new educators to learn about us. NIET specialists and professional learning team members drew from their experiences coaching and supporting educators to design the tools and templates. We saw principals share resources with their teams, and teacher leaders accessed new tools to support their coaching.

This summer, NIET designed a new web page, NIET.org/resources, which is now the most viewed page on the NIET website. It includes more than 100 publicly available resources, including planning and guidance documents, instructional and coaching tools, advice for remote and hybrid learning, templates, and webinars. Resources cover everything from curriculum implementation and content knowledge to learning acceleration and student ownership.

This fall, NIET released new resources to help educators foster a positive school environment and support character development. The end of the semester is a key moment for leaders to step back and celebrate the strengths they have seen educators exhibit so far in the school year. For the past 18 months, teachers have shown incredible resilience, and as they have continued to adapt and learn new strategies, they are discovering skills and strengths that could be shared across the campus.

On the opposite page, we have an example of a resource that can facilitate that sharing through a mid-year reflection. Leaders and coaches can use this guide to support teachers and drive student growth by pinpointing instructional strengths they have observed and making a plan to spread those practices across the building. For more tools to foster a positive environment and strengthen student ownership and learning acceleration, visit NIET.org/resources.

Mid-year reflection guide to support school leaders and coaches in fostering a strengths-based environment

STEPS FOR STRENGTHS-BASED REFLECTION	GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS AND COACHES
Step 1: Gather evidence of teacher strengths from the past semester that led to student engagement, ownership, and a positive learning experience.	• How did you see a teacher try new instructional strategies or practices these past few months? How did you respond and reward that action? • What strategies did a teacher try to increase student engagement? Were there "wins" you could share with the broader team? • What specific actions did a teacher take that positively impacted a student's growth and learning? • How can you proactively provide positive feedback to the teacher about the observed strength(s) to encourage and build investment for a later conversation? Consider sending a quick note detailing the strength and how you observed students benefiting from this instructional move.
Step 2: Decide which teacher strengths to highlight and leverage in other classrooms. Take a moment to bring attention to specific, individual teacher strengths in a public or celebratory way.	• What do you want your school environment to look and feel like in the spring? How did you see teachers building momentum toward that vision this fall? • Is there a specific teacher move you observed that addresses an identified need in the building? • Is there a specific teacher move that might be the easiest for another teacher to observe or effectively replicate? • How can you shout out the teacher's strength in front of their peers? • How can you celebrate the teacher's practice while acknowledging their resilience and specifically pointing out obstacles they had to overcome this year?
Step 3: Identify the most effective place to leverage this strength.	• Who else could utilize or try out the strength(s) you observed? • Who already has a positive working relationship with the teacher with the identified strength(s)? Would that teacher be willing to work with his or her peers to share more? • Who has a classroom culture that is primed for the identified strategy? • How can you utilize this strengths-based process to bring your teachers closer together as a team? Consider guiding PLC/cluster conversations around an identified strength and allowing teachers to share additional feedback.

Step 4: Develop a plan for transferring the strategy across classrooms.	• What structures are already in place that allow teachers to collaborate?
	• Which leadership team member(s) is the best fit to guide this process?
	• Which process for transfer is most appropriate in this situation:
	  - Co-planning, observation, and debrief
	  - Collaborative planning with grade level/department
	  - Analysis of impact of the teacher strategy on student work
	  - Recorded lesson segment shared as a model in PLCs/cluster

Step 5: Determine areas of focus and a strategy to check-in on progress.	• Based on the identified strengths across the school, how will you select which areas to target and focus on in the upcoming semester? How will you communicate that with educators? • What supports will teachers need to scale the transfer of this learning into their classrooms? How will their progress be monitored? • How can you collaborate to implement the plan and make refinements? • How will you follow up to ensure teachers feel supported? • How will you define success? • How will you celebrate success, individually and publicly?