

5 Questions

Every Instructional Coach Should Ask During a Post-Observation Debrief

Why this tool exists

Post-observation debriefs can either:

- reinforce compliance and defensiveness
or
- build teacher clarity, agency, and instructional growth.

This tool is designed to help instructional coaches anchor debriefs in student learning, evidence, and forward movement, without triggering shame or lowering expectations.

Use these five questions to shift conversations from:

- performance → learning
- self-protection → reflection
- “What went wrong?” → “What will I do next?”

The 5 Questions

1. What did students actually learn today?
Coach for evidence, not intention.
2. Where did you see evidence of student thinking?
Coach for cognition, not compliance.
3. What instructional move had the biggest impact on learning?
Coach for cause and effect.
4. Where did students struggle—and why?
Coach for instructional conditions, not student deficits.
5. Given what you saw today, how will you adjust tomorrow?
Coach for growth, not reflection alone.

How to Use This Tool

- Choose one teacher and practice these questions intentionally
- Use the coach stances to stay regulated and grounded
- Notice how the conversation shifts when clarity leads

Remember:

Instructional Clarity makes continuous growth possible and measurable.

In Partnership,
~ Dr. O
The Shift