

The Mindful Reflection Protocol

A Process for Checking Unconscious Bias

*Compare and contrast with ECMHC strategies, consultative stance, Theory of Change, etc.

What are the useful elements of this protocol?

Step 1. Ask the teacher to describe the student's behavior or interaction.

- a. Describe what you and the student said and did like it was a movie.
- b. Describe how the student reacted to your actions or comments?
- c. Collect notes on multiple days and at different times of the day if you can.

Step 2. Give the teacher an opportunity to reflect on his feelings and thoughts when working with the student.

- a. How does this student make you feel? What triggers you about this behavior?
- b. What are your assumptions? Why do you find the student problematic?

Step 3. Ask the teacher to explain his interpretation of the student's behavior.

- a. What is your interpretation of the student's behavior?
- b. What leads you to this interpretation?
- c. What are your assumptions?
- d. What are your expectations for the situation? How is the student not meeting your expectations?
- e. In what way is the behavior interfering with learning?

Step 4. Ask the teacher to consider alternative explanations of the student's behavior. Guide the teacher through the processes of checking (deconstructing) his assumptions and reframing the behavior based on deep cultural values and neuroscience of connection.

- a. Review the explanations and reflect on why the student may be doing what he or she does. Look for patterns in your behavior and the student's behavior.
- b. List alternative explanations or interpretations of the student's behavior.

Step 5. Help the teacher identify one small change he can make to reframe the behavior and respond differently to it. Make a plan for gentle implementation.

- a. How will you change or respond differently?
- b. Brainstorm ideas on how to change the environment, your actions, and/or expectations for this student.
- c. Experiment with responding differently. Note what happens. Reflect on your feelings as well as the student's response.
- d. Be mindful of your own triggers and find ways to manage when you are (i.e., S.O.D.A.)

Step 6: Continuously revisit this process to reassess your attributions and identify progress with the student.

- a. Notice when you are overgeneralizing or interpreting behavior from a deficit perspective.
- b. Remember that this process is a continuous one, so create opportunities to revisit the steps periodically to continue your growth and understanding of students.