



# INTERPERSONAL side-by-side skills

Learning happens at the speed of trust. It is important to connect on a personal level with your colleagues as you build psychological safety. Learning is both social and emotional; deep relationships can lead to deep learning.



## Language is Important



Language is used by a community to negotiate shared meaning and build group coherence and understanding around ideas, behaviors, and actions. The words and structures that make up language not only convey an **explicit surface meaning**, but also **implicitly shape thought and influence behavior**. This is the **hidden power of language**: Its ability to subtly convey messages that shape our thinking, sense of self, and group affinity. [Source: [Project Zero](#)]

## Language to Consider Using During Learning Conversations



**I wonder...**



**Tell me more...**



**What makes you say that?**



**I'd be interested in learning (or hearing) more about...**



**What I'm hearing you say is...**



**I'm curious to know more about...**



**What do you think would happen if...**



**What do you think?**



**Could you please give me an example of...**



**What else can you tell me?**

# Active Listening

As a side-by-side learning partner, it is important that you listen actively to the individuals you are learning alongside. Listening is one of the powerful ways we show respect for and interest in people's thinking. Listening starts with genuine interest in the other.

First seek to understand before you engage in the learning together. Listening actively helps uncover deeply held beliefs, both conscious and subconscious, and understanding these beliefs can offer insight as to where you might nudge the learning next.



## Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing and summarizing will help you to make sense of a speaker's points and will also allow you to demonstrate that you are listening closely.



## Pay Attention & Clarify

Actively listen to what the individual is saying. Make space to hear without reloading what your response will be. Ask: Tell me more! and What make you say that?



## Body Language

Pay close attention to the way you're standing or sitting. Are you open to the conversation? Are they?



## Withhold Judgement

We are all doing the best that we can. Instead of passing judgement on others, seek to understand where individuals are and what their next nudges might be.



## Ask Open Questions

Closed questions are ones that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no", while open questions are designed to promote longer, more thoughtful responses.



## Be Attuned to Emotions

Try to be aware of the emotions that individuals are feeling throughout conversations. Be ready to make changes to your approach when needed. You may want to acknowledge the emotions.



## Seek to Understand

Listen for the belief sets that underpin the decisions that are being made. What might the educator's image of the child be? Ask questions that will help you to dig deeper.



## Be Vulnerable

Come in to conversations as the expert, not as an equal learning partner. Make yourself vulnerable by sharing mistakes made and struggles you have had with your own learning. Vulnerability builds trust.