

August 2016

# Placing Student Feedback at the Center of Teaching and Learning

*Accelerating Learning for Overage,  
Under-Credited Adolescents*

A School Redesign Model based on  
the work at Bronx Haven High School



An initiative of the  
New York City Transfer School Common Core Institute

**T**he way in which teachers engage in two-way, formative, skill-aligned feedback with students is central to student learning. Indeed, it is one of the most influential factors identified in education research. *Placing Student Feedback at the Center of Teaching and Learning: Accelerating Learning for Overage, Under-Credited Adolescents* describes a set of practices and tools for educators who are committed to using feedback as a powerful way of supporting students, particularly those who struggle academically. The feedback practices and tools described in this monograph have worked for Bronx Haven High School, where they were developed during participation in an innovative New York City professional development institute for high schools serving overage, under-credited students who have struggled to find success in school.

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### *Overview of This Monograph*

*Placing Student Feedback at the Center of Teaching and Learning: Supporting Overage, Under-Credited Adolescents* describes the practices and tools implemented at Bronx Haven High School for educators to improve results for students who have struggled in the past.

Chapter 1 provides a rationale for the implementation of feedback practices as a key lever for supporting students in mastering the Common Core standards.

The subsequent chapters provide practices and tools to use in implementing strong feedback practices: The Standards-to-Skills Loop in Chapter 2, the *Student Feedback Form* and *Conferring Protocol* in Chapter 3, *Individualized Student Engagement Chart* in Chapter 4, and the *Student Academic Skill Chart* in Chapter 5.

The monograph closes with an overview of the key elements needed to lay the groundwork for successfully putting these practices in place.

An appendix provides blank copies of the tools for modification or use in other schools.

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**Based on the practices of the professional educators of Bronx Haven High School:**

*Lucinda Mendez, Principal*

*Nayiri Panossian, ELA Teacher*

*Tanell Pendleton, ELA Teacher*

*Paula Rosa-Gerstein, Social Studies Teacher*

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**August 2016**

## *The New York City Transfer School Common Core Institute*

The New York City Transfer School Common Core Institute is a unique professional development model. It was launched in 2012 to build the capacity of teachers and schools to help students who have struggled in public schools to master the Common Core standards. From 2012 to 2015, all participating schools exclusively served students who are overage, under-credited and had fallen behind in high school in the past. Schools were selected through a competitive process that involved identifying clear goals, crafting action plans, and creating teacher and administrator teams to support the work.

Once admitted, schools were provided three years of job-embedded coaching and technical assistance by the Department of Education and its professional development partners, reDesign and Eskolta School Research and Design. Together, this team of partners collaborated to simultaneously strengthen instructional practices and transform systems and structures to support these new practices. This occurred through two core components:

- **Job-embedded coaching and capacity-building.** The work launched with site-based strategic planning to support individual schools as they refined their Common Core focus and created a plan for participation in the Institute for the year. Teachers, principals, and instructional teams at each school then worked with partners on their Common Core alignment efforts, collaborating for approximately 20 days, over the course of each year.
- **Communities of practice.** Inter-school collaborative opportunities that enable school teams to learn from one another occurred throughout each year of involvement in the Institute, through a mix of hosted site visits, full-day Saturday Symposiums for cross-school sharing and planning, and Leadership Sessions for school principals.

### **A Customized Approach: Bronx Haven's Focus on Feedback**

At the heart of the institute's success is its commitment to customizing and tailoring support to individual school participants through a synergistic approach of transforming educators' practices at the same time as reshaping school structures that form the context within which those practices occur. Each school defines its own goals and pathway, with partners providing targeted support. At the center of this effort at Bronx Haven High School was the process of providing students with specific and concrete feedback that could be used simultaneously by students to propel their learning and by teachers to strengthen their instructional practice.

# *When teachers began integrating*

**more time for feedback and revisions into classes at Bronx Haven High School**, there was concern that the time taken away from covering content could initially lead scores on the statewide Regents exams to drop. Instead, **Regents scores improved. In every content area. For three years in a row.**

**T**hat outcome tells only a small part of the story. Since changing classroom practice to emphasize actionable feedback, Bronx Haven has seen a shift in practice that has, in turn, had a dramatic effect on student learning. Students who once avoided feedback now seek it out; students who were once lost after receiving comments now submit revisions showing growth in key academic skills.

In 2013, Bronx Haven used its participation in New York City's Transfer School Common Core Institute (TSCCI) to launch a multiyear effort to shift the school's focus from traditional outcome measures, like standardized test scores, toward the learning process itself. TSCCI is a unique professional development model launched in 2012 by the New York City Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Readiness to help high school students who are farthest behind to reach the high standards of the Common Core.

Bronx Haven principal Lucinda Mendez and teacher leaders committed to developing and implementing





a set of feedback and instructional practices to help students meet the Common Core standards. To support this work, they developed a set of tools that allowed them to place core skills at the center of feedback and to track the frequency, type, and quality of feedback between students and teachers. With this, they began to:

- Improve the quality of teacher-to-student interaction on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis
- Deepen understanding of student progress, and
- Inform lesson and unit planning.



## Bronx Haven High School



Bronx Haven High School enrolls approximately 180 students in the Bronx’s Melrose neighborhood, where nearly half the population lives in poverty. The school’s student body is largely made up of students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunch by federal poverty guidelines.

Though the school is located in one of the most distressed communities in the city, Bronx Haven is a school with a warm and welcoming environment. Walk the halls and you encounter students and adults greeting each other like family. The school has put great attention on building a culture in which students are accepted while simultaneously being pushed, as students describe it, “to grow more mature” regarding how they make decisions about their own lives.

Yet, since Bronx Haven High School opened its doors in 2008, Principal Lucinda Mendez had found herself concerned that conversations about student performance too often turned to test scores and credit accumulation. To Principal Mendez, the school’s primary mission is to re-engage students as learners; test scores and credits are important but secondary.

## The Impact of Strengthening Student Feedback

Over the three years that Bronx Haven High School began developing and adopting these feedback practices and tools, exam passing rates in every core exam increased each year: in English by 28 percent, in algebra by 36 percent, in global history by 11 percent, in U.S. history by 24 percent, and in science by 41 percent. These numbers are impressive under any circumstances, but amongst the cohort of NYC

Transfer Schools, serving students who have experienced repeated failure in school, this growth is particularly dramatic.

But the changes go much deeper than test scores.

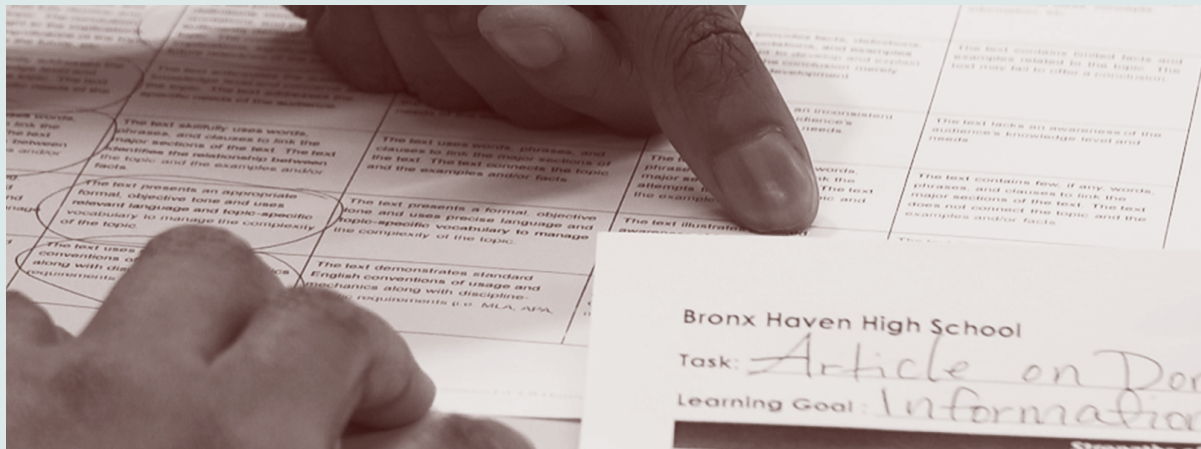
Since teachers have integrated these tools and practices into their work with students, “kids have changed the way they speak about their

work,” Principal Lucinda Mendez reports. “Daily grading and daily check-ins communicate: We’re checking in with you daily, we care about your performance. This drives belonging, value, and attendance.”

Tanell Pendleton, a Bronx Haven teacher who helped develop the tools, describes how formalizing feedback has changed her practice, with the goal not only “to facilitate







the growth mindset for the student but also to inform the teaching practice. You might think the student really got the activity, but when you go to give feedback, [you realize that if you're] providing the same feedback to all students, maybe you need to teach that differently." Tanell says that previously a common mindset was "they get it or don't. But," she explains, "you go through the process of evaluating work with strengths and weaknesses using the tools, and it gives you a clearer picture of the details."

The effect is evident, too, in students' own reflections, in which they are able to describe their own learning process and key skills. As one student explains: "My teacher told me I needed to be more analytical and have more details on the topic I was working on, so I took my time and added inferences." This student explains that her grade improved "because when we talked about it and we met she had a chart and she was able to tell me exactly when I did it right and what else I needed to work on." Another student similarly describes

how guidance on the feedback form helped his writing: "Before I used this tool, I wasn't specific enough in my writing. I didn't use textual evidence. My teacher would ask, Who is he? Now I have to be specific. Now my essays are more detailed and they have more information."

The care, attention, and actionable guidance teachers give students through the new structures for feedback have been part of a dramatic change for teachers and students alike at Bronx Haven.

**The care, attention, and actionable guidance teachers give students through the new structures for feedback have been part of a dramatic change for teachers and students alike at Bronx Haven.**

1



**Placing Student  
Feedback at the Center  
of Teaching and  
Learning**



*Organizing feedback around carefully crafted, skill-based, academic learning goals and targets—with associated assessment criteria—provides students with clear guideposts for improvement.*

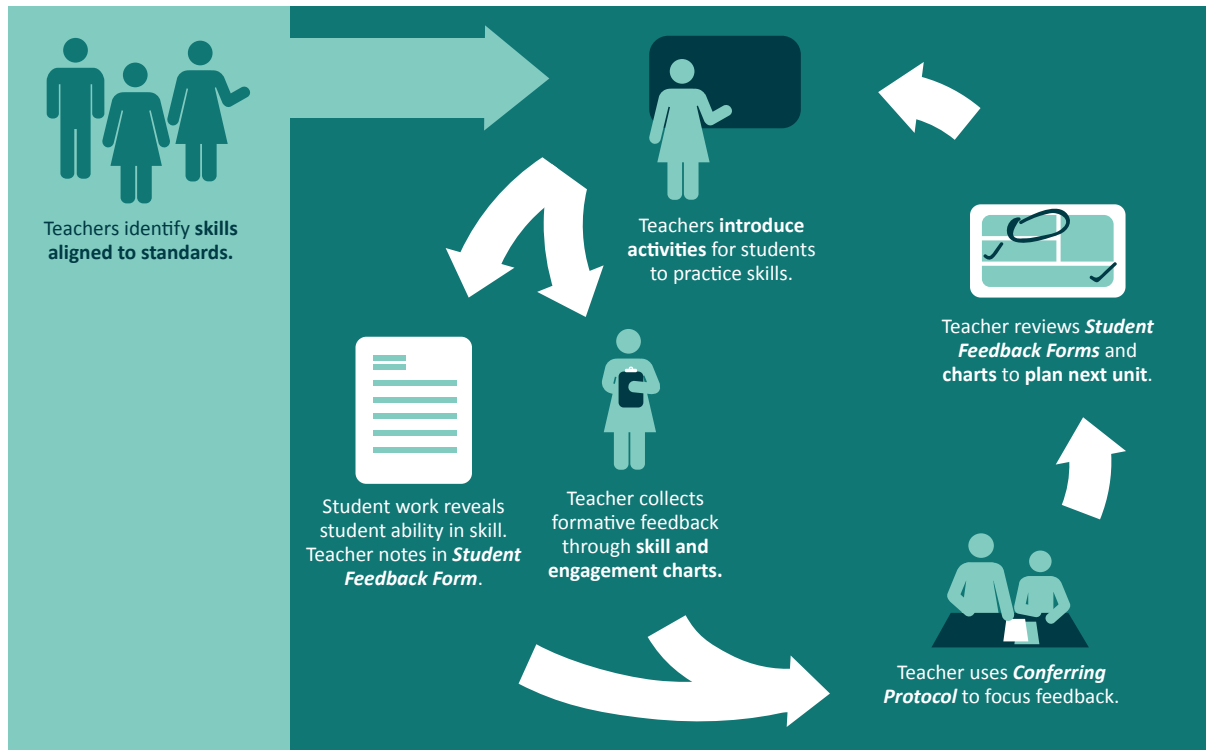
Every day in every class, students are getting feedback. They get feedback from the offhand comment a teacher makes, they get feedback from the written notes at the top of an assignment, they even get feedback from the lack of any comment at all. When teachers act carefully, thoughtfully, and intentionally, they can shape feedback to ensure it accelerates learning and builds trust, particularly with students who felt alienated from school in the past (Yeager et al. 2013). In the process, the loop from instruction to feedback and back to instruction informs and strengthens teacher practice.

High-quality feedback between a teacher and a student is one of the most influential success factors identified in education research (Hattie 2008). When effective, feedback is part of a continuous loop whereby teachers identify learning objectives, focus their instruction on those objectives, then help students learn from their performance against them. The introduction of the Common Core standards in New York and across the country has emphasized the importance of making these learning objectives cognitively demanding. Organizing feedback around carefully crafted, skill-based learning goals and assessments can provide students with clear guideposts for reaching such demanding levels of thinking and feeling responsibility for deciding their own learning goals (Brookhart 2008).

Practitioners who implement a powerful feedback cycle within their classrooms simultaneously discover that “the feedback students give teachers can be more powerful than the feedback teachers give students” (Tovani 2012). The loop of continuous learning allows students to discover what they are capable of while simultaneously enabling teachers to learn what has and has not been effective in their own instruction. Instead of simply developing lessons, delivering them, and testing to see how well it went at the end of a unit, they refine their instructional approaches as they go based on the rich information they gather from exchanges with students about their work.

## Placing Student Feedback at the Center of Teaching and Learning

A series of inter-related practices enable the work described in this monograph.



### **When Planning: Identify and support specific learning objectives.**

It begins with the practice of identifying learning objectives focused on individual literacy skills that are reinforced through scaffolded classroom instruction, daily opportunities to check for student understanding, and frequent opportunities to assess students' growing competence. (This is reviewed in greater depth in Chapter 2.)



### **When Conferencing: Tie feedback to student work.**

It continues as teachers and students engage in frank and transparent conversations about the quality of student learning, always oriented to providing students with control and clarity in their learning process. Teachers support this work with the *Student Feedback Form* and the *Conferring Protocol* (detailed in Chapter 3) to anchor one-on-one conferences in the crucial steps of noting specific academic strengths and areas to improve in core skills.

### **When Teaching: Monitor learning in the moment.**

The cycle between feedback and instruction continues in the moment of instruction with tools that enable feedback during classroom instruction. The *Individualized Student Engagement Chart* (detailed in Chapter 4) enables teachers to engage students in brief reflection on their day-to-day performance and trends in participation. Alongside this, the *Student Academic Skill Chart* (detailed in Chapter 5) helps teachers to note student progress against preselected skills during in-class work and to track progress. Overall trends observed on the tracker make it easier for teachers to tailor activities to meet the skill-development needs of individual students and student groups.

Feedback is a part of every student's experience of school. It can be part of every student's path to success. The practices presented in this monograph help to create the conditions in which students can achieve that success.

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**The  
Standards-to-Skills  
Loop**



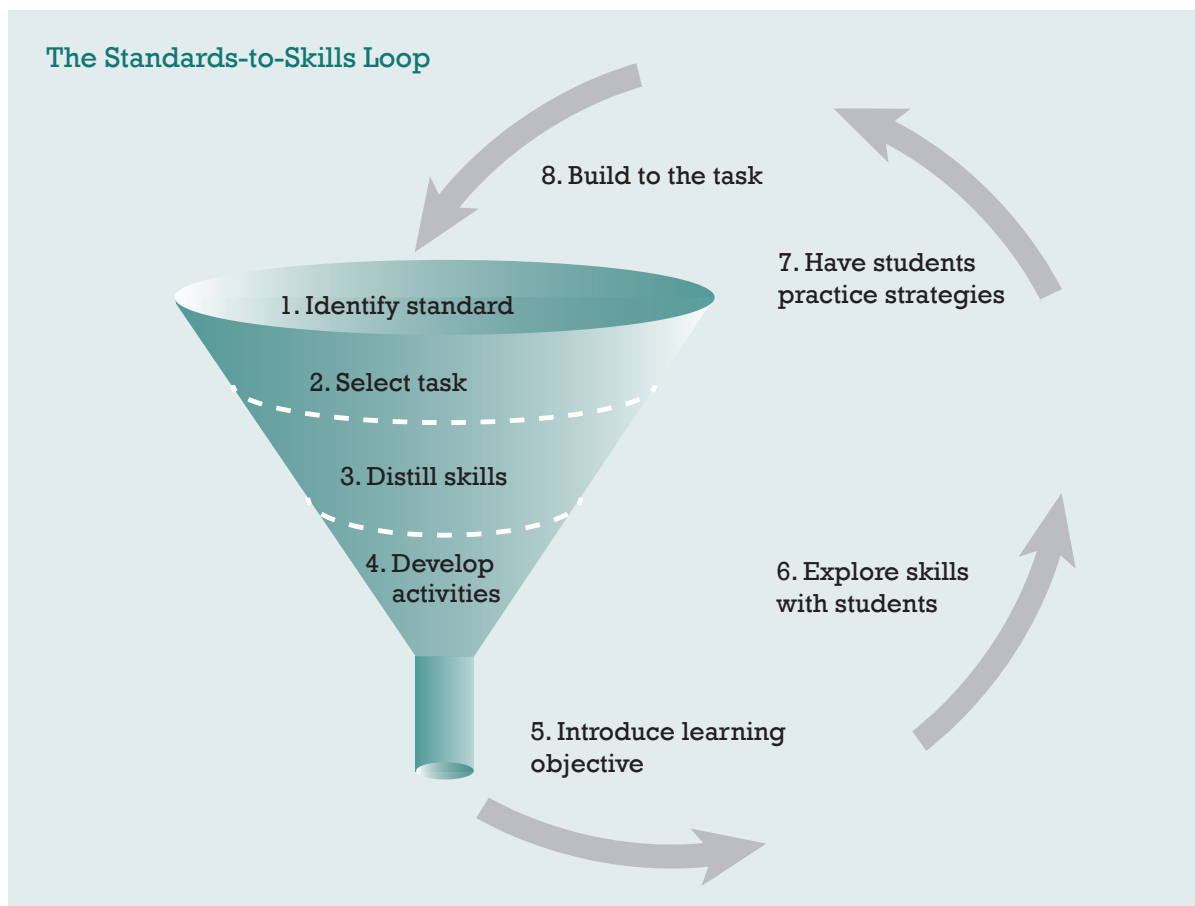
How *The Standards-to-Skills Loop* is put to use

<b>Purpose:</b>	Establishes clear skill learning objectives and provides tiered support for skill growth
<b>Who uses it:</b>	Teachers
<b>When is it used:</b>	To design a unit and the activities and culminating tasks that form that unit

### SUPPORTING STUDENTS' SKILL DEVELOPMENT

forms the backbone of the teaching and learning process. Teachers who want students to master high-level Common Core standards need to carefully structure how they will help them develop the individual skills that lead to that mastery. The Standards-to-Skills Loop is a way of mapping the path to such rigorous standards through attainable performance tasks. It is described here as a loop because it entails more than a straight-line path that

is often implied by the adoption of state standards and the notion that those standards will simply be “taught.” Rather, the loop follows a multistep path in which a standard is first broken down—defined, distilled, introduced, and explored in detail—before it is then gradually reassembled in the process of practicing and building to the assessment task. If teachers do not engage in this Standards-to-Skills Loop, students are likely to struggle to meet Common Core-aligned goals.



## Steps to the *Standards-to-Skills* Loop

### 1 Identify standard.

Supporting learning begins with defining the learning standards you will be working toward. What exactly is it that students need to learn at this moment, on their path to college and career success? In transfer schools, this is a particularly critical question because students enroll with a considerable range of strengths and gaps. As a result, what they will know is far less important than what they will know how to do. The Common Core standards provide a set of ambitious and important goals for what students will be able to do: from expressing oneself clearly to contrasting meaning from multiple texts. In order to start down the path of having a few clear learning objectives, work together as a teaching staff to explore the Common Core standards. In teacher team meetings, identify specific items from the Common Core standards that can be practiced and learned across the school. This consistent schoolwide focus on what students should learn how to do provides a valuable starting point for instruction.

For example, at Bronx Haven High School, teachers in English and social studies classes focused on argumentative writing as a vital schoolwide objective. Various elements of the Common Core standards address the skills involved in such writing. Tanell Pendleton, an English teacher, specifically identified Common Core Literature Reading Standard 1 as an overarching objective for her class: “Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.”

### 2 Select task.

With the overarching standard in mind for a single course or unit, identify a task for students to complete in that unit. Students will work toward completing that task in order to show that they have achieved the standard. This task should result in a work product that can then be discussed in feedback and revision as the teacher helps the student engage in skill development.

At Bronx Haven, from the ultimate aim of citing strong and thorough textual evidence in a text, Pendleton identified the task of writing a five-paragraph essay drawing upon evidence from a single text as the task that students would work toward. This task would provide a concrete work product that students could develop over the course of an instructional unit.

### 3 Distill skills.

A standard and the task connected to it are usually too broad for students to reach directly. They need scaffolding and support along the way to reach it. The next step in building this scaffolding is to distill the skills that enable accomplishing the task. Use a teacher team meeting to review the standard and discuss what the component skills are that go into achieving it. A skill should be small enough to be teachable in an activity or lesson (even though it may take several activities or lessons to master).

As you define a skill, it is also helpful to define the levels of mastery of that skill. At Bronx Haven, the high school level of the Common Core is used as Level Three (or the “Developed” level) of a four-level rubric. From here, what is one step down to a “Developing” level? What is one step up to a “Well-Developed” level? Drawing on the Common Core for different grades can help. Naming these levels can later serve as a focal point for feedback for students as they seek to progress from one level to the next.

Pendleton and her colleagues discussed what skills enable students to use evidence. They enumerated various skills such as: the ability to select the most significant and relevant facts, details, quotations, and information from a text, and the ability to assess the strength and limitations of sources of evidence. In each case, the skill was something that the teachers could envision teaching to students. Taken together, the skills would help students to accomplish the task. For these skills, they then named levels in a rubric:

	Well-Developed (100)	Developed (75)	Developing (50)	Under-Developed (25)
Use of Evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples from the text(s)</li> <li>Skillfully integrates information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas and advance the thesis</li> <li>Skillfully assesses the strengths and limitations of each source</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops the topic by selecting significant and relevant facts, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples from the text(s) <b>(W2)</b></li> <li>Integrates information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas and advance the thesis <b>(W8)</b></li> <li>Assesses the strengths and limitations of each source <b>(W8)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attempts to develop the topic using facts and other information, but evidence is inaccurate, irrelevant, and/or insufficient</li> <li>Attempts to integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas and advance the thesis, but information is insufficient or irrelevant</li> <li>Attempts to assess the strengths and limitations of each source, but misinterprets information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not develop the topic by selecting information and examples from the text(s)</li> <li>Does not integrate information from the text</li> <li>Does not assess the strengths and limitations of each source</li> </ul>

## 4 Develop activities.

With individual skills outlined, you now need to develop or cull activities that will help students acquire them. To design such activities requires drawing upon available resources inside or outside the school and one's own teaching experience. You will draw on these activities as you go through the steps enumerated here: explain the skill (see step 5 below), demonstrate its use (see step 6 below), and provide students with a strategy to practice it (see step 7 below). As students do this, they build their ability to accomplish the task (see step 8 below).

## 5 Introduce the learning objective.

Transparency is key to helping students become self-aware learners. Once you know the objective you are working toward, make sure that students know it as well. Explicitly introduce the language of the objective to students and explain that they will now be working on achieving it. Provide them with an active way to engage with what it means and to connect this to the skills that lead to it. One of the most straightforward ways to do this is by asking students to read and interpret the learning objective in an individual writing exercise. Then ask them to share what they wrote, using this to lead a full-group discussion in which you note where students have identified the individual skills that comprise the target.

Pendleton hands students copies of the Common Core Literature Reading Standard 11-12.1: "Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain." As a five-minute lesson opener, she asks them to answer on their own: "What is textual evidence?" This then forms the basis of a brief group discussion in which she draws upon the students' insights to highlight key skills.

## 6 Explore the skill with students.

Students who are struggling in high school often have not had the opportunity to develop skills that many teachers otherwise take for granted. Teachers must take the time to show students what the skill looks like when it is being used. This generally takes some combination of a few forms:

- a "think aloud," in which the teacher models using the skill and talks out their thought process in doing so;
- a rubric review, in which the teacher discusses levels of a rubric with students; or
- one-on-one conferences, in which the teacher talks to individual students about how they are using the skill.

By generating examples that show effective use of the skill with texts, you provide students with the opportunity to observe and discuss how it is used before they themselves are individually engaging with it. Note that you will likely continue to explore the skill as students practice it themselves.

Pendleton shares with her students the rubric focusing on the skills involved in use of evidence. She takes time to discuss with the class what "Developed" in citing evidence actually looks like, referring to this level in the rubric. To do this, she herself reads a simple text aloud in front of the class, and shows that text on the projector. She underlines specific key words. Then she offers the main idea she got from the text and suggests a piece of evidence she can use to support her idea. "Okay," she asks, "so does this piece of evidence help support the main idea?" She then engages a back-and-forth among students as they follow her through use of the skill.



## 7 Have students practice strategies.

Next, give students a low-stakes chance to practice the skill. To do this, give them a structured assignment that offers a specific strategy embedded in the skill. For example, as you help students learn the skill of identifying an author’s purpose, teach them to use the strategy of determining importance in a text to uncover that purpose. Drawing upon

existing resources or creating your own, provide opportunities for students to see models of this strategy and skill in action, as well as practice using it themselves. These activities thus explicitly offer students the opportunity to practice the skill on content and emphasizes that they are learning the skill, not merely using it.

Tanell asks her students to refer to their text and write a brief written response to a question about the text. She emphasizes that she wants them to support their response “with textual evidence,” thus demonstrating their use of the skill. To help, she provides a handout on a strategy: “The Six Steps of Annotating” (such as “Circle and define any unknown words” and “Note word patterns, repetitions, point of view, or anything else that strikes you as confusing or important”). She guides students to use this strategy to collect their key thoughts during their reading and annotation.

## 8 Build to the task.

Remember that task you designed at the beginning? The activities you have provided for students to reflect on, explore, and practice skills need to connect, one by one, to that task. Cycle through steps 5, 6, and 7 from one skill to the next while providing students with an overall organizer that helps them

to see the connections to the larger task. In this way, students are constantly aware that they are building skills, practicing those skills, and developing the ability to complete complex work. Content is acquired through the process of practicing the skills.

Pendleton provides students with a graphic organizer (see below) to help them build their multiple skills toward the task of writing a five-paragraph essay. As students work on the skills of gathering evidence through note-taking, organizing information, and so on, they begin to refer to this broad organizer in order to complete the culminating task of writing a complete five-paragraph essay. With their graphic organizers completed, students can then bring the pieces of their essays together in a new document, making refinements—based on teacher and peer feedback and their own self-editing—in the transition.

**Introduction:** The thesis statement is clear and relevant to the topic.

**Body Paragraph 1:** There are well-chosen, concrete details in this paragraph. The concrete details support the thesis.

**Body Paragraph 2:** There are well-chosen, concrete details in this paragraph. The concrete details support the thesis.

**Body Paragraph 3:** There are well-chosen, concrete details in this paragraph. The concrete details support the thesis.

**Conclusion:** Restate your thesis. Sum up your details.

# 3



## **Student Feedback Form and Conferring Protocol**



How the ***Student Feedback Form*** and ***Conferring Protocol*** are put to use

<b>Purpose:</b>	Helps teachers to guide students to reflect on a given assignment and plan revisions and improvements
<b>Who uses it:</b>	Teachers with students in classroom discussion
<b>When is it used:</b>	During daily independent work time with a subset of students or during an additional period set aside for one-on-one feedback
<b>Bonus use:</b>	Counselors and administrators also use for reference in discussions with teachers

**TEACHERS USE THE STUDENT FEEDBACK FORM AND CONFERRING PROTOCOL**

to guide students through a feedback conference. Using the *Student Feedback Form*, teachers and students reflect in writing on a specific skill then meet one-on-one guided by the *Conferring Protocol*. Over time, teachers and students refer to past forms to discuss growth and to identify effective improvement strategies. The template becomes increasingly familiar, so that both teachers and students develop the habit of expecting further improvement and learning from the conversations. Bronx Haven principal Lucinda Mendez explains that “the conference is where research is happening”—teachers learn from students as much as students learn from teachers. This research generates understanding of student progress that is crucial to further instructional planning.

**Bronx Haven Teacher Nayiri Panossian explains that taking students through feedback discussions using the form started to “change the way we talked in classrooms—to growth-mindset discussion. It changed the conversation to become about improving. It’s not about ‘smart’ but about working hard or not.”**

**Key Groundwork: Detail skills and identify standards**

The form and student conferences are effective only if a teacher has first explicitly introduced key skills and designed and implemented assessments that guide students in phases to meet standards in the process of gaining those skills. Chapter 2 describes the process of scaffolding the development of skills—from the introduction of skills to their mastery.

**Feedback Tool**

Bronx Haven High School

Task: Informational Essay - Activism

Learning Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Draft #: 1 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Score (final draft): Developed

Strengths of Student's Assessment	Next Steps
<p>— Thesis statement was clear and relevant to the topic</p> <p>— Clear introduction, body, and conclusion</p> <p>— 3 concrete examples</p>	<p>Form conclusion more and how did activism lead to the civil rights act and voting rights act.</p>
Specific Ways for Student to Improve	
<p>— In your introduction, mention which activism examples you will discuss</p> <p>— Where did your information come from? Please state where you got it from and paraphrase</p> <p>— Reason your conclusion</p> <p>— Explain what specific form of activism led to the acts</p>	<p><b>Follow-Up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circle the steps from the list above that you made to your next draft/benchmark.</li> <li>• List any you still need to work on:</li> </ul>
Student Reflection	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I need help understanding...</li> <li>• One thing I can easily fix is... wrapping up the conclusion more</li> <li>• Through the process of completing this assignment I learned...</li> </ul>	

Developed by Nayiri Parossian, Tanell Pendleton, Paula Rosa-Gerstein, Matt Zummo, and Helen Colon of Bronx Haven High School with support from Eskolta School Research and Design and the NYCDOE Office of Postsecondary Readiness.

## Conferencing Protocol

*Bronx Haven High School*

### Steps for Student Conferencing

*This presents a set of steps to be used in five-minute conferences with students during Do Now/Independent reading time or other student work times. A bank of relevant questions and dialogue starters are included as a resource for crafting personalized conferences that are responsive to individual student needs.*

#### Before the Conference...

- Evaluate the student's work to identify specific areas of strength and weakness, noting concrete examples of each. (Make a copy to keep on file!)
- Collect assignment data (e.g., skills/assignment rubric, written feedback) and plan out a conferencing focus.

#### Prepare Examples and Focus

#### During the Conference...

##### Frame

1. Explain the purpose of the conference.

##### Facilitate Reflection

2. Ask the student to explain the task in their own words to be able to gauge their understanding of what they were supposed to do.
3. Ask the student to reflect on their work, possibly asking them to self-assess against a portion of the skills rubric.

##### Explain Evaluation

4. Discuss the student's performance, referring back to rubric criteria and grounding it in examples from their work. Use a growth mindset phrase.

##### Identify Strategies

5. Brainstorm strategies for addressing one or two areas for growth.

##### Close

6. Choose a focus area for a goal and next steps and have the student verbally summarize the key takeaway.

#### After the Conference...

##### Follow Up

- Ideally within one week, check in with the student to see if they have completed next steps or need further support or prompting to do so.

### Conferencing Dialogue Starters

#### Facilitating Student Reflection

- What is something you feel you did really well on in this assignment?
- How do you feel this assignment went for you?
- If you could do this assignment over, what would you do differently?
- What do you think could be improved?
- What steps did you take with this assignment?

#### Identifying Strategies

- What class activities or assignments help you learn most? Which do not?
- Is there anything confusing or difficult that comes up repeatedly for you?
- Let's think of a different approach to try next time.
- What is one thing you feel you could easily fix in future assignments?
- What do you need from me to help you do this?

#### Closure

- Then we have decided...
- Tell me how you'll do that...
- What will you do on the next assignment to show that you are understanding/improving?
- Do you remember what you're going to do?
- Explain (or tell me) what you'll be doing.

Developed by Tanel Pendleton, Nayiri Panossian, Paula Rosa-Gerstein, Matt Zummo and Helen Colon with in collaboration with Eskolta School Research and Design and the NYCDOE Office of Postsecondary Readiness.



## How to Use the *Student Feedback Form* and *Conferring Protocol*



### 1 Identify the students you will focus on for conferences.

While it is important to offer feedback to every student on their work, time constraints do not allow for full, one-on-one conferences with every student on every assignment. When choosing which students to confer with on a given assignment, consider identifying a focus group of five consistently attending students who represent diverse skill levels in relation to the learning goal. As students tend to face common challenges, this helps to better understand how to support not only those specific students but also their peers across a range of levels. Plan to expand from these students over time. Teachers may take different approaches, expanding more quickly to reach as many students as possible, or remaining with the initial focus students to build depth and understanding. In general, ongoing feedback conferences should occur with the same students for at least two months so progress can be built upon.

**Making feedback specific, actionable, and connected to target skills:** Feedback such as “great job” offers little guidance to students. A note such as “add more detail” comes closer, but students reading or hearing this may still be lost as to how exactly to approach adding detail. To make this kind of feedback more precise—and thus more actionable—a history teacher could write: “Can you add more detail here about George Washington’s earliest decisions as president?” To help the student connect this particular task with the larger learning goal, the teacher should note that making this change will help the student improve toward the target skill of citing specific and relevant evidence. Commenting on the benefits of getting specific, task-aligned feedback, one student explained: “Before I used this tool, I wasn’t specific enough in my writing. I didn’t use textual evidence. My teacher would ask, Who is he? Now I name characters, and I have to be specific. Now my essays are more detailed.”

### 2 Identify specific strengths and areas to improve tied to task performance.

Before a given conference, evaluate student work using skill rubrics familiar to students (see Chapter 2 for more detail). Take five minutes to list at least two specific strengths and no more than three areas to improve related to the Common Core skill goal

identified to students as the assignment's focus, as explained in Chapter 2. Noting strengths not only encourages further effort by building student confidence, it also makes students more receptive to further guidance on what to improve. Limiting the number of areas to improve to three ensures that students are not overwhelmed and discouraged by a dauntingly wide range of things to work on, and it ensures mutual emphasis of the highest-leverage skills related to a task. It is critical that both strengths and areas of improvement be as specific as possible and rooted in details of task performance in relation to the learning objective. "Great job" can be nice to hear, but students truly believe they have done well and can learn from it when they are told how they did well in relation to skill development. Consider, for example, targeted feedback such as, "You make a strong, arguable claim in the introduction," and, "This statement clearly ties the evidence to your claim." Bronx Haven students report that this is the way in which conferences are most helpful.

### 3 Schedule time to confer.

The length of student conferences can vary widely, but generally plan for five to ten minutes with each student. If this is not included as part of the planned lesson, it is difficult to incorporate into a lesson spontaneously. To make time for it, ensure that lessons include significant time for structured group or independent learning activities. At Bronx Haven, teachers schedule individual conferencing to occur while students are engaged in independent reading and writing, which are emphasized schoolwide.

#### Major conference steps (from the Conferencing Protocol on page 34) and sample phrases to use

- **Explain the purpose of the conference:** Right now we're looking at how well your evidence is tied to the claim you make.
- **Ask the student to explain the task:** What steps did you take with this assignment?
- **Ask the student to reflect on their work:** What is something you feel you did really well on this assignment? What is one thing you would do differently?
- **Discuss the student's skill performance based on assignment criteria:** Your first body paragraph cites this really strong piece of evidence. In that same paragraph, you could tie that evidence even more clearly to your overall claim.
- **Brainstorm strategies for growth:** What is one thing you could easily fix in your next draft? How can I help you do this?
- **Choose a focus area and next steps:** Summarize your goal for me. Explain what you'll do to meet this goal.

### 4 Prompt students to reflect on their own work.

When entering the feedback discussion, be ready to prompt students to reflect on their own work in three areas: strengths, challenges, and ways to improve—always with reference to the assignment's focus skills (as explained in Chapter 2). At this stage,

it is critical that you let the student speak first, regarding their own evaluation of their work. During the conference—for as many conferences as it takes for the process to be very familiar—refer to the *Conferring Protocol* (see page 34) to be sure that you have taken key conferring steps:

- Explain the purpose of the conference and remind the student of the focus skill.
- Ask the student to explain the assignment.
- Ask the student to reflect on their work.
- Discuss the student’s skill performance referring to the skill-based criteria for the assignment.
- Brainstorm strategies for growth with the student.
- Choose a single focus area and concrete next steps for the student to try.

At the beginning of the conference, keep the conversation focused on the learning objectives that were established at the outset. If the student strays into strengths or challenges that are not related, remind them what the relevant skills are and ask about those. This approach of asking before offering any thoughts not only supports student ownership of their learning process, it also allows teachers to get a glimpse into students’ thinking before they receive the teacher’s own impressions.

## 5 Start with a skill-related strength.

After hearing their initial reflections, you can either present your own prepared notes on the work or together complete the sections of the *Student Feedback Form*, drawing upon their insight while also pushing them to hear and understand your perspective. Open your feedback by noting a strength of the student’s work. Like the student, you too should stay focused on the skill at hand or skills previously covered in the class. As far as areas for

improvement are concerned, avoid the temptation to begin addressing multiple skills and instead stay focused on the specific focus skill at hand.

### Clear next steps are key.

**“ [What made the feedback effective] was that I did it on the spot. If I have too much time to do it, I won’t do it because I’m too busy or forget.”**

— Bronx Haven Student

## 6 Clarify reflections and next steps.

After strengths and areas for improvement are recorded, the *Student Feedback Form* provides four prompting questions for students to engage in key metacognitive steps to inform their own improvement. These ask them to reflect on: what they need help understanding, one easy fix, one next step, and one thing they learned. Ask students to record their reflections and plans for next steps on the feedback form.

For example, next steps for argumentative writing at Bronx Haven included: “Summarize in your introduction the key points you will discuss,” “Cite sources for the evidence in the second-to-last paragraph,” and “Reword your conclusion to clearly explain the impact of [blank] on [blank].”

### Write it down!

**One Bronx Haven student explains: “I have to remember so many things from all my classes. If a teacher just tells me something, it gets lost with everything else I have to remember.”**

Depending on timing and individual needs, you can more deeply engage students by asking them to record this information themselves. Be sure to check for understanding with the student to make sure both of you are clear about which steps the student should take next. In closing, it is critical to prompt students to take specific next steps that are possible within the next couple days of class or, if possible, on the spot.

### **7 Check in with students on progress.**

Timing for checking in with students on their progress is critical but may vary. For example, if a substantial essay revision is needed, the student may need a couple of days to make changes. However, check in with students within one week at the latest; after more than a week, it becomes difficult for students to recall the context for the next steps that had been clear when they completed the feedback form. Often, quickly referring to a student's completed form and then checking in with the student for a moment during class is enough to maintain momentum.

### **8 Follow up with unit planning and keep forms available for reference.**

The feedback conversations built around these forms not only help the teacher to guide an individual student in the moment, they also help inform teaching practice and planning itself. Use the notes from *Student Feedback Forms* to inform your decisions about whether to proceed to a new skill or continue building competence around the current one. When you go through the process of providing systematic feedback on an activity, you will realize the ways in which that activity did and did not have an impact on student learning. When the same critical feedback applies to multiple students, it is a sure sign that they need additional time and new strategies to master

the targeted skill. This is a powerful planning moment, requiring creativity and expertise, often pushing into learning territory that you might not have anticipated.

To keep track of learning from feedback conferences, keep *Student Feedback Forms*, alongside student work if possible, in binders with one section per student. Make binders available both to students and teachers for common reference during follow-up work and check-ins on progress. Plan time after a series of conferences to reflect on forms related to a given learning objective to inform teaching. For example, Bronx Haven teachers review forms from formative assessments as they solidify plans for summative assessments. They also use the forms to recall what specific steps students planned to take before following up with students on their progress. Administrators and counselors also refer to the forms during discussions on student progress. As the learning goal is noted on each form, the progression of forms helps each stakeholder understand not only an individual student's overall performance in a subject but also an individual student's progress toward specific Common Core standards. This, in turn, informs instructional decisions regarding skill areas most in need of emphasis for a given student and an entire class.

**“You might think the student really got the activity, but when you go to give feedback, [you realize that if you are] providing the same feedback to all students, maybe you need to teach that differently.... [I previously thought that] they get it or don't. But you go through the process of evaluating work with strengths and weaknesses using the tools, and it gives you a clearer picture of the details.”**

**—Tanell Pendleton, Bronx Haven Teacher**

4



**Individualized Student  
Engagement Chart**





How the ***Individualized Student Engagement Chart*** is put to use

<b>Purpose:</b>	Helps teachers and students quickly track daily progress in key performance areas and reflect on trends
<b>Who uses it:</b>	Teachers with students
<b>When is it used:</b>	By students, at the beginning of each class; by teachers, after each class
<b>Bonus use:</b>	Counselors and administrators review for reference

**TEACHERS USE THE *INDIVIDUALIZED STUDENT ENGAGEMENT CHART*** to provide quick, ongoing feedback to students. The chart serves as both an active gradebook and an asynchronous check-in tool; it includes daily scores for key areas of student work as well as space for concise teacher comments, periodic student reflections on progress, and strategies for improvement. Over time, the chart shows important trends that can inform instruction, such as grade patterns, recurring challenges, and attendance. Unlike the *Student Feedback Form* (outlined in Chapter 3), which is especially useful for facilitating growth in the context of conferences lasting five to ten minutes, the *Student Engagement Chart* enables teachers to efficiently reach every student with ongoing feedback on a daily basis. By setting these common standards—and calling for step-by-step improvement—teachers can increase their confidence that students know clearly what they are working toward and foster student ownership of learning.

highlights academic behaviors and participation, two schoolwide categories articulated in rubrics that have been collaboratively developed by the faculty, as well as expectations for demonstration of learning, which always tie to specific subskills (e.g., determining importance, making inferences) evaluated on Common Core–aligned skill rubrics. Chapter 2 describes the process of scaffolding the development of skills—from the introduction of skills to their mastery.

**One Bronx Haven teacher explains that while her full conferences with students about their work and growth are important, it can be nearly impossible to hold frequent conferences with all students while also documenting each one. “My goal is to reach all the students,” she says. The tracker helps her reach all of her students with recorded feedback on a daily basis.**

### **Key Groundwork: Detail skills and identify learning objectives**

As with other tools presented in this monograph, the chart is effective only if a teacher has first explicitly introduced clear learning objectives that students can use to gauge their progress as they review their charts over time (detailed in Chapter 2). In the case of the chart, these may be more related to classroom behavior than the more cognitively rigorous skills highlighted in the *Student Feedback Form* (see Chapter 3). At Bronx Haven, the chart

## Individualized Student Engagement Chart

Bronx Haven High School

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Benchmark 4, Weeks 1-3

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>Monday: 22</b></p> <p>AB: _____</p> <p>DOL: <u>A</u> (ES)</p> <p>PART: <u>A</u></p> <p>Feedback: 74 Made up test finish</p>	<p><b>Tuesday: 23</b></p> <p>AB: <u>ES</u></p> <p>DOL: <u>AS</u></p> <p>PART: <u>ES</u></p> <p>Feedback: - First statement must include evidence from the text - Talk back statements?</p>	<p><b>Wednesday: 24</b></p> <p>AB: <u>✓ ES</u></p> <p>DOL: <u>MST</u></p> <p>PART: <u>ES</u></p> <p>Feedback: - Nice start on CER!</p>	<p><b>Thursday: 25</b></p> <p>AB: <u>ES</u></p> <p>DOL: <u>MST</u></p> <p>PART: <u>ES</u></p> <p>Feedback: - Love the advice you gave lucky!</p>	<p><b>Friday: 26</b></p> <p>AB: _____</p> <p>DOL: <u>A</u></p> <p>PART: <u>A</u></p> <p>Feedback:</p>
<p><b>Monday: 29</b></p> <p>AB: _____</p> <p>DOL: <u>A</u></p> <p>PART: <u>A</u></p> <p>Feedback:</p>	<p><b>Tuesday: 1</b></p> <p>AB: _____</p> <p>DOL: _____</p> <p>PART: _____</p> <p>Feedback:</p>	<p><b>Wednesday: 2</b></p> <p>AB: _____</p> <p>DOL: _____</p> <p>PART: _____</p> <p>Feedback:</p>	<p><b>Thursday: 3</b></p> <p>AB: _____</p> <p>DOL: _____</p> <p>PART: _____</p> <p>Feedback:</p>	<p><b>Friday: 4</b></p> <p>AB: _____</p> <p>DOL: _____</p> <p>PART: _____</p> <p>Feedback:</p>
<p><b>Monday: 7</b></p> <p>AB: _____</p> <p>DOL: _____</p> <p>PART: _____</p> <p>Feedback:</p>	<p><b>Tuesday: 8</b></p> <p>AB: _____</p> <p>DOL: _____</p> <p>PART: _____</p> <p>Feedback:</p>	<p><b>Wednesday: 9</b></p> <p>AB: _____</p> <p>DOL: _____</p> <p>PART: _____</p> <p>Feedback:</p>	<p><b>Thursday: 10</b></p> <p>AB: _____</p> <p>DOL: _____</p> <p>PART: _____</p> <p>Feedback:</p>	<p><b>Friday: 11</b></p> <p>AB: _____</p> <p>DOL: _____</p> <p>PART: _____</p> <p>Feedback:</p>
<p><b>Benchmark Assessment Grade:</b> _____</p> <p><b>Feedback:</b></p>				
<p><b>Student Reflection:</b> What did you do well this week? What do you need to improve? What is your goal for next week? Did you meet your goal from last week? What can the teacher do to help you?</p>		<p><b>Teacher Reflection:</b> What did the teacher think went well? What are some areas of growth? What could be improved?</p>		

## How to Use the *Individualized Student Engagement Chart*



### 1 Identify a skill focus.

At the beginning of a new term, identify a Common Core skill focus for students (as described in Chapter 2) to help them orient lessons and ground their understanding of the daily feedback they will receive on their Chart. This establishes a “North star” for students, which helps them orient their daily effort to improve and reduces the stigma of feedback as a judgment rather than a guidepost to success. In this way, students’ daily scores on participation and academic behaviors like maintaining focus on work or arriving ready to work become concretely connected to their specific learning objectives.

### 2 Fill out the charts.

To keep information organized, hand each student his or her chart at the beginning of each period. Then, at the end of the period, gather students’ charts along with their work. The chart provides space for three scores every day: an *Academic Behaviors* (AB) score, a *Demonstration of Learning* (DOL) score, and a *Participation* (PART) score. While students are engaged in independent work, write scores in each category.

- *Academic Behaviors* provides an opportunity to score the student’s demonstration of effort, focus, and perseverance during work time.
- *Participation* provides an opportunity to score the student’s engagement in questioning and discussion as part of the work period.
- *Demonstration of Learning* provides an opportunity to score the student’s progress on the relevant skill (see Chapter 2 for detail on identifying skills).

Accompany scores with brief comments—ideally featuring one strength and one area for improvement as closely related as possible to the specific skill acquisition goal. Record these scores in a gradebook in case the form is lost as it later passes between you and the student.

Be sure to cross out or otherwise highlight days absent. For students who have struggled with truancy in the past and may not connect attendance to grades, this helps to create a powerful visual display of the impact of attendance on progress.

**Giving regular feedback to students in quick succession helps a teacher drive instruction for a whole class. One Bronx Haven teacher explained: “I’ll notice certain mistakes on repeat and then do a mini-lesson on it.”**

### **3 Give feedback to students.**

Use independent work time, such as a warm-up, to return the charts to students along with work from the previous day. While doing this, check in quickly with each student in case there is any need for clarification regarding feedback. Prioritize those students most in need of attention; for these students in particular, hearing guidance out loud and captured on paper will help underscore the support you intend and steps they should take in their work.

As you will later collect the form again (as outlined in step 2 above) and repeat this exchange, consider using strategies to help students keep track of the form: print the form on colored paper, give the form to students in a transparent folder (for easy reference), and attach the form to work with binder clips.

### **4 Ask students to reflect weekly.**

Take ten minutes toward the end of each week to review the charts for a given class and take note of any skills that remain challenging for individual students and the class as a whole. Then, during class, prompt students to add a note into the reflection portion of their chart (included in the most recent version of this iteratively designed tool, in the appendix). Ask students to use the questions listed to guide their thinking: *What did you do well this week? What do you need to improve? What is your goal for next week? Did you meet your goal from last week? What can the teacher do to help you?* When you next collect the forms, respond to students' comments with brief affirmation and/or redirection.

### **5 Reflect weekly to adjust lesson planning.**

Your own weekly reflection on the charts affords an opportunity for whole-class instructional planning. For example, imagine that your class is focusing for one three-week benchmark on the citing evidence effectively to support a claim. For the first week, you focus on close reading and annotation strategies for pulling out evidence from the text. On Friday afternoon you review the charts to offer comments and note class-wide trends; you see (as you might well remember from having written the comments earlier in the week) that nine students continued to struggle with one key annotation strategy: highlighting key phrases without highlighting too much or too little. You decide to follow up by planning a mini-lesson for Monday: The three students who consistently succeeded in the skill will serve as advisors for three student groups as they collaboratively work through a practice activity designed to strengthen the skill. Assuming this shores up the foundation of this skill, you will spend the rest of the week proceeding to refine students' ability to bring those identified key phrases into their own draft essays as evidence.

### **6 Keep charts on file for reference.**

Charts are designed to be completed every three weeks. As they are, generate new blank ones for students and retain the old ones for reference in a binder available to both students and teachers. This record allows both parties to refer to them as they identify specific goals for particular benchmarks and terms. Additionally, the forms serve as a useful reference—with comments beyond scores alone—during student-teacher-counselor discussions regarding strategies for improvement, during teacher-administrator discussions of individual-student progress, and during teacher-administrator discussions of instructional practice.



5



**Student Academic  
Skill Chart**



**How the  
Student Academic  
Skill Chart is  
put to use**

<b>Purpose:</b>	Teachers track one-one-one check-ins with students and reflect to plan instruction
<b>Who uses it:</b>	Teachers with students
<b>When is it used:</b>	In daily independent or group work time; in teacher planning

**THE STUDENT ACADEMIC SKILL CHART** helps teachers organize and reflect on quick feedback interactions with students. As students complete in-class work, the teacher circulates to briefly check in with students on how their work is going. The teacher notes a “snapshot” of each student’s progress and adds any relevant details on how to respond to the student’s needs in further instruction. By putting students on a single page, the tool also offers a “bird’s-eye view” of class progress, which enables the teacher to plan small- and whole-group activities based on the evidence noted.

Used alongside the student-facing feedback tools described in Chapters 3 and 4, this teacher-facing tool helps ensure that spoken feedback on skill development—so often lost in the pace of a class period—is captured for the sake of teacher reflection and follow-up. Scaffolding skill-building activities to foster increasingly independent work over time can be a challenge even with records of which students need which kind of follow-up, but trying to hold this information in one’s head—absent a chart such as this—can prove impossible.

### **Key Groundwork: Detail skills and identify learning objectives**

As with the tools described above, a clear picture of the specific skills under development—articulated, for example, in Common Core–aligned skill rubrics—is key for orienting the types of check-ins and instructional planning that the chart is intended to guide. Without this orientation, feedback can become scattered and lose its resonance with students.

Chapter 2 describes the process of scaffolding the development of skills—from the introduction of skills to their mastery—using the example of work on citing evidence at Bronx Haven.

#### **Advice from a Practitioner: Social Studies Teacher Paula Rosa-Gerstein**

- **How do you find time to check in with each student?**

*I’ve been trained: you need at least 20 minutes of independent work. ... Because that’s where students really show whether they get the lesson or not. That’s the goal—the long-term goal.*

- **How is this tool helpful?**

*What I like about this is it informs my practice. Usually what a kid tells you one on one is very different from what you’re able to get out of them in the whole group. They’re more honest one on one. They’ll tell you what they get and don’t.*

- **How often do you use it?**

*Over a three-week benchmark period: in the first week I introduce the skill. I use this in the second week, then I do it again before the assessment. I use it every benchmark. A particular skill will be the focus for four benchmarks—a full cycle.*



### Student Academic Skill Chart

Bronx Haven High School

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

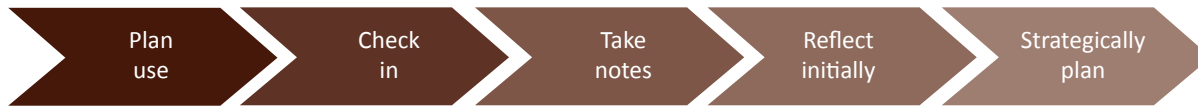
Focus: Determining Importance, Making Inferences, Asking questions

Follow up       All Set (choose new focus point)

David	Bryan	Ethan	Jennifer
- Able to determine importance - Needs to work on inferences (write down) <input type="checkbox"/>	- determines importance well + makes inferences - needs to answer questions <input type="checkbox"/>	- work on making inferences and asking questions in writing <input type="checkbox"/>	- Determined importance - working on inferences - work on reading comp <input type="checkbox"/>
_____ <input type="checkbox"/>	_____ <input type="checkbox"/>	_____ <input type="checkbox"/>	_____ <input type="checkbox"/>
_____ <input type="checkbox"/>	_____ <input type="checkbox"/>	_____ <input type="checkbox"/>	_____ <input type="checkbox"/>
_____ <input type="checkbox"/>	_____ <input type="checkbox"/>	_____ <input type="checkbox"/>	_____ <input type="checkbox"/>

Next Steps: Mini-lesson on inferences  
Review

## How to Use the *Student Academic Skill Chart*



### 1 Select a routine time to use charts.

Embed the use of the chart into your practice by establishing regular times to use it. For example, if you are introducing a skill to students in one week, you might use the chart as students complete one formative assessment to demonstrate that skill (e.g., a first draft of a paragraph) and then again during the next formative assessment (e.g., revisions leading to a final draft).

### 2 Check in with students while they complete class work.

At the top of the chart, note the specific skill you are focusing on with the class (detailed in Chapter two). This serves as a reminder that your check-in questions and guidance to students should address observable progress on this specific skill. Circulate during independent or group-work time to check in with students on their progress. Spend one to three minutes with each student. Depending on specific needs, ask students:

- What aspect of the skill they are focusing on in the task,
- Whether they have any questions,
- What they have had success with,
- What has been challenging,
- What they can do to improve their work and how you can support them.

### 3 Take notes.

As you check in with a given student write their name at the top of one square in the chart, according to seating arrangement if possible. Note key strengths and challenges, or only one or the other, depending on observations. Keep notes as focused as possible on the target skill, as this will orient your follow-up with individual students and your instruction to the group as a whole.

For example, if one student cites evidence effectively in the first body paragraph of their argumentative essay draft but then relies only on vague analysis in subsequent paragraphs, you might note: “Strong evidence at first; next paragraphs need more.” You might then note a next step that you and they have identified during your brief check-in: “Review text to prove points 2 and 3 in body.” If you feel the student needs another check-in to see how their next steps have gone, place a single slash in the small box in the corner of their square. If, during the first check-in or a follow-up, a student needs no further individual follow-up, add a second slash.

## **4 Reflect on observations.**

Use the space at the bottom of the page to note your own initial thinking regarding immediate follow-up plans for small groups or the whole class. Try to think as much as possible in terms of specific skill-building steps to take. For example, a teacher's notes might suggest, "Place Susana and Josef at the head of two student groups: Susana's on crafting effective questions during Socratic seminar, Josef's on citing specific and relevant evidence in writing before seminar."

## **5 Follow up with strategic planning.**

While the provisional notes you add to the bottom of the chart may well prove to be your basic plans, budget five minutes after class or during students' independent work time to review the recurring strengths and challenges of the class as a whole. As you go, note information revealed in patterns, such as:

- Further follow-up needed for individual students,
- Adjustments to student groupings,
- Identification of students to act as resources for others,
- Changes to mini-lessons, or
- Specific skills in need of work that you had not noticed on your first pass through the class.

This process helps you more clearly understand whether, for example, to re-emphasize particular skills or to move on to a subsequent skill area that entails increased rigor.



# Conditions that supported success

**Schoolwide Skill-Based Assessment Criteria, Lesson Planning, and Teacher Feedback.** Strong feedback is directly correlated with clarity on learning objectives. At Bronx Haven, this clarity ran through assessment criteria, lesson-planning frameworks, and approaches to teacher feedback. Practitioners at Bronx Haven had an identified set of Common Core-aligned skills—and attendant assessment criteria—putting them in a strong position to begin talking with students about their progress toward specific learning objectives. They used lesson-planning frameworks organized around these learning objectives to backward-design activities emphasizing higher-order thinking skills embedded in the most complex of the Common Core standards: those requiring analysis, evaluation, and synthesis. Furthermore, at Bronx Haven, the professional goals that school leadership developed with teachers were also structured to focus on students' development of target skills.

**Leadership Support for Adult Learning.**

Administration support at the school needs to be both deep and broad: administrators must be prepared to deepen their own skills in providing feedback, and be willing to prioritize the use of data from feedback sessions to inform meetings about and with students. Providing concrete and specific feedback is a learned skill, requiring dedicated resources to achieve. At Bronx Haven, Principal

Lucinda Mendez provided teachers with the latitude to conduct feedback interactions as they saw fit along with supportive accountability by checking in with teachers periodically to review documentation from those feedback interactions.

**Elements that help lay the groundwork for success:**

- ❑ Skill-aligned assessment, lesson planning, and teacher feedback
- ❑ Administrative support for adult learning
- ❑ Collaborative professional development
- ❑ Frequent progress reports
- ❑ Ability to set aside one additional period daily

**Professional Development Built on Collaboration.**

Whether an educator team is building feedback tools and practices from scratch or refining their own approach to tools and practices they have, teams need space and time for collaborative work on their approach to student feedback. Teachers at Bronx Haven High School both strengthened their individual

Individual teachers can implement student feedback cycles within their own classes. But when a school as a whole seeks to undertake this work, effective implementation is most successful if it rests on a set of foundational structures. The five structures identified below were present in Bronx Haven High School and contributed notably to its success. Ultimately, providing strategic feedback to students requires a schoolwide commitment of time and resources. In a school that is not yet prepared to put these structures in place, further work may be needed.

practice and developed consistent schoolwide approaches by norming their language and strategies for feedback, by observing each other in person and on video, and by consistently aligning this work to student skills emphasized schoolwide.

**Frequent Progress Reports.** To support teachers in embedding routine feedback sessions into their classrooms, it helps if school has a structure for providing progress reports to students and families frequently. At Bronx Haven, report cards every three weeks provided benchmark periods that bookended feedback processes. These progress reports were based on a common schoolwide grading policy, powerfully informing students', teachers', advisors', and administrators' understanding of individual and collective student progress.

**Ability to Set Aside Dedicated Time to Undertake One-on-One Feedback Sessions.** One-on-one feedback sessions are time-consuming in preparation, execution, and follow-up. Bronx Haven allocated an additional daily block of time specifically for teacher-student feedback and found this structure yielded a tremendous improvement in the overall quality and effectiveness of both the feedback sessions and the lesson and unit planning that follows.

# Appendix



# Student Feedback Form

Bronx Haven High School

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Task: \_\_\_\_\_ Draft #: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Learning Goal : \_\_\_\_\_ Score (final draft): \_\_\_\_\_

Strengths of Student's Assessment	Next Steps
<p data-bbox="789 1161 824 1692"><b>Specific Ways for Student to Improve</b></p>	
<p data-bbox="1137 1294 1171 1559"><b>Student Reflection</b></p> <ul data-bbox="1189 1227 1388 2001" style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I need help understanding...</li><li>• One thing I can easily fix is...</li><li>• Through the process of completing this assignment I learned...</li></ul>	<p data-bbox="1137 431 1171 586"><b>Follow –Up</b></p> <ul data-bbox="1189 254 1302 807" style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Circle the steps from the list above that you made to your next draft/benchmark.</li><li>• List any you still need to work on:</li></ul>

# Conferencing Protocol

Bronx Haven High School

## Steps for Student Conferencing

*This presents a set of steps to be used in five-minute conferences with students during Do Now/Independent reading time or other student work times. A bank of relevant questions and dialogue starters are included as a resource for crafting personalized conferences that are responsive to individual student needs.*

### Before the Conference...

- Evaluate the student's work to identify specific areas of strength and weakness, noting concrete examples of each. (Make a copy to keep on file!)
- Collect assignment data (e.g., skills/assignment rubric, written feedback) and plan out a conferencing focus.

### During the Conference...

- Frame**
  1. Explain the purpose of the conference.
- Facilitate Reflection**
  2. Ask the student to explain the task in their own words to be able to gauge their understanding of what they were supposed to do.
  3. Ask the student to reflect on their work, possibly asking them to self-assess against a portion of the skills rubric.
- Explain Evaluation**
  4. Discuss the student's performance, referring back to rubric criteria and grounding it in examples from their work. Use a growth mindset phrase.
- Identify Strategies**
  5. Brainstorm strategies for addressing one or two areas for growth.
- Close**
  6. Choose a focus area for a goal and next steps and have the student verbally summarize the key takeaway.

### After the Conference...

- Ideally within one week, check in with the student to see if they have completed next steps or need further support or prompting to do so.

## Conferencing Dialogue Starters

### Facilitating Student Reflection

- What is something you feel you did really well on in this assignment?
- How do you feel this assignment went for you?
- If you could do this assignment over, what would you do differently?
- What do you think could be improved?
- What steps did you take with this assignment?

### Identifying Strategies

- What class activities or assignments help you learn most? Which do not?
  - Is there anything confusing or difficult that comes up repeatedly for you?
  - Let's think of a different approach to try next time.
  - What is one thing you feel you could easily fix in future assignments?
  - What do you need from me to help you do this?
- .....
- Closure**
- Then we have decided...
  - Tell me how you'll do that...
  - What will you do on the next assignment to show that you are understanding/improving?
  - Do you remember what you're going to do?
  - Explain (or tell me) what you'll be doing.

## Individualized Student Engagement Chart

Bronx Haven High School

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Benchmark \_\_\_\_\_, Weeks \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Monday:</b> AB: _____ DOL: _____ PART: _____ Feedback:	<b>Tuesday:</b> AB: _____ DOL: _____ PART: _____ Feedback:	<b>Wednesday:</b> AB: _____ DOL: _____ PART: _____ Feedback:	<b>Thursday:</b> AB: _____ DOL: _____ PART: _____ Feedback:	<b>Friday:</b> AB: _____ DOL: _____ PART: _____ Feedback:
<b>Monday:</b> AB: _____ DOL: _____ PART: _____ Feedback:	<b>Tuesday:</b> AB: _____ DOL: _____ PART: _____ Feedback:	<b>Wednesday:</b> AB: _____ DOL: _____ PART: _____ Feedback:	<b>Thursday:</b> AB: _____ DOL: _____ PART: _____ Feedback:	<b>Friday:</b> AB: _____ DOL: _____ PART: _____ Feedback:
<b>Monday:</b> AB: _____ DOL: _____ PART: _____ Feedback:	<b>Tuesday:</b> AB: _____ DOL: _____ PART: _____ Feedback:	<b>Wednesday:</b> AB: _____ DOL: _____ PART: _____ Feedback:	<b>Thursday:</b> AB: _____ DOL: _____ PART: _____ Feedback:	<b>Friday:</b> AB: _____ DOL: _____ PART: _____ Feedback:
<b>Benchmark Assessment Grade:</b> _____ <b>Feedback:</b>				
<b>Student Reflection:</b> <i>What did you do well this week? What do you need to improve? What is your goal for next week? Did you meet your goal from last week? What can the teacher do to help you?</i>		<b>Teacher Reflection:</b> <i>What did the teacher think went well? What are some areas of growth? What could be improved?</i>		

## Student Academic Skill Chart

*Bronx Haven High School*

**Section:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Focus:** \_\_\_\_\_

Follow up       All Set (choose new focus point)

_____  <input type="checkbox"/>	_____  <input type="checkbox"/>	_____  <input type="checkbox"/>	_____  <input type="checkbox"/>
_____  <input type="checkbox"/>	_____  <input type="checkbox"/>	_____  <input type="checkbox"/>	_____  <input type="checkbox"/>
_____  <input type="checkbox"/>	_____  <input type="checkbox"/>	_____  <input type="checkbox"/>	_____  <input type="checkbox"/>
_____  <input type="checkbox"/>	_____  <input type="checkbox"/>	_____  <input type="checkbox"/>	_____  <input type="checkbox"/>

**Next Steps:** \_\_\_\_\_



