

Educator: End-of-Year Reflection

Describe your progress on your individual learning plan. What have you learned? How has it changed your practice? How has it made an impact?

At the beginning of the year, I was hesitant about using Motivational Interviewing (MI) questions, but I committed to trying them in at least two student sessions each week. Over time, the practice became more natural. By spring, I had incorporated MI questions into about half of my counseling sessions, and my counseling notes showed that 67% of students generated their own goals—surpassing my target of 60%.

What I learned is that students are more capable of problem-solving when I slow down and let them take the lead. I've also learned that open-ended questions often uncover concerns students hadn't voiced before. My practice has changed because I now enter sessions with the mindset of facilitator rather than problem-solver. The impact has been clear: student follow-through has improved, and several students have told me directly that it feels better when the plan is theirs. One even said, "I actually did it this week because I wanted to, not because someone told me to."

What challenges did you encounter and what are your next steps with your professional learning?

The biggest challenge was time. MI questions often led to longer, more reflective conversations, and it wasn't always possible to fit everything into one session. Another challenge was resisting the urge to step in too quickly when students paused or struggled to answer. I'm still working on being comfortable with silence and giving them space to think.

My next steps are to expand my use of MI by incorporating scaling questions (e.g., "On a scale of 1–10, how confident are you in trying this step?") and change talk prompts. I'd also like to explore how MI strategies can be applied in small group settings, not just individual counseling, to help students support each other's goal-setting.

How have you contributed to the continuous improvement of your PLC? How do you know?

Throughout the year, I shared anonymized case examples in PLC meetings to show how MI questions were working with my students. I also modeled the strategy in a role-play activity, which encouraged colleagues to try it themselves. Together, we developed a shared bank of MI-style prompts that we can all use in our work.

I know I contributed because colleagues came back with their own stories of using MI, and we noticed a theme of students taking more ownership across different settings. One team member even said, "Your example pushed me to try it, and I saw my student finally take responsibility for their next step." That kind of feedback shows that my learning not only impacted my students but also supported the growth of our whole PLC.