

6 Strategies for Better Classroom and School Communication

Powered by Swivl's Audio +
Video Tools

Swivl

Dear Educator,

Communication is at the heart of education.

For administrators, communication is how you [build relationships in your school or district](#). It's how you get things done. It's how you ensure your district initiatives succeed.

For teachers, communication skills are some of the most important yet challenging skills to help students develop. Speaking and listening are foundational to students' personal, professional and academic success.

Swivl [builds audio and video coaching tools](#) to help administrators move faster by communicating better. Our tools also help teachers provide students' with engaging, low-prep ways to practice authentic speaking and listening skills.

With the right tools, administrators can move from idea to practice in days instead of weeks or months. Teachers can motivate students to engage in speaking activities they might otherwise shy away from.

In the following guide, we'll share six of our most popular Swivl Strategies. These are practical, educator-tested ways to use [Swivl's Teams + Robot](#), as well as our asynchronous audio tool [Synth](#) to improve communication at both the classroom and school or district level.

You'll notice the first three strategies are labelled "Teacher Collaboration," while strategies four through six are labelled "Student Learning." Whether you're an administrator, teacher, or coach, we think these strategies will get you thinking about how to improve communication in your classroom, school or district, and how Swivl's tools can help.

[Learn more about Swivl's Teams + Robot here.](#)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Lamb". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brian" and last name "Lamb" clearly distinguishable.

Brian Lamb

CEO and Co-Founder, Swivl




Table of Contents

Part I: Teacher Collaboration & PD Strategies

Extending Faculty Discussions	5
Virtual Instructional Speed Rounds	6
3-2-1 Professional Development Check Out	9

Part II: Student Learning Strategies

SEL Classroom Community Circle Check-Ins	11
Think Through It Again	12
Fix It Aloud	13





Teacher Collaboration & PD Strategies



Extending Faculty Discussions

As administrators look for additional ways to implement Swivl into their daily practice, recording their faculty meetings is a simple, yet useful practice that will benefit all staff. Recording the faculty meeting provides a historical record that can be used at future meetings for verification of decisions, and as a reminder of past events and actions. It's also useful for people who were not invited or able to attend the meeting. By implementing this practice, admin will improve focus and engagement in the meeting; get new staff up to speed quickly; understand problems and how solutions were determined; and discover teachable moments to build a culture of transparency.

**ESTIMATED TIME** 45–60 min.**BEST FOR** Teacher Collaboration**LEVEL** Elementary, Middle School, High School

GET STARTED

- Set up **Swivl Robot and the Teams by Swivl app**
- Strategically place secondary markers around room to pick up participant audio

DIRECTIONS

- ① Record faculty meeting.
- ② Upload faculty meeting to Teams by Swivl.
- ③ Share recording to faculty group.
- ④ Leave timestamps with questions to prompt faculty discussion on certain topics, school/district wide initiatives (Optional: Use the bookmarking feature during the recording to highlight important topics, questions, announcements, etc).
- ⑤ Discuss outcomes at next meeting and revise as necessary.

STRATEGY ALTERNATIVES

Professional Development, Administration (Principals and Assistant Principals) Meetings



Virtual Instructional Speed Rounds

The best way to ensure learning continues after a professional development session is to continue the conversation. Teachers grow their practice by creating, sharing, observing, and reflecting with others. Participants may upload, share, and comment on video artifacts that show examples of the new strategies and/or practices they tried in the classroom after learning in a professional development workshop. Then teachers debrief to reflect on what they have learned.

**ESTIMATED TIME** Varies**BEST FOR** Teacher Collaboration

GET STARTED

- Teachers select skill areas for improvement at the end of professional development. Instructional coach groups teachers by selected skill.
TIP: This collaborative activity is best conducted with small groups of 3-9 teachers. Groups can be formed around similar skills. Teachers must be willing to both record, share, and observe others. Teachers can represent different grade levels and/or content areas.
- Teachers select at least 3 designated times to record instruction.
- Instructional coach creates group in **Teams by Swivl** to include small group of teachers who will participate in speed rounds

DIRECTIONS

- ① Teachers each record instructional segments (10 min maximum) on at least 3 instances by using Swivl Robot. Each instance should demonstrate the skill they are working toward.
- ② Teachers upload video, and using Sessions mode, document goal (intention), enter self-reflection comments, and share each video to the designated teacher collaboration group in Teams by Swivl.
- ③ Teachers complete virtual speed round visits by watching at least 3 short videos shared by other teachers (3 different teachers) in group and provide feedback on specific goals based on the intention recorded by each teacher.
- ④ Teachers use time-stamped commenting to provide feedback to other teachers based on the goals (intention) they established.
- ⑤ Teachers revisit their shared videos to review feedback from colleagues.
- ⑥ Instructional coach facilitates live debrief session for small group of teachers to reflect on the feedback they received and to highlight new ideas they have based on review of other videos.
- ⑦ Teachers reflect, document learning, and make decisions about future adjustments.
- ⑧ Teachers may repeat the cycle to further improve skills as needed.

STRATEGY ALTERNATIVES

Strategy can be used with new (to teaching or to the building) teachers who are working on implementing new practice areas. Teachers may implement new strategies, share with other participants, sharing ideas about how to implement ideas.



Virtual Instructional Speed Rounds

Feedback Planning Grid

[illegible]



Virtual Instructional Speed Rounds

Reflection Worksheet

One important takeaway.



Two things I will do differently in my instruction based on the feedback



Three new ideas I learned by observing others





3-2-1 Professional Development Check-Out

Teachers can reflect and be ready to take action at the end of a professional learning session by sharing their 3-2-1 in a Synth channel. This exercise will help to summarize and extend learning by putting thoughts into action. It will also help the facilitators identify areas for future professional learning.



ESTIMATED TIME 5–10 min.



BEST FOR Teacher Collaboration & Learning

GET STARTED

- Create **Synth** channel with purpose of reflecting on professional learning
- Record initial prompt with instructions for 3-2-1 activity

→ DIRECTIONS

- ① Immediately after conclusion of professional learning (recommended within 1 school day), teachers access Synth channel to share the following:
 - 3 things I learned
 - 2 things I plan to do differently in my work
 - 1 thing I am curious about
- ② After sharing these ideas, teachers listen to the recordings of their colleagues and respond through comments.
- ③ Teachers may return to add new recordings and provide updates as they iterate on their thinking and try new strategies.
- ④ Professional learning facilitators use recordings to evaluate effectiveness of the session and identify areas for future learning.

STRATEGY ALTERNATIVES

When using this strategy among school leaders after admin professional learning, the prompt might be adjusted to reflect their role as lead learners in their buildings:

- 3 things I learned that I plan to share with my staff
- 2 things I plan to do to implement these ideas in my building
- 1 potential barrier or roadblock that I need help with

A photograph of a classroom scene. A female teacher with dark curly hair is leaning over a desk, pointing at a tablet held by a female student with long dark hair and glasses. Another student with curly hair is smiling in the background. The text 'Student Learning Strategies' is overlaid in white on the left side of the image.

Student Learning Strategies



Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Classroom Community Circle Check-ins

Classroom community circle check-ins can help students build caring relationships with their peers and teachers. However, for introverted students this can be uncomfortable. Creating a channel in Synth for asynchronous audio conversations provides a safe space for students to share and interact with one another without the pressure of live interactions. Daily classroom check-ins through a class Synth channel is a great way to break through barriers, build community, and promote social emotional learning.



ESTIMATED TIME 5–10 min.



BEST FOR Student Learning



LEVEL Elementary, Middle School, High School



INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS Questioning, Explaining, Inferences

GET STARTED

- Create a **Synth** channel specifically for building classroom community. Set Intentions within the app to prompt class members to record daily.
- Each week, record a Synth with the check-in question students can respond to.

DIRECTIONS

- ① Students record responses to daily check-in questions, for example:
 - Name one high and one low from yesterday
 - Name one thing you're excited about today
 - What was the best part of last week?
 - What was the most challenging thing about last week?
 - What is your goal this week?
- ② Teacher moderates discussion by reviewing recordings before making visible to other students.
- ③ Students listen to recordings from peers and respond through voice messages or comments.

STRATEGY ALTERNATIVES

Synth channels can be used to help students and teachers get to know one another at the beginning of the school year. Students can respond to questions that help them share more about themselves and find connections among peers. Examples of get-to-know-you prompts:

- How would your best friend describe you?
- What was your favorite vacation and why?
- Name one thing that makes you laugh
- Who is your hero and why?
- What are you excited about this school year?



Think It Through Again

Using **Teams by Swivl**, students will record a detailed explanation to a question on homework, classwork, and/or assessment. For example, during classroom centers, students can record themselves explaining why they got an item wrong on a Math test, what they should've done, and how they can avoid making this mistake in the future. Since this can be done asynchronously, the teacher doesn't need to be present, but can respond back to each individual student with their glows and grows. The teacher will also be able to use this information to chart student progress.



ESTIMATED TIME 2–5 min. per student



BEST FOR Student Learning



LEVEL Early Childhood, Elementary, Middle School, High School



INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS Scientific Process, Math Problem Solving, Language Arts
Grammar/Communication

GET STARTED

- Set up the **Swivl Robot and Teams app** for students to record
- Have instructions available for students to reference
- Grade student assignments, clearly flagging items that need to be reviewed or corrected

DIRECTIONS

- ① Student receives graded assignment with items flagged for review/correction.
- ② Student attempts to correct items answered incorrectly on the assignment by using notes and other resources.
- ③ Student records explanations by using the thought starters:
 - The mistake I made.....
 - The way I fixed the mistake.....
 - What I would do differently next time is....
- ④ Student resubmits corrected assignment.

STRATEGY ALTERNATIVES

Students can provide explanations for correcting other student errors. This would require students to exchange papers, and is best used when the teacher has capacity to check student partner responses for accuracy before shared back with owner.



Fix It Aloud

Students share, receive feedback, and improve their writing using this strategy. After generating ideas in the prewriting stage, students make a video recording to think aloud and share with their teacher. Using the Teams platform, the teacher provides feedback using time-stamped comments. Students receive feedback to help organize, expand, and refine ideas before drafting their writing. By inviting feedback early in the process, students can receive support for their ideas. Allowing students to talk about their writing on video allows for a more free flow of ideas for some students.



ESTIMATED TIME ~30 min. per student



BEST FOR Student Learning



LEVEL Elementary (grades 3+), Middle School, High School



INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS Written Expression

GET STARTED

- Provide students with writing prompt and several strategies and/or templates for pre-writing exercise (brainstorming, outline, mind-mapping)
- Ensure method for students to record and share videos with teacher (e.g. Learning Management System, Google Classroom, etc.)

DIRECTIONS

- ① Upload student videos to the **Teams by Swivl** platform.
- ② View student videos and enter time-stamped comments throughout. Use comments at specific moments to encourage strong ideas, push them to expand on others, and make suggestions about how to refine organization and flow.
- ③ Share video with comments back to students using weblink so students may view time-stamped comments.
- ④ Some students may need to do one more iteration of the process. In this case, steps 1-3 can be repeated. In other cases, students may be ready to use teacher feedback to move to the next stage: drafting.
- ⑤ Optional extension activity: students reflect on their experience, highlighting feedback that was most helpful and what they might do differently for the next assignment.



Fix It Aloud Strategy Alternatives

- **Shared review:** Teachers may collaborate to divide and conquer video reviews by uploading to Teams by Swivl and then sharing to a group to allow for multiple teachers to access and comment on videos. Useful for team teaching, involving instructional assistants, and student interns.
- **Support writing at every stage:** Use this same writing strategy to provide feedback at the drafting stage of writing. Students may record themselves reading their draft, and then share with the teacher. The teacher may then provide feedback on the video in the same way described above. Reading their own writing aloud provides a way for students to self-correct errors and hear their ideas reflected back to them, and also receive teacher feedback.

Thanks for reading this short guide by Swivl.

Learn more about how our audio + video tools can support your school or district here.

Swivl

swivl.com