

CURRENTS OF KNOWLEDGE

Exploring Collaborative Partnerships to Expand
Teaching Capacity in Academic Libraries

GWEN GEIGER WOLFE: SCIENCE & ENGINEERING LIBRARIAN
AMBER OVSAK: UNDERGRADUATE ENGAGEMENT LIBRARIAN

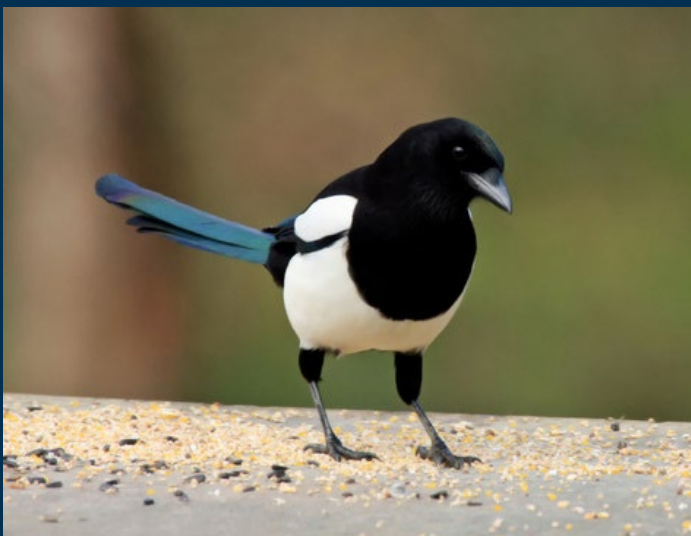
KU LIBRARIES
The University of Kansas

INTRODUCTIONS:

IF YOU COULD BE ANY ANIMAL, WHAT WOULD YOU BE?

Amber Ovsak, MA, MLS

Undergraduate Engagement Librarian
Research and Engagement



Gwen Geiger Wolfe, MPH, MLS

Science & Engineering Librarian
Collections Strategy & Development



OUR FOCUS

Exploring the topic of collaborative teaching partnerships to expand instructional capacity in academic libraries through the lens of a support framework.

Objectives

- Think deeply about the expanding role of teaching in Libraries
- Consider why Librarians feel unprepared for instruction
- Deconstruct a case study about collaborative partnership for instruction
- Explore a teaching support framework
- Reflect on strategies to apply the teaching support framework

SAMPLE INSTRUCTION REQUESTS

“WE’D LIKE A SESSION ON USING
DATABASES LIKE PUBM ED AND
EVALUATING MEDICAL
M ISINFORM ATION.”

“CAN YOU HELP STUDENTS FIND
DEM OGRAPHIC DATA AND QUALITATIVE
RESEARCH?”

“CAN YOU HELP STUDENTS DEVELOP
RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND FIND LITERARY
CRITICISM ?”

“STUDENTS NEED TO WORK WITH PRIM ARY SOURCES—
ARCHIVES, NEW SPAPERS, LETTERS.”



HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT INSTRUCTION?

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 Mentimeter

Instruction Requests

Consider your initial reaction to the instructional requests and share a word that describes how you feel about those requests.

fast bold
transpiration creative
leader focus inspiration

<https://www.menti.com/alphax7nbsr>



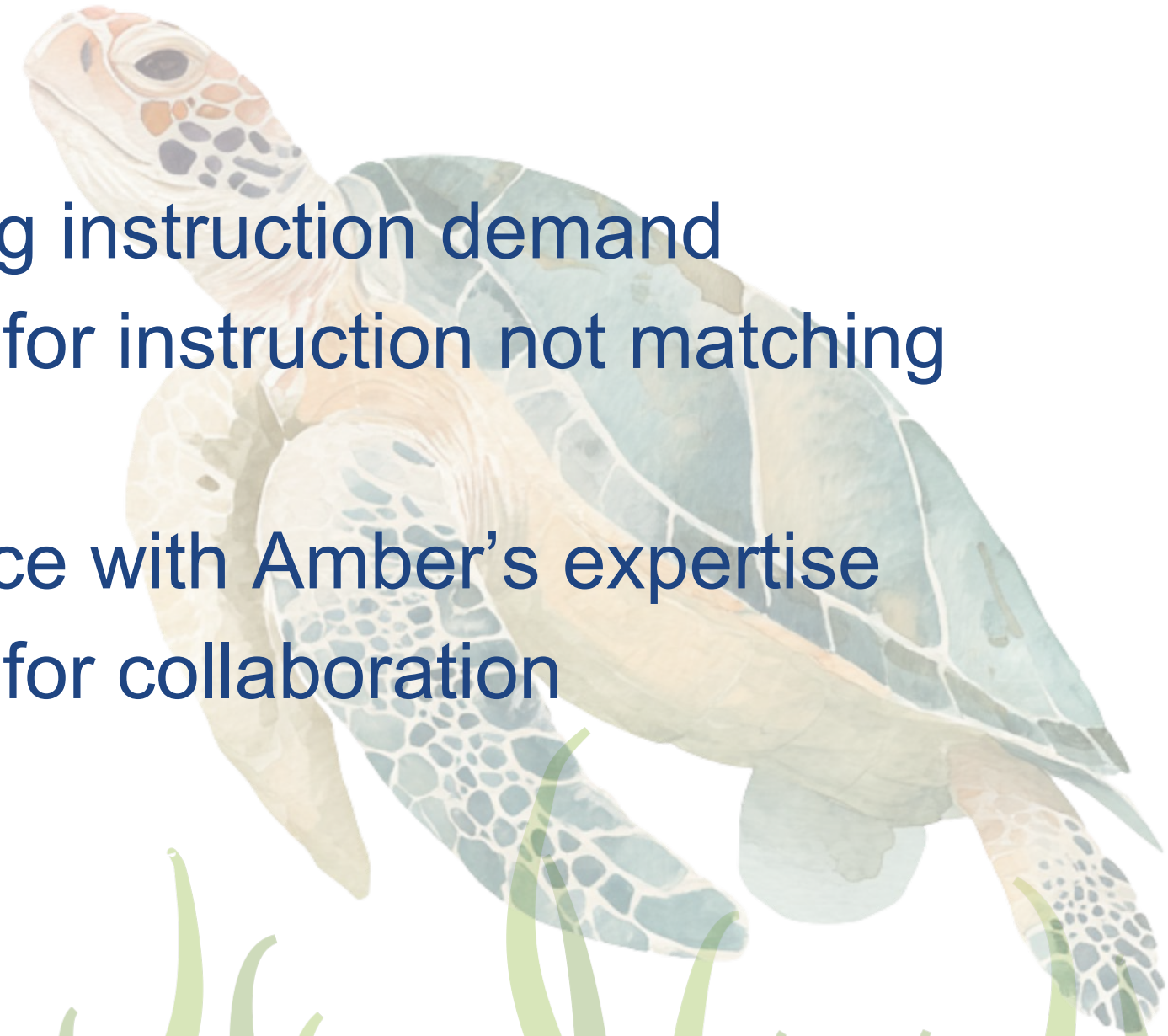
ORIGINS OF OUR REFLECTIVE PARTNERSHIP

Amber

- Anxiety around instruction requests
- Unfamiliar content
- Teaching outside of comfort zone
- Adapting instruction to fit into curriculum & be accessible for undergraduate students

Gwen

- Increasing instruction demand
- Capacity for instruction not matching demand
- Experience with Amber's expertise
- Potential for collaboration





THE EXPANDING ROLE OF TEACHING IN LIBRARIES

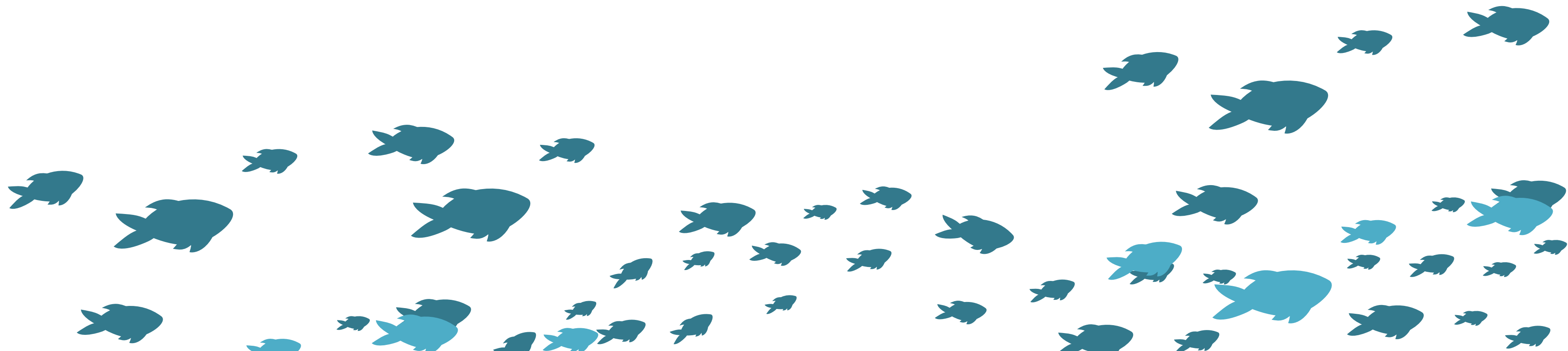
There are approximately 6,000 graduates annually from M LIS programs & 25% of these individuals will work in academic libraries (where instruction is often a requirement) (Hostetler 2020)

97% of job descriptions for entry level reference positions require instructional responsibilities (Detmering & Sproles 2012)

Generative Artificial Intelligence has increased the need for instruction of the knowledge and application of digital, information, and specialized literacies (Schmidt et al. 2024; Oddone et al. 2024)

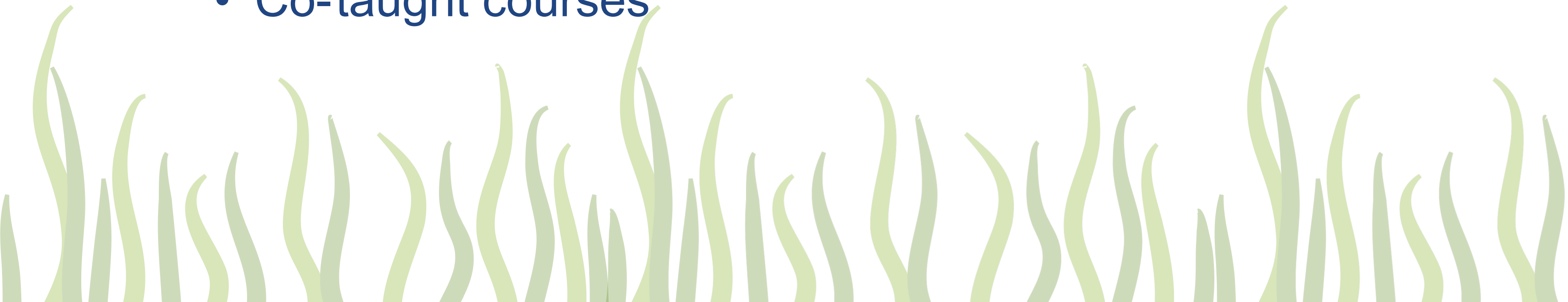
WHY DO LIBRARIANS FEEL UNPREPARED?

"...academic librarians across the United States fill positions that are either primarily dedicated to instruction or include instruction as one of a myriad of other responsibilities—even in roles without faculty status or that omit instruction in the job title—and feel unprepared to tackle this role." Hostetler & Luo 2022



OUR APPROACH

- Reached out across roles
- Described our needs and philosophies
- Shared existing lessons and ideas
- Adapted materials together
- Co-taught courses



SWIMMING TOGETHER

Observations:

- Complementary strengths, Similar approaches
- Organic, intentional, collaborative development
- Built-in reflection structure
- Iterative cycle across sessions

Outcomes :

- One-time support becomes intentional collaboration
- Sharing materials becomes Co-developing and Co-teaching
- Address instructional demand + training gaps simultaneously
- Build confidence, capacity, and consistency in teaching
- Offer a replicable model for sustainable library instruction

“What began as a single request quickly became a model for how we could work —and grow —together.”





EBBS & FLOWS

Challenges:

- Vulnerability in reflective practice
- Navigating co -leadership dynamics
- Trust as prerequisite not byproduct
- Time and cognitive load

Opportunities:

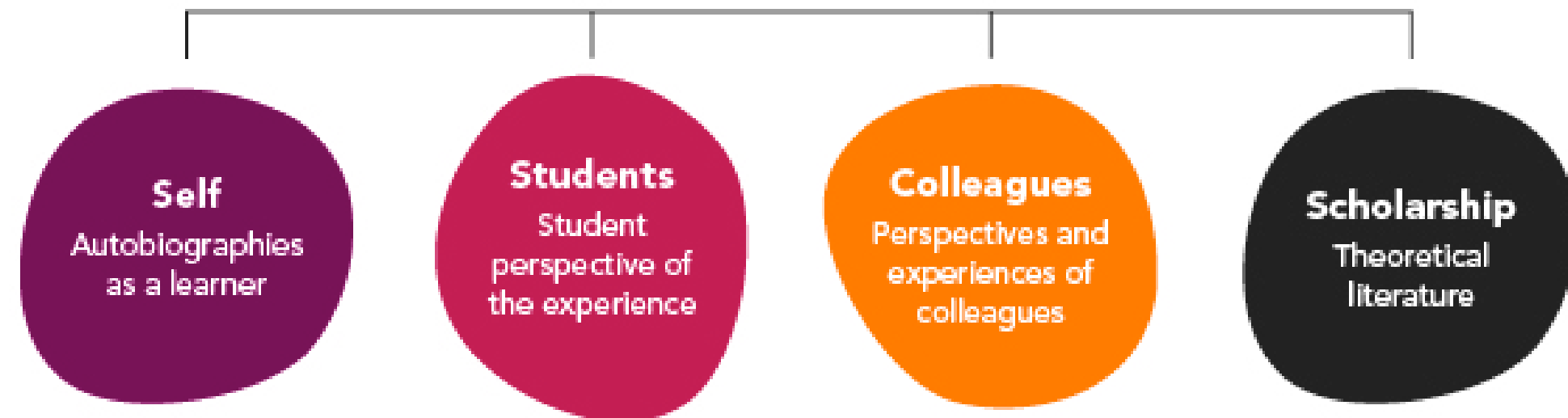
- Increased instructional confidence and support
- Accelerated professional growth
- Stronger, more adaptable instruction
- Expanded, sustainable instructional capacity leading

THE ROLE OF REFLECTION

Stephen Brookfield's Lenses for Critical Reflection



Four Lenses for Critical Reflection



FOUNDATIONS OF OUR TEACHING PARTNERSHIP

Communities of Practice (Etienne Wenger, 1998)

- Mutual Engagement- Active collaboration & shared teaching experiences
- Joint Enterprise- Common goals for student learning and instruction
- Shared Repertoire- Tools, strategies, and practices developed together

Social Capital (Robert Putnam, 1995)

- Built through trust, shared goals, and reciprocity
- Strengthens collaboration through ongoing support & investment

Reflective Practice (Michelle Reale, 2017)

- Emphasizes Intentional reflection on teaching
- Supports continuous improvement and deeper learning

WHY PEER OBSERVATION MATTERS

“Colleagues with teaching experience offer unique, practice informed feedback that goes beyond general observation.”(Saunders & Wong 2020)

- **Shared Expertise** - Different approaches to strengthen instruction
- **Nuanced Feedback** - Notice classroom dynamics & engagement
- **Instructional Insight** - Lesson design & delivery
- **Trusted Collaboration** - Supportive environment for growth & reflection

A MODEL TO START FROM:

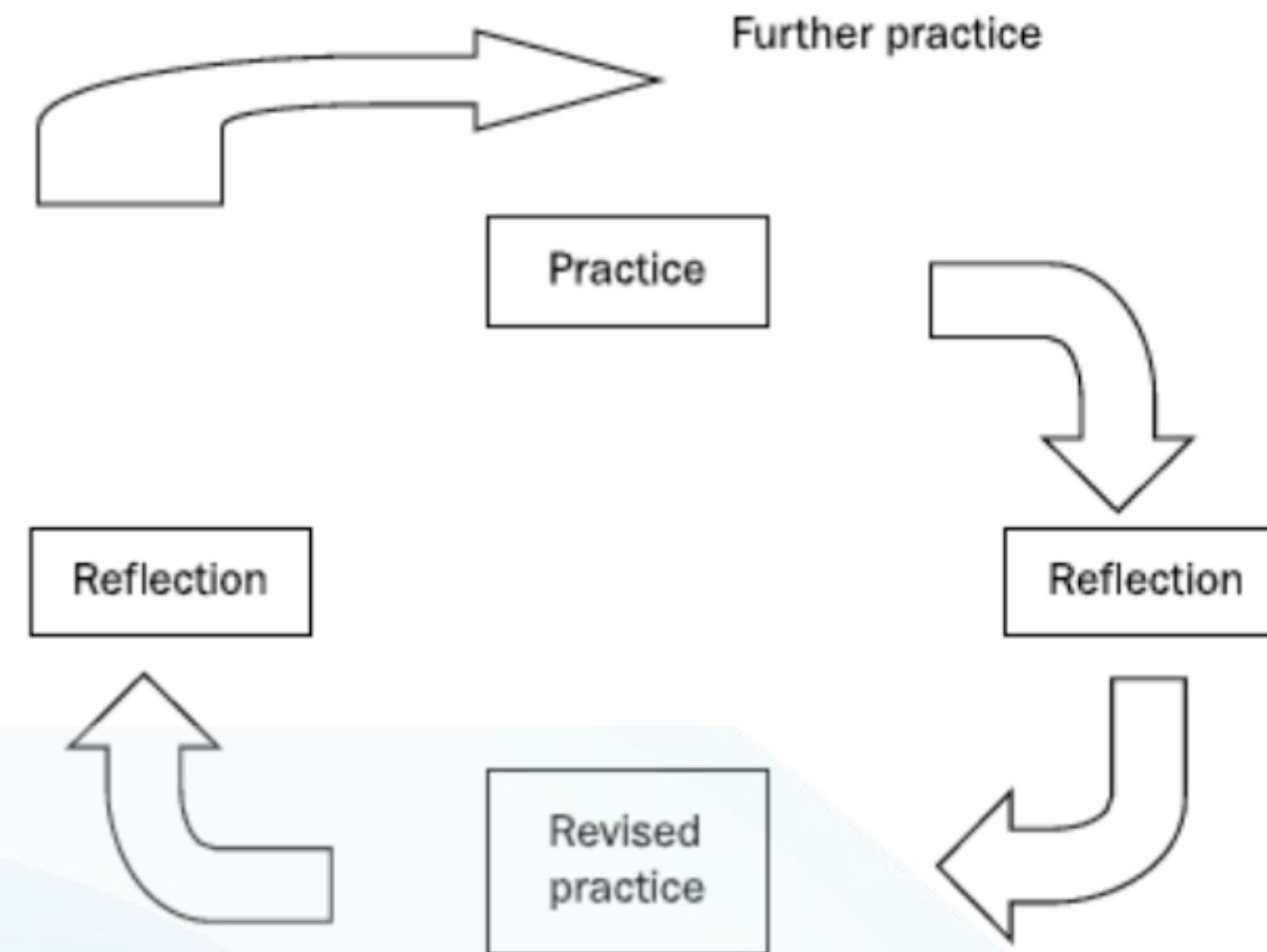
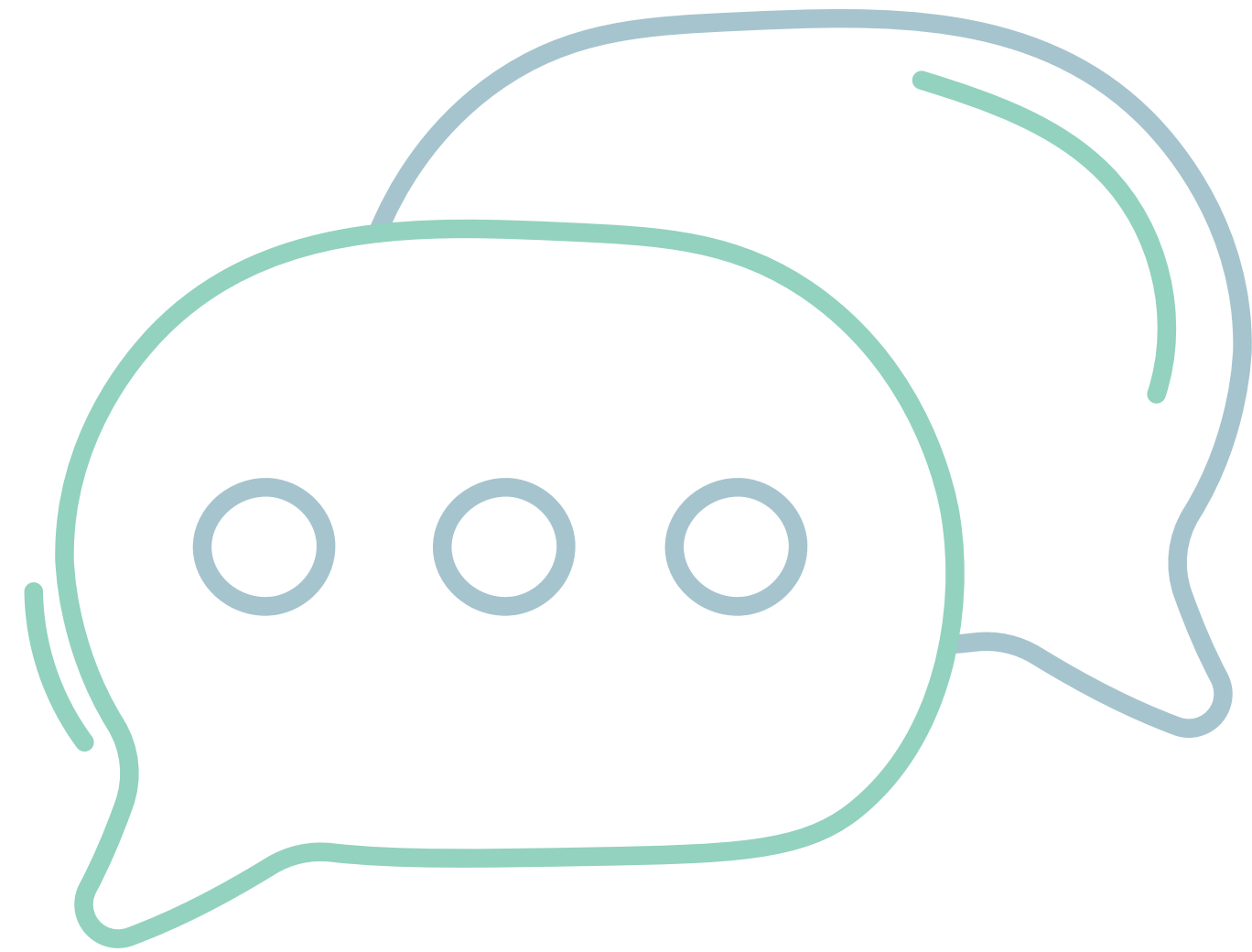


Figure 2.1 A basic model of reflection
Source: Reynolds and Suter (2010)

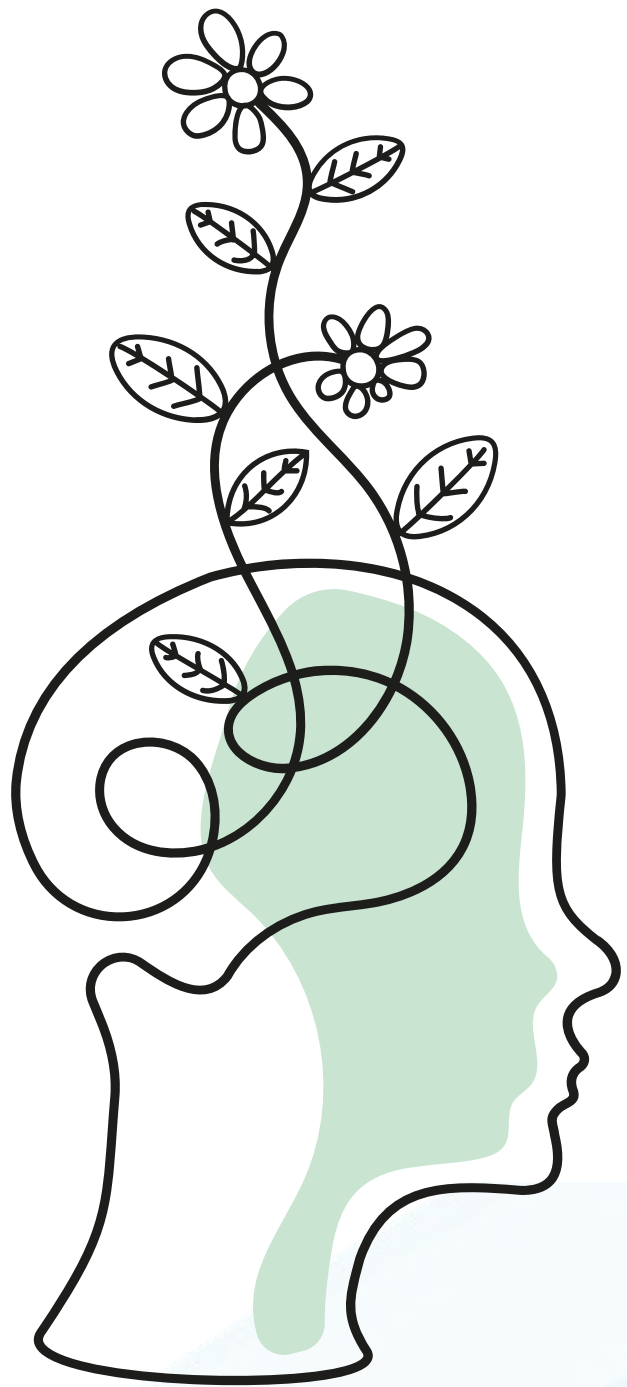
CIRCLE OF TEACHING SUPPORT FRAMEWORK



LISTEN.



Listening begins with shared conversation
Building understanding through reciprocal exchange.



OBSERVE.

Observation is:	Observation is not:
• A chance to learn from colleagues • A window into different teaching approaches • A shared practice of growth	• Not evaluative • Not judgmental • Not about critique

Observation invites reflection, not evaluation

REFLECT.

REFLECTION



DIALOGUE

DIALOGUE



CHANGE



PRACTICE.

Through listening,
observation, and reflection,
take everything that's gained
and begin to experiment
with CURIOSITY.



ITERATION

Listen & Reflect

- Cyclical & Flexible
- Driven by Practice

Revise & Practice Further

- Ongoing & Adaptable
- Expandable Across Contexts



RETURNING TO INSTRUCTION REQUESTS

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What concerns or questions do you have?

Responses can be up to 200 characters and will appear here.

You can group responses if you get more than 10.

Turn on voting so people can flag their favorite responses.



SOURCES

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THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING

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