



Talking Teachers and Teachers' Unions Toolkit: Talking Points

The following are talking points to be used as a guide during media interviews or when constructing communications materials. The recommendations presented here are based on FrameWorks' research on how Americans think about education, teachers and teachers' unions.

1. Start with a Value

To achieve meaningful education reform will take hard work but, with feasible and practical solutions put into place, it can be done. This means that we all need to roll up our sleeves to work together to design and implement programs and reforms that are proven to be effective. If existing programs are failing to work, we need to take a step-by-step approach to improving them and, if necessary, replacing them with more up-to-date and effective strategies.
(VALUE OF PRAGMATISM)

2. Explain the Issue

According to recent reports on teachers and education, education reform must ensure that teachers have all the reliable resources they need to be effective brain builders. For reform to be effective in improving the quality of education for our nation's children, we must make sure teachers have the support they need to meet the challenge. (REPLACES CARING WITH EFFECTIVENESS)

Similar to when you remodel a house, you update old parts, and make the house more modern and efficient. We have to remodel our educational system so that it can do a better and more efficient job at providing our teachers a breadth of professional development opportunities to build the skills needed to teach our children. Fortunately, when you remodel you don't have to start from scratch – you simply strengthen what's working and fix what's not. Therefore,

when we approach education reform like remodeling a house, we can provide our teachers the opportunity to strengthen their current approaches while enhancing current skills with up-to-date and effective teaching tools, so that our country is able to advance in a rapidly changing and increasingly technological society. (REMODELING SIMPLIFYING MODEL)

3. Introduce the Simplifying Model/Metaphor

A key ingredient in any successful education reform effort is having effective teachers in our nation's schools. In order to be effective, teachers need to be connected to a network of teaching professionals and to resources which are like scaffolding. Like the scaffolding builders use when constructing buildings, teachers are also builders (of children's brains) who use and depend on the scaffolding of information, tools, materials, and colleagues around them to safely support them. So, the better the quality of the scaffolding teachers have access to, the more effective teachers are in delivering quality education to our nation's children. (SCAFFOLDING SIMPLIFYING MODEL)

4. Then, Link the Simplifying Model/Metaphor to Solutions

Effective teaching is the most important school factor in a child's education. Having strong and reliable scaffolding is an important way to help create effective teachers. Such support and resources can be used to establish the conditions for student success, including developing a state-of-the-art system for diagnosing reading weaknesses. When teachers have access to additional resources in combination with their experience and expertise, they can immediately and effectively intervene in circumstances when a child is reading below grade level; develop and implement quality and knowledge-rich curriculum; and work with other staff, including administrators, to meet and uphold high educational expectations. (SOLUTIONS)

5. Including Teachers' Unions in Solutions Can Be Done!

A school system's most important asset is its teaching force. Therefore providing a variety of supports to teachers is key to ensuring that students receive the quality education they need for their own and our country's future. Teachers' unions and professional associations are one type of scaffolding teachers need to support good teaching. By offering teachers access to high-

quality professional development networking and learning opportunities through these professional associations, as well as consistent and rigorous evaluation, and fair and equitable pay, we create and support effective teachers. (SCAFFOLDING SIMPLIFYING MODEL; ROLE OF UNIONS)

6. Putting It All Together

Meaningful education reform should focus on feasible, practical solutions. This means that we need to be sure the new programs we design and put in place are proven to be effective. If existing programs are failing to work, we need to take a step-by-step approach to improving them and, if necessary, replacing them with more up-to-date strategies. (VALUE OF PRAGMATISM)

A key ingredient in any successful education reform is having effective teachers in our nation's schools. In order to be effective, teachers need to be connected to their colleagues and to resources, which are like scaffolding. Teachers are brain builders who use scaffolding to share plans, information, tools, and materials, and they depend on the scaffolding to safely support them. The quality of the scaffolding helps them do their job – they can use their expertise and construct a good building only if the scaffolding is reliable. (SCAFFOLDING SIMPLIFYING MODEL)

Teachers' unions and associations are part of this scaffolding for teachers. A school system's most important asset is its teaching force. By offering teachers access to high-quality professional development opportunities, consistent and rigorous evaluation, and fair and equitable pay, we create and support successful teachers. (SCAFFOLDING SIMPLIFYING MODEL; ROLE OF UNIONS)