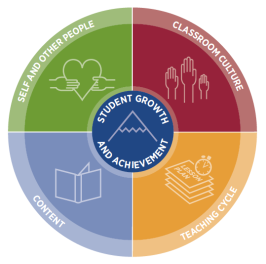
**SGA-315: The Master’s Defense**

**Session 2: The Oral Defense**



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| **Session Objectives:**   * Identify the strengths of a sample Oral Defense presentation * Identify the key elements of your PowerPoint Presentation * Summarize key insights gleaned from Relay GSE work * Generate responses to common Oral Defense questions * Articulate logistics for Oral Defense |
| **Session Key Points:**   * The Oral Defense is a PowerPoint presentation with five sections * Your Oral Defense will consist of a 15 minute presentation and five minutes of Q&A with your scoring panel * The key to success on your Oral Defense is preparation! |
| **Session Agenda:**   * Welcome * Mock Oral Defense * Oral Defense Questions * Oral Defense Day Logistics * Sample PowerPoint * Key Insights * Work Time * Closing |

**Oral Defense Presentations**

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| **Section** | **Suggested**  **Time** | **Content** | **Preparation** | **Mock Defense Notes** | **General Notes & Questions** |
| Introduction and Context | 2 minutes | * Personal Introduction * Teaching Context | * Leverage introduction of your Data Narrative |  |  |
| Student Results | 5 minutes | * Overall academic results relative to the PG and AG * Distribution of academic results * Your perspective on academic data * Mastery based character analysis * Growth based character analysis * Your perspective on character data | * Leverage academic data section of your Data Narrative * Leverage character data section of your Data Narrative |  |  |
| **Section** | **Suggested**  **Time** | **Content** | **Preparation** | **Mock Defense Notes** | **General Notes & Questions** |
| Portfolio Entry #1 | 3 minutes | * Demonstrate that this module assessment is a proficient example of skill * Why you selected this Portfolio entry | * Ensure all Portfolio entries are top notch work, and something you would be proud to defend in person * Module assessments documents/videos * Portfolio annotations |  |  |
| Portfolio Entry #2 | 3 minutes | Same as Portfolio Entry #1 | * Same as Portfolio Entry #1 |  |  |
| Key Insights | 2 minutes | * Two key Insights from your work at Relay that show professional growth | * New content to create between now and your Oral Defense |  |  |

**The PowerPoint Presentation**

* **Please note the use of images, graphics, and text in your handout**
* **What types of slides are needed?**
* **Take down ideas you want to incorporate into your own PowerPoint.**

**Key Takeaways from the Sample PPT:**

**Criteria for Success**

* Use images and pictures
* Limited text- You should explain not the slides
* Clear graphics
* Slides in correct order
* Title slides for sections

Specific Slides:

* School Context
* Showing overall Standards Mastery
* Overall class mastery
* Student by Student mastery
* Research questions w/ graphic (optional)
* My Perspective on academic results
* Character results overall
* Character results Final Indicator Scores Round 4
* Character results Growth
* My Perspective on Character Results
* Portfolio Entries 1-4
* Key Insight #1
* Key Insight #2

**Key Insights**

*\*\*\*Note, for your Master’s Defense you will not be creating written explanations of your Key Insights. The example below serves as an example of the type of content you may want to share during your Oral Defense.*

**Sample #1**

Author Michael Gelb wrote that “champions know that success is inevitable; that there is no such thing as failure, only feedback. They know that the best way to forecast the future is to create it.” Gelb’s point strikes at the heart of the Master’s Defense process. We as educators, particularly those entrenched in fighting the achievement gap, have a relentless drive to best serve our students. Intentions, however, do not directly correlate with results for students. I firmly believe that the key factor for my growth as an educator has been the incorporation of a paradigm that values honest, reflective feedback.

The paradigm I have developed through the Master’s Defense recognizes that honest, even difficult, feedback is a measure to assess and improve my teaching practice, not a critique of my personality or intentions as an educator. For example, I could look at Antonia or Edwin in my data set and question their failure to meet the achievement floor. The traditional approach would relieve me (and my practice) of responsibility. In reality, I need truthful feedback to determine how my instruction did not lead these scholars to success. I rely on my coaches, deans, and instructors to review my plans, observe my lessons, and share what critical factors are leading my students to growth and which are not. The idea that adult comfort (or job security) is more important than having difficult conversations and/or negative feedback protects a teacher’s insecurities at the expense of professional growth that could dramatically alter a student’s opportunities.

Comparing my skill as an educator today to my first days in the classroom, there is a tremendous difference in knowledge, aptitude, and student achievement. Throughout the past two years I have participated in one-on-one coaching at school as well as instruction at Relay that has enabled me to not only identify strengths and weaknesses but use that awareness to plan targeted ways for improvement. For example, at the beginning of this year I felt I had a solid understanding of guided reading and best practices for facilitating student growth. Throughout my module work, particularly my SGA Data Narrative, I found gaps in my instruction that were never intended, but existed. The feedback I received from my peers on lesson videos remains invaluable today. Having the data analysis skills and willingness to reflect honestly about my practice, not as a critique of my efforts but an honest measuring of my capabilities, I was able to adjust my instruction towards the end of the year and can continue to grow next year.

Unfortunately, I have found among my peers and the teaching profession at-large a fierce resistance to feedback and/or formal measures of evaluation. Adults in education regularly say they want to improve, grow, or professionally develop, but are unwilling to engage in a paradigm of honest reflection and ownership of student data. I firmly believe, however, that for adults to best serve students, we need to willingly put up a mirror to ourselves, even when the reflection is disappointing, upsetting, or negative.

1. Based on this sample, how would you define a key insight?
2. What is this teacher’s key insight?
3. What experience is this teacher drawing on to form his key insight?
4. How does this sample show professional growth over his time at Relay?

**Sample #2**

Organizations, particularly schools, spend a great deal of time and energy working toward goals. During my first year teaching I was aware of our grade’s “BHAGs”: Big, Hairy, Audacious Goals. As our team set goals for 5 subjects and 3 different series of assessments, numbers like 90% mastery or 85% proficient became meaningless to my teaching. I was aware of what we hoped our end results would be, but not necessary driven with a step-by-step plan for attainment.

As I completed the earliest moments of the Master’s Defense course work, I began to truly understand how my Achievement Floor and Student Specific Ambitious Goals could serve as influential components of my daily practice. I looked at the end goal for each my students: either an instructional reading level S or T. I knew this was highly ambitious and truly uncharted territory for me as an educator. I backwards planned benchmarks that students would need to meet during each cycle. Having a clear short-term goal for each student at 5 points in the year granted me (1) a quick assessment of our path to meeting the achievement floor (2) a quick assessment of each student’s likelihood to reach their ambitious goal and (3) and macro-level analysis of the success of my group.

For instance, I knew that if Joe was to meet his SSAG and read on an instructional reading level T at the end of the year, he would need to be on level N by November, Level O by December, Level Q by February, and Level S by April. Additionally, it was powerful to see how at cycle 3, Asha had already reached her goal. Similarly, I was able to see how Carlos would need huge improvement in a short amount of time to reach his goal. In being able to analyze my data through short-term benchmarks, I was able to make instructional decisions that were grounded in data and in the best interest of my students.

I have realized that the true usefulness and power of goals comes not solely from an over-arching or year-long vision, but in the small steps and measures that guide daily instruction, check progress, and provide for timely measures of success. I am interested to see how this form of goal-setting and assessment can be implemented across all subjects and utilized at grade and school-wide levels.

1. Based on this sample, how would you define a key insight?
2. What is this teacher’s key insight?
3. What experience is this teacher drawing on to form his key insight?
4. How does this sample show professional growth over his time at Relay?

**Tips for Writing Key Insights**

* What specifically changed your way of thinking / influenced this core belief
* How has your teaching practice grown as a result? How will you use this insight in your teaching next year?

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| **Tip** | **Specifics** |
| State your key insight | In the samples we just read these would have been:   * The importance of feedback and reflection * The power of goal setting |
| Share the experiences you are pulling from | * Particular modules or sessions * Particular instructors or colleagues * Particular assessments or work products * School or classroom experiences |
| Explain your professional growth | * How have your opinions/beliefs changed over time? * How have your opinions strengthened? * What are *your* core teacher beliefs? * Push to a “4”: Prove how you will use these insights in the future? |

**Key Insight Drafting**

*(Remember, you should be able to state each Key Insight in approximately one minute.)*

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| **Key Insight #1** | **What specifically changed your way of thinking / influenced this core belief** | **How has your teaching practice grown as a result? How will you use this insight in your teaching next year?** | **Partner Feedback** |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Key Insight #12** | **What specifically changed your way of thinking / influenced this core belief** | **How has your teaching practice grown as a result?**  **How will you use this insight in your teaching next year?** | **Partner Feedback** |
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**Oral Defense Questions**

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| **Student Results Questions** | **Preparing Oral Defense Responses** |
| * What surprised you about your student outcomes this year? * How does your students’ academic performance this year compare your students’ performance last year? Why do you think that is? * What are you most proud of within your student data? * Who is your highest performer and why do you think this is the case? * Who is your lowest performer and why do you think this is the case? * Do you notice any relationships between academic performance and character performance? * Now that the year is over, what would you have done differently for those students who didn’t meet the Proficient Goal? * What would you do to raise student achievement if you had one more month of school? |  |
| **Portfolio Entry Questions** |  |
| * Why is this your best work within the “x” module? * How does this entry show that you are a teacher who can drive student learning? * *Note: you may also receive content-specific questions related to the entry you are presenting.* Example: In your instructional showcase video you modeled two methods for checking for understanding. What are the other two methods for checking for understanding that you learned in this module? |  |
| **Key Insights Questions** |  |
| * What are your plans for next year? * How will you apply these insights in your next role? * What is your greatest teaching strength? Or strengths? * What is your greatest area for improvement as a teacher? Or areas for improvement? |  |

**Oral Defense Tip Sheet**

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| **Preparing for the Oral Defense** |
| * You will have up to 15 minutes for your Oral Defense presentation. It is up to you how long you want to spend on each section, but please note that you will be cut off at 15 minutes if you have not completed your presentation by that time. * The final five minutes of your Oral Defense will be spent on Q&A with your faculty scoring panel. Your scoring panel will ask you questions from the list you received in the Oral Defense class, as well as questions specific to the information presented in your Oral Defense. * Prepare, prepare, prepare! * Everything you need for your Oral Defense will be submitted with your SGA-315 module assessment. You will need to share your screen of your PPT when presenting your Oral Defense. * Please make sure that your PPT is clear, straightforward, and in line with the Presentation Zen design guidelines you learned about in SGA-315 and on Canvas. Overly detailed font selections, ambitious animations, and embedded video or music files may be lost in translation. Simple and compelling is always best. * If would like to invite anyone to your Oral Defense, say a school leader, colleague, parent, family member, significant other, or friend, please feel free to do so! You are welcome to invite up to four visitors to your Oral Defense. |

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| **Day of the Oral Defense** |
| * Please wear professional attire. * Please be on time for your slot. * We ask that you have your PowerPoint up and ready to present prior to calling in to Zoom. * You can invite family. Share the zoom link. They must remain muted. * Please note that your Oral Defense may be filmed to use as an exemplar for future instructional purposes. * Your Oral Defense will be attended by at least two Relay faculty members who will score your Defense, and may also be attended by other Relay staff members. * Our intent is to make you feel welcome and comfortable during your Oral Defense. We look forward to reviewing your Portfolios and hearing your Oral Defenses! Thank you for all of your hard work! |