# Conversational Skills

These conversational protocols (Hord & Sommers, 2008) provide simple guidelines for respectful and productive discussions.

- **Listen:** Focus on what is being said instead of waiting for your turn to speak.
- **Set aside judgment:** Remain open to various perspectives and new ideas.
- **Ask questions:** Seek clarity before making a decision about what has been said.
- **Make observations:** State your perspective or restate another person's perspective without passing judgment.
- **Stay open:** Let the discussion run its course; do not force judgments or decisions too soon.
- **Clarify goals:** Restate and ask questions to clarify the goal of the conversation; shift focus to what we do want, rather than what we don't want.

*Source: Hord, S. M., & Sommers, W. A. (2008).* Leading professional learning communities: Voices from research and practice. *Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.*

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