
Are You Coaching Heavy or Light?

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DESCRIPTION

"Are You Coaching Heavy or Light?" by Joellen Killion demands that specialists in the role of coaching shift their focus from being liked and appreciated to making a difference. The goal of this specialist is to improve student learning. To accomplish that goal, specialists must work on strengthening the quality of teaching and learning. Two categories of coaching are described: coaching heavy and coaching light. Coaching light occurs when coaches want to build and maintain relationships. To teachers, coaching light feels supportive. While coaching light may be effective in building relationships, it does not get to the important questions at the heart of coaching:

- How are our students doing?
- How can we improve teaching?
- How can we improve student learning?

Coaching heavy opens up conversations about teacher beliefs and how they influence practice. Coaching heavy requires coaches to:

- Focus on a commitment to improving teaching and learning
- Focus on planning rigorous and powerful instruction
- Say "no" to trivial requests
- Work with all teachers
- Collect and use data about their work to analyze choices

Coaching *heavy* stretches the skills of specialists. For teachers, coaching heavy requires the recognition of the collective responsibility of each teacher towards the success of every student.

STAGE 1 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

"Are You Coaching Heavy or Light?" by Joellen Killion supports stage 1 development of leaders working to develop the knowledge and skills of effective coaching. Effective specialists move beyond being appreciated to making a difference. To move to making a difference requires a commitment to coach heavy or deep. After reading the article, make a list of the activities that the author uses as examples of coaching light that are a part of your work as a specialist. Then make a list of heavy coaching activities. What other activities do you engage in as a part of your coaching work? Would you consider them to be examples of coaching heavy or coaching light?

Reflect on the list from the article of beliefs that might interfere with coaching heavy and take some time to write reactions to these beliefs. Be honest. Create a list of your own beliefs about coaching using the table on page 3 as a starting point.