
How Coaches Can Maximize Learning

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Relationships: Articles

DESCRIPTION

"How Coaches Can Maximize Learning," by John Saphier and Lucy West, defines a culture of coaching as a strategic, systemic approach to improving student learning that involves:

- Public teaching that is the focus of study among professionals
- Planning for instruction that is collaborative and thorough
- Constant, evidence-based, and non-defensive conversations about improving student learning

The job of the mathematics specialist in the role of coaching is to raise the quality of the teaching and learning in every classroom in the school. This is crucial to the creation of a collaborative culture. When the purpose and role of the coach have been clearly defined and systemically implemented, it can be a powerful means to improving student learning. During the coaching process, specialists and teachers engage in public teaching with feedback. They spend a good deal of time in collaborative planning and discussions. They examine daily, weekly, and periodic assessments to do error analysis, design re-teaching, and focus instruction on student needs.

STAGE 1 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

"How Coaches Can Maximize Learning," by John Saphier and Lucy West, supports stage 1 development of leaders working to improve their practice. Specialists in the role of coaching are encouraged to build from strength, starting with the strongest teachers in the building to create classrooms that serve as sites for the public teaching and join inquiries that are crucial to the culture of coaching. Building these lead teachers also helps to build capacity as they are partnered with other teachers in a strategy of peer coaching. These lead teachers will be demonstration teachers not of perfect teaching but of non-defensive self-examination of their practice in relation to evidence of student learning. Using this capacity-building process for three or four years will result in every teacher being engaged with the instructional practices being supported by the district or school. Specialists working to improve student achievement through coaching will find the ideas of collaborative planning and group planning essential to building practices of mindful planning. Specialists might read the section about the relationship between the coach and the principal and then discuss with their principal opportunities to:

- Observe classes together to develop a common vision for mathematics in the building.
- Plan together for where to begin, with which teachers to work, and what format to use.
- Meet weekly to monitor progress.