

The Power of Educational Coaching

By Ben Johnson

Coaching Defined

Coaching has been around a while at the leadership level, but it has taken its time in getting to the teacher level. I'm not talking about athletic coaching. I'm talking about educational coaching, instructional coaching, life coaching, learning coaching, leadership coaching -- pick your name.

Whatever you call it, it is more than a simple technique and it is more than a simple "play on words" of an old idea. It is a unique philosophy that deals with how best to implement radical and sustained change in educators. The autocratic way or if you like the "let me help you fix it" way, means that others dictate and direct a teacher's progress to teacher improvement with affixed consequences if it does not happen. Under this traditional system, ultimately, the teacher can blame his boss if the strategy that he was dictated to do does not work. Educational coaching is entirely different.

How It Works

Instructional coaching at the teacher level requires that the administrator and school leaders be trained to refrain from their natural tendency to provide the teacher with solutions to the problems he is facing. Rather, the administrator's role is to help the teacher identify the problems and bring their own solutions to light. By asking the teacher probing, open-ended questions, the administrator helps the teacher reflect and analyze an issue of the teacher's choosing and then asks the all powerful question: "What are you going to do about it?"

Employing this coaching strategy compels the teacher to accept responsibility for his behavior, which is a big step for a teacher who often only turn to students, parents, and prior teachers for the reason behind a student's lack of progress.

Why It Matters

This approach helps teachers focus on and change their own behaviors. And that real power of educational coaching is revealed when the administrator later follows up with the teacher about his plans by asking, "How did your solution work?" Celebrations ensue if they were successful, and if not, another poignant question, "Now what are your options?"

Educational coaching has powerful ramifications for the classroom. Through coaching, true teacher empowerment is possible, but perhaps most importantly, the skills that are modeled by the administrator on the teacher are exactly the constructivist skills that teachers can employ with their own students. If teachers are able to help students solve their own educational and personal problems in similar ways, teachers become less prescriptive in their attitudes towards students, and students feel more in charge of their learning and their lives.

Source

<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/power-educational-coaching-ben-johnson>