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Patience helps explain the role

Q What challenges have you faced as a coach?

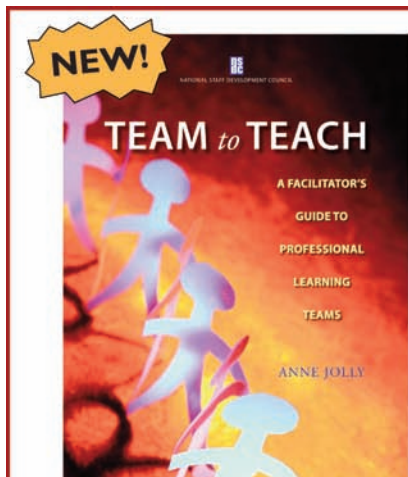
The hardest conversation I had was with a teacher who didn't understand the role of coach and didn't understand what I was there to do. She wanted me to pull small groups of students from her class and tutor them. She didn't understand that you can still impact student learning without working directly with students. Her experience was with people helping her in the classroom. I just sat down and we talked again about how I could support her. I had to explain that I could help plan lessons, co-teach, and she could still get great results, that you're not going to see as strong a benefit for yourself if you're using me to work with students.

I worked on coaching language. I had to think ahead of time and remember to assume positive intentions rather than getting my feelings

hurt. I went in with the assumption that she didn't understand this role and once she realized what to ask for, that she would see that the other things I offer are even better.

I think you have to start by acknowledging, "I understand you feel pressure to get students to achieve," and make it clear that you want to help and support the person. I still had to have a few conversations. I had to be patient. In my own training, we discussed the change process, and I had to remember how many times you have to do something before change can occur.

Some teachers ran with (the opportunity to have coaching), and I kept that in mind. I had to give it time and keep talking about coaching and what I was offering in different ways. By the end of the year, I felt like she had a better idea of what I could be doing and realized she could call on me. Some teachers are harder to get to shift their thinking than others — just like students. ♦



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