

Can Coaching Help Education?

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The idea of teachers being coaches to the students, although not new, stuck me as a fabulous concept. As coaches, we see lives transform, perspectives shift, confusions dissolve and clarity emerge as clients discover themselves. We assist them in this journey by offering support, tools and employing various methodologies. How great will it be if coaching can help young people gain clarity and confidence and be more equipped for the future, more importantly young people can learn this new way of seeking their own answers!

If educators can learn to adopt the coach approach in the classroom, it can be a great learning experience for both the teacher and the student. As in any coaching engagement the basis of student - teacher relationship has to be 'trust'. Rather than lecturing/ telling, teacher/coaches will have to be willing to listen and engage with their students. It is within this circle of trust created by the teacher that the students can begin to blossom. Educators should be willing to look beyond the defined academic parameters. They have to pay attention to the attributes and values of the students. What drives your student? What are his/her dreams and aspirations? Education encompasses a very wide spectrum, including not only the subject being taught but also ethics, morals and purpose.

As a teacher to the undergraduate Biology students who were repeating the course, I asked them, 'What is your idea of an ideal classroom'? The responses fascinated as well as intrigued me. The responses basically conveyed the need to be heard and understood by the teacher. I received various valuable suggestions like including lots of visual information in the lectures and holding one on one weekly conference with the individual students. The last fifteen minutes of the lecture were devoted to the discussions. As a result, students were

visibly happier, more engaged, feeling understood and validated. All of them did very well that semester.

In the academics, teacher coaches can help students learn realistic goal setting, evaluate and assess themselves. Teacher coaches can facilitate creative brainstorming, rather than passive lecturing/note taking to create synergy and vitality in the classroom. All of us can recall great teachers in our lifetime who intentionally or unintentionally adopted the coach approach and won the love and respect of their students. In the nutshell, Coaching can lower the stress levels in both the teacher as well as students by creating a classroom environment more conducive to learning.

Universities and schools need to get their faculty members trained as coaches. Career coaching can help students discover their beliefs, strengths and can help their make right choices for their career. Youth coaching can be of significant help to the young people with the life issues at the same critical time when they are studying. Leadership coaching can prepare youth to take on future career challenges more confidently and positively. Alternatively, educational institutions can hire coaches to help the students with career and life issues.

I believe that Coaching is extremely relevant and required in today's educational arena.