

Scripts

9-10 классы

TEXT 1:

Everyone needs a coach. It doesn't matter whether you're a basketball player, a tennis player, a gymnast or a bridge player.

We all need people who will give us feedback. That's how we improve. Unfortunately, there's one group of people who get almost no systematic feedback to help them do their jobs better, and these people have one of the most important jobs in the world. I'm talking about teachers. Today, districts are revamping the way they evaluate teachers, but we still give them almost no feedback that actually helps them improve their practice. Our teachers deserve better. The system we have today isn't fair to them. It's not fair to students, and it's putting America's global leadership at risk. So today I want to talk about how we can help all teachers get the tools for improvement they want and deserve.

Let's look at the best academic performer: the province of Shanghai, China. Now, they rank number one across the board, in reading, math and science, and one of the keys to Shanghai's incredible success is the way they help teachers keep improving. They made sure that younger teachers get a chance to watch master teachers at work. They have weekly study groups, where teachers get together and talk about what's working. They even require each teacher to observe and give feedback to their colleagues.

So we need a system that helps all our teachers be as good as the best. What would that system look like? Well, to find out, our foundation has been working with 3,000 teachers in districts across the country on a project called Measures of Effective Teaching. We had observers watch videos of teachers in the classroom and rate how they did on a range of practices. For example, did they ask their students challenging questions? Did they find multiple ways to explain an idea? We also had students fill out surveys with questions like, "Does your teacher know when the class understands a lesson?" "Do you learn to correct your mistakes?"

And what we found is very exciting. First, the teachers who did well on these observations had far better student outcomes. So it tells us we're asking the right questions. And second, teachers in the program told us that these videos and these surveys from the students were very helpful diagnostic tools, because they pointed to specific places where they can improve.

TEXT 2:

Questions are magnets that draw us towards our teachers, and they transcend all technology or buzzwords in education. But if we place these technologies before student inquiry, we can be robbing ourselves of our greatest tool as teachers: our students' questions. For example, flipping a boring lecture from the classroom to the screen of a mobile device might save instructional time, but if it is the focus of our students' experience, it's the same dehumanizing chatter just wrapped up in fancy clothing. But if instead we have the guts to confuse our students, perplex them, and evoke real questions, through those questions, we as teachers have information that we can use to tailor robust and informed methods of blended instruction.

The truth is, I've been teaching for 13 years now, and it took a life-threatening situation to snap me out of 10 years of pseudo-teaching and help me realize that student questions are the seeds of real learning, not some scripted curriculum that gave them tidbits of random information.

In May of 2010, 35 years old, with a two-year-old at home and my second child on the way, I was diagnosed with a large aneurysm at the base of my thoracic aorta. This led to open-heart surgery. This is the actual real email from my doctor right there. He said: First, his curiosity drove him to ask hard questions about the procedure, about what worked and what didn't work. Second, he embraced, and didn't fear, the messy process of trial and error, the inevitable process of trial and error. And third, through intense reflection, he gathered the information that he needed to design and revise the procedure, and then, with a steady hand, he saved my life.

Now I absorbed a lot from these words of wisdom, and before I went back into the classroom that fall, I wrote down three rules of my own that I bring to my lesson planning still today. Rule number one: Curiosity comes first. Questions can be windows to great instruction, but not the other way around. Rule number two: Embrace the mess. We're all teachers. We know learning is ugly. And just because the scientific method is allocated to page five of section 1.2 of chapter one of the one that we all skip, trial and error can still be an informal part of what we do every single day at Sacred Heart Cathedral in room 206. And rule number three: Practice reflection. What we do is important. It deserves our care, but it also deserves our revision. Can we be the surgeons of our classrooms? As if what we are doing one day will save lives. Our students are worth it.