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When a coach and a teacher are engaged in a *Before* conversation, one important factor to determine is what the coach should look for in a classroom visit. A common request on the part of a teacher is often for the coach to note whether the students are engaged.

This begs the question of what is student engagement, and how can one tell if students are engaged. If you were to view a lesson where students are all taking notes or using manipulatives to represent a problem they may give the impression of engagement, but upon closer examination, the activities were simply student compliance of given tasks. Contrast the difference between directing students to make a pattern using attribute blocks with having them create a pattern where each block differs from the previous one by exactly two attributes. A similar comparison would be telling students to highlight the passages in an essay they find interesting as opposed to determining the passages which support the author's thesis about the effect of carbon fuels upon climate change.

The difference between compliance and authentic engagement centers on the nature and delivery of the task as well as the student expectations and outcomes. There are a number of ways that students can demonstrate they're making meaning. For example, are students wrestling with the assigned work by conversing and asking questions among themselves as opposed to merely responding to a teacher prompt? Is there evidence of students finding value and relevance with the material they're learning? The classroom environment should transform from a teacher-centered environment to a student-centered one.

The pivotal point in discerning between engagement and compliance is the effective use of formative assessment in planning lessons. The coach can play a critical role in supporting teachers in designing lessons that help stimulate student curiosity and creativity. Teachers need to provide opportunities for their students to express themselves through speaking, listening, writing, and reading critically. Formative assessment can also take the form of student-constructed demonstrations, models, and projects. As students engage in these authentic learning experiences, they experience success and ultimately higher achievements.

The experience of working with a coach enables teachers to get a better understanding of the connection between authentic engagement and higher student achievement. The co-planning

and modeling process is critical for teachers to be provided opportunities to learn and try new strategies to promote higher engagement. As the collected data is shared with the teacher, decisions can be made regarding future instructional practices which continue to advance student engagement and learning. It's important to note that not all instructional practices work with all students, but through data collection, formative assessment and reflection, a teacher will have the necessary tools to help design future lessons.

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