

The 15-Minute Meeting

Problem to Possibilities

Directions: You see the novice teacher in the library, and you discover that you have 15 minutes to talk. The teacher tells you she is still having trouble with one student who is unmotivated in her classroom.

On the spot, try this activity:

1. Identify the problem: What is the student actually doing? Saying? Not doing? Not saying?
2. What has she already tried? Talking to the students? The parents? The administration? The school counselor?
3. Brainstorm several possible solutions to this problem together.

Possibility A:

Possibility B:

Possibility C:

4. Ask her to summarize the meeting verbally and state what her next steps will be.
5. The next time you talk, check it to see if any possibilities worked. If not, create three more possible solutions.

Let her know that every problem cannot be solved quickly, and you may need to do this problem-solving more than once. Avoid telling the novice how you would solve the problem. One possible option could be yours, but be sure the teacher feels empowered to implement the option of her choice. She may have to try all three! She could bring this problem to the group mentoring meeting and let other novice teachers share their ideas with her. See The Group Mentoring Agenda Figure 9 in Part I of this book.