

Growth Mindset Thinkers

Video: Teachers are the Key

(ALAN SCHOENFELD:) Plain and simple, teachers are the key to improvement in the math classroom. Technology won't do it by itself. Curricular won't do it by itself. Place your bets squarely on the professionalism of teachers. And do what you can to support them with good curricula, with good technology, but with the opportunities to learn and develop the kinds of understandings that enable them to create the kinds of classrooms that we're talking about.

Well, if you're going to a doctor, you'd want someone who is well-prepared and was continually being upgraded. I take our students that seriously, and I think we should as a society. And that means that short-term training, declaring people to be professionals and setting them loose in the classroom and saying, "Not only do you have autonomy, but it's a sin for us to peer into your classroom," is exactly the wrong way to go.

So from my point of view, it means building teacher communities where there is trust. And there's a long history of distrust. So it means earning their confidence by showing that what you care about is their teaching and supporting their teaching. And within that context, beginning a series of long-term conversations that open up the space for inquiring into, What do we mean by effective teaching? How do we go about doing that? How do we support each other in doing that?