
Introduction

My first book, *The Active Classroom* (2008), was written to give teachers practical strategies for shifting kids from passive observers to active participants in their own learning. This was followed by *The Active Teacher* (2009), a book that emphasized the importance of planning and continuous improvement as twin accelerants of ultimate success for teachers. The third entry in this series, *The Active Mentor* (2010), highlighted the investments teacher mentors, administrators, peers, and support staff can make in order to keep new teachers from simply hanging it up and walking away after a few weeks, months, or years. All three books stress meaningful and frequent collaboration in classrooms, buildings, and districts—all in pursuit of continuous improvement and results.

This fourth entry in the *Active Classroom Series* is an opportunity to explore some favorite themes (movement, engagement, face-to-face student conversation, process improvement, and the importance of feedback, to name a few). It also gives me a chance to highlight some success stories from teachers who are using the active-classroom strategies. These examples are not formal lesson plans; they are, for the most part, short vignettes that demonstrate or underscore a concept or instructional strategy.

The entire *Active Classroom Series* is predicated on the belief that preparation, application, evaluation, and adjustment are all components in a continuous-improvement journey that ramps up instruction and student performance. The books in this series support the notion that, in order to make progress, students must be actively and consistently involved their own learning. By the same token, teachers can accelerate their own progress by involving themselves in collaborative improvement efforts at the building level. Principals and district administrators need to enlist the support of teacher leaders in

creating self-evaluating improvement systems that can outlive them. Truly active teachers and administrators are constantly in motion in a way that contributes to student progress and systems improvement. Active teachers and administrators don't simply react to events as they occur; they take events into their hands and move classrooms, buildings, and districts relentlessly forward. This book will highlight teachers and administrators who have done just that.