

18 July 2013

MINI-MANUAL

# Community Building: Power With, Not Power Over



INSTRUCTIONAL  
COACHING  
GROUP

Jim Knight

For more detailed information regarding the information contained in this mini-manual, refer to:

*High Impact Instruction: A Framework for Great Teaching*

Chapter 11

By Jim Knight

Also view the High Impact Instruction introduction video:



**Community Building: Power With, Not Power Over**

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# *Power With, Not Power Over*

*“Nearly all [people] can stand adversity, but if you want to test [their] character, give [them] power.”*

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

*“It takes two to have a power struggle.”*

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JIM FAY

## KEY CONCEPTS FOR COACHES

### FIVE WAYS TEACHERS CAN PROMOTE POWER WITH, NOT POWER OVER

- 1 Empathizing with students can promote power with students.
- 2 Connecting with students through 1:1 conversations.
- 3 Listen intently to your students.
- 4 Communicate respect of your students.
- 5 Defuse conflict intentionally.

## *Turning Ideas Into Action*

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### STUDENTS

- 1 Give the students the student survey.
- 2 Teach students listening skills and explain that it is your intention to model the practices in every class, every day.
- 3 Give students numerous opportunities to explain how they feel in class and how they would like the classroom to be adjusted to support their learning needs.

### TEACHERS

- 1 Record your conversations (inside or outside of school) to see how effectively you listen.
- 2 Video record your classes to observe how well you use the power with strategies.
- 3 After you have been the victim of power over, write down as much as you can about your experience and consider how your students might feel if they were victims of power over.

### INSTRUCTIONAL COACHES

- 1 Conduct a book-study using Chapter 11 of [High Impact Instruction](#) by Jim Knight and discuss such questions as these: “How would you define power over and power with? What does power with look like to you? How can we know for sure if we are doing power with?”
- 2 Conduct schoolwide surveys of students, assessing their perceptions of how often they experience power over, how psychologically safe they feel, and how much they think teachers care about them.

**PRINCIPALS**

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- 1 Commit to modeling power with during all of your interactions with people (children and adults) in the school.
- 2 Lead schoolwide conversations with staff to define power with and power over.
- 3 Once everyone can describe power with and power over and has committed to eliminating power over practices, be vigilant in naming power over when you see it.

## *What It Looks Like*

Embracing power with, not power over, is as much about not doing certain things as it is about what not to do. If people embrace power with, they shouldn't yell, belittle, interrupt, or bully others. If students feel they are respected, that should be reflected in surveys of student attitudes.

**STUDENT SURVEY—ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AGE**

**WHO AM I? QUESTIONS**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 Which way do you learn best?                        | 23 What type of technology do you use at home?  |
| 2 What is your favorite subject?                      | 24 What are your three favorite things?   |
| 3 What is your least favorite subject?                | 25 How would you like to receive feedback from me?  |
| 4 What hobbies are you interested in?                 | 26 What is your favorite cartoon?   |
| 5 What do you like best about school?                 | 27 What is your favorite food?  |
| 6 What do you like least about school?                | 28 If you were allowed to choose a place to go after school today, where would you go?        |
| 7 What do you like to do after school?                | 29 When do you usually go to sleep Sunday through Thursday?                                   |
| 8 Tell me something about your family.                | 30 How do you concentrate best? Sitting in a group, standing at a desk, or another way?       |
| 9 What would be your ideal day?                       | 31 How would you best explain a word or concept? On a computer, drawing, writing, or talking? |
| 10 Who do you live with?                              | 32 How many brother/sisters do you have?  |
| 11 When is your birthday?                             | 33 Who lives in your home?  |
| 12 Tell me about your friends.                        | 34 Who is your favorite character from a book or movie?                                       |
| 13 What do you do after dinner?                       | 35 Who do you admire?   |
| 14 What is your goal this year?                       | 36 Who do you trust?  |
| 15 What do you think you are good at?                 | 37 Do you belong to any clubs or groups?  |
| 16 What is your favorite place to go with the family? | 38 Describe a perfect teacher.  |
| 17 Do you like to read?                               | 39 Name the important people in your life.  |
| 18 Who helps you with your homework?                  | 40 What are three things you want to tell me about yourself?                                  |
| 19 What are you afraid of?                            | 41 How can we make our classroom a comfortable place to learn?                                |
| 20 What is your favorite game?                        |   |
| 21 What is your favorite thing to read?               |   |
| 22 Do you like sports? What is your favorite?         |   |

STUDENT SURVEY—MIDDLE SCHOOL AGE

**WHO AM I? QUESTIONS**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 Tell me about your family.                          | 9 What are your interests?                         |
| 2 Who do you look up to?                              | 10 When do you feel successful?                    |
| 3 Who is your role model?                             | 11 What are you proud of?                          |
| 4 What are your strengths?                            | 12 What are your reading habits?                   |
| 5 What do you struggle with?                          | 13 What books do you like to read?                 |
| 6 How do you want this year different from last year? | 14 How do you know when a skill has been mastered? |
| 7 What are your activities?                           | 15 Describe a typical day in your life.            |
| 8 What are your study habits?                         | 16 Explain your goals for the future.              |