

Fall 2011 MATYCONN meeting – October 21, 2011

Herb Gross

Presentation #2 – “The Teacher as Coach”

In sports we recognize that good players do not automatically become good coaches. Yet academia persists in hiring its coaches (i.e., instructors) based on their player’s credentials (degrees, publications, etc.). The community colleges are facing an enormous bimodal distribution where at one end of the spectrum there are students who by the standards of previous generations would never even have considered coming to college and at the other end of the spectrum there are students who in previous generations would have enrolled directly to a senior (i.e., four year) college upon graduation from high school. Both of these groups require us to develop special technics to help these groups attain their objectives.

In this presentation I will discuss what in my mind distinguishes the teacher as coach from the teacher as researcher. More specifically:

- (1) The teacher as coach makes the material relevant to the needs of the student as the student perceives the needs to be.
- (2) The teacher as coach develops a delivery system that allows the lower half of the class (and there is always a lower half) to compete more successfully with the upper half but without holding back the progress of the upper half.
- (3) The teacher as coach provides a live support system that encourages students to remain in the course and strive toward their goals. This must be done in addition to teaching the content rather than at the expense of stressing the content.