Minds on Mathematics-Using a Math Workshop to Develop Deep Understanding in Grades 4-8—Wendy Ward Hoffer

	Typical Helping	Intentional Conferring
Focus	Ensure student gets correct answer.	Inquire about students' thinking and comprehension.
Students' role	Listen. Ask Questions.	Explain Thinking.
Teachers' role	Explain. Note Mistakes.	Listen. Ask questions.
Outcome	Student gets correct answer.	Student hones problem solving strategies. Teacher understands student as thinker
Inferred beliefs	Teacher is repository of knowledge, dispensing answer to students.	Students are capable problem solvers with interesting ideas to share.

When and Where: *Tinker Time*—"Between the Desks" (*kikan-shido*) or at a table, 5-10 minutes during independent or partner math task, problem-solving or written practice.

What to Talk About:

- **Research**—Find out what the learner knows and is thinking.
- **Coach**—Nudge the learner forward with one specific point of instruction. Discuss which tool or model might scaffold independence and perseverance.
- **Reflect/Record**—Ask the learner what she now understands as a result of interaction; document conversation.

Some Conferring Questions

Research:

- Tell me about what you are doing.
- How's it going?
- Show me a problem you liked solving.
- How does this work?
- Wow! How did you do that?
- What's up?

Coach:

- Show me what you understand in a picture.
- Explain to me what parts you *do* understand
- What questions do you have?
- Can you remember any similar problems and how you solved them?
- How does what we did in our lesson connect to what you are doing now?
- What would help look like?
- What tools, models, or visuals might help you?

Reflect/Record:

- What was important to remember about solving this problem?
- What do you need to remember?
- How did this conversation help you?
- How has your thinking changed?