

Math Sense: The Look, Sound, and Feel of Effective Instruction

Christine Moynihan, 2012. 144 pp., \$19 paper. ISBN 978-1-57110-942-2. Stenhouse Publishers; www.stenhouse.com.

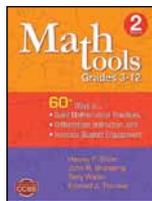
In *Math Sense*, Moynihan explores the look, sound, and feel of engaging mathematics classrooms. With each chapter, she discusses the what, why, and where, and magnification of a variety of important tools for creating classrooms that engage all students. For example, in “The Look of the Lesson: Students” chapter, Moynihan discusses the importance of active listening. She shares the definition of active listening, discusses why it is important, and when students should be engaged in active listening. In addition, for each recommendation, she includes what she calls a “magnification,” in which she shares a real-life implementation to help the reader better understand the strategy being discussed.

This book is a great resource for beginning and experienced teachers as they transition to the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics. It is an easy and clear read. After a teacher has read it once, it will be a resource for his or her library that can serve for years to come. I recommend it for anyone who wants specific strategies for engaging their students in mathematics in a thoughtful and meaningful way.

—Tamara Pearson
Clayton State University
Morrow, Georgia

Math Tools, Grades 3–12: 60+ Ways to Build Mathematical Practices, Differentiate Instruction, and Increase Student Engagement

Harvey F. Silver, John R. Brunsting, Terry Walsh, and Edward J. Thomas, 2012. 272 pp., \$38.95 paper. ISBN 978-1-4522-6139-3. Corwin; www.corwin.com.



This resource is intended for classroom teachers or math coaches. It is an updated publication from the 2008 edition with explicitly articulated connections to the Common Core’s Standards for Mathematical Practices.

In this brief review, I cannot discuss all 60+ tools that the authors provide. However, I can say that the collection is comprehensive and current. I found several resources, such as Vocabulary Knowledge Rating (p. 38), Cinquan (p. 114), and Mathematics Writing Frames (p. 222), to be novel and relevant to promoting literacy in mathematics instruction. I found the exemplars and tools to be appropriate for grades 3–12, from order of operations to polynomials. Additionally, the teacher notes highlighting formative assessment connections support high-impact instruction.

Some resources, however, were less novel. “Student Knowledge Cards” (p. 14) sounded intriguing, but I felt this topic was little different from flash cards, and the “Memory Box” (p. 26) seemed to be a creative name for crib sheets.

Although I appreciated the chapter structure of the “Four Styles of Mathematics Students,” I would encourage the reader to decide what would work from a learning objective and not from a student learning style. I understand the authors’ desire to make connections to the Standards for Mathematical Practice; however, I am not certain a classroom teacher would find the “Matrix” chart at the opening of each chapter particularly useful.

The final section, Task Rotation (p. 224), distinguishes this book from just a collection of resources. This is a rich model for classroom teachers in that it helps them differentiate instruction and use formative assessment concurrently. The author’s guidance in

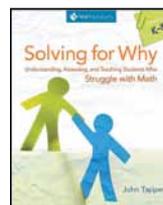
designing a task rotation with “a hook or engaging point of entry” is spot on, and several solid exemplars are given.

In conclusion, I feel this updated edition is packaged as described to support “common core + differentiation + student engagement” and would be a very useful resource for a department and/or math coach’s bookshelf.

—Norma Borenstein-Gordon
Former middle and high school
mathematics teacher, education consultant
Lexington, Massachusetts

Solving for Why: Understanding, Assessing, and Teaching Students Who Struggle with Math

John Tapper, 2012. Gr. 6–8. 256 pp., \$35.95 paper. ISBN 978-1-935099-33-8. Math Solutions; www.mathsolutions.com.



Written for K–8 teachers and math specialists, this book offers insights that may be the answer to the problem of why

Janie cannot do math. In fact, the author poses a number of hypotheses that give teachers excellent starting points in diagnosing the underlying difficulties behind students’ issues with mathematics.

In addition to the main features, stories that illustrate practical experiences are sprinkled throughout. However, these anecdotes detract from the smooth flow of the author’s voice and may create struggles of their own. The stories provide practical examples, and the main text offers step-by-step guidance. Of particular note are the recommendations for math conferencing and diagnostic centers.

The author assumes nothing, so experienced teachers and specialists may find some of the background information to be unnecessary. However, this journey from understanding students who struggle with math to teaching