



Welcome fellow Recovering Traditionalists to Episode 206: 1% Better - The 4-Minute Daily Math Difference

Welcome to Build Math Minds the podcast, where fidelity to your students is greater than fidelity to your textbook. I'm your host, Christina Tondevold, the recovering traditionalist and BuildMathMinds.com Founder, where my mission is to change the way we teach elementary math to our kiddos. Are you ready to start building math minds and not just creating calculators? Let's get started.

My husband and I listen to all kinds of podcasts and for years we have listened to the One Percent Better podcast but it wasn't until he was listening to a baseball one that we really thought about what 1% better really entails and then I started to think about what 1% Better could look like in your classroom.

My husband is the head high school baseball coach in our town and each year he likes to give his players a phrase to focus on and recently he was telling me about what this year's is going to be. I'm pretty sure I'm not spoiling anything because I doubt any of his players listen to my podcast but this year his phrase is 14/24. As I said we've listened to the One Percent Better podcast for years and when he was listening to Zach Sorensen who is a Mental Performance Coach for the Cincinnati Reds on the ABCA (American Baseball Coaches Association) podcast, he talked about using 14/24 with his players. When you calculate out what 1% of a 24 hour day is, it comes out to be 14 minutes 24 seconds, thus 14/24. So by focusing on doing something you are working on getting better at, knowing it's just 14 minutes 24 seconds makes it seem doable each day.

Now my husband has been talking about this for months since he heard the podcast episode but it just recently started churning in my brain about what that could look like for educators. So let's do the math. An average school day in the U.S is around 6.5 hours. That is 390 minutes, one percent of that is 3.9 minutes which is really 3 minutes 54 seconds. In math, whenever I can I like to use friendly numbers so let's just call that 4 minutes shall we?

If you are trying to work on something, it can often feel overwhelming to think about a massive undertaking. Instead focus on just getting 1% better every day. So if you are wanting to change up what you are doing in math and just change up 1% of your school day. And with it just being 4 minutes of your day, you can really do it at any time, it doesn't have to be part of your math time but it could.

For example, you might start each day with a 4-minute Number Talk, or end with a quick Which One Doesn't Belong activity, or have students do a brief math journal reflection.

Now I know what you're thinking - 'I don't have 4 extra minutes!' But remember, this isn't about adding time, it's about intentionally shifting how you are using the minutes you already have. Take a look at your day tomorrow and see if you notice a few minutes of down time throughout the day. If so, pull out a 1% Better Math Experience. What are 1% Better Math Experiences?

I've put together a 1% Better Guide that gives you 30 ideas for math experiences you can provide to your students that take less than 5 minutes and it's yours for free. I am currently creating a supplemental resource for every grade level that is \$18 but has 180 slides of 5 minutes or less math experiences...but those aren't ready quite yet. So for now you can use the guide with general examples.

Now here's the thing, a lot of the activities on the list COULD take more than 5 minutes if you let it. So be intentional and focus on keeping it within the time constraint. Go to BuildMathMinds.com/1% (that's the digit 1 and the percent sign) to get the free 1% Better Guide and I'll also link it up on the show notes at BuildMathMinds.com/206

To help you see the power in those 4 minutes, let's take a look at the math. Four minutes a day for 180 days is 720 minutes. That's 12 hours! Twelve hours of time your students got that focused on building their foundation of math understanding or even practicing something they are working at building their fluency with. And then next year, find another 4 minutes to change up and make it 1% better again. Don't feel like you need to change everything all at once. Make a small change, 4 minutes of your day with your students, and help them experience math just 1% differently than before. And it doesn't matter if you are hearing this at the beginning of a school year or towards the end, it's never too late to get 1% Better.

Until next week, my fellow Recovering Traditionalists, keep letting your students explore math, keep questioning, and most importantly, keep Building Math Minds.

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