Become the math teacher you always wanted to be

Minds on Mathematics
Using Math Workshop to Develop Deep Understanding in Grades 4–8

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“Minds-on math workshop is not a program or a formula, but rather a stance and a challenge: design learning experiences that convey your greatest hopes for your students and take them knee deep into the work of thinking.”

—Wendy Ward Hoffer

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Why is it that so many of our students don’t get math? Why, despite all our efforts, does students’ progress in mathematics lag way behind our expectations? Wendy Ward Hoffer argues that all learners are capable of deep understanding, but first we must create classrooms where teachers serve as coaches, students engage as a community of learners, and everybody works toward “getting it” together. Minds-on Mathematics shows you how. Wendy describes a “minds-on” math workshop that packs a powerhouse of benefits, helping you:

• set the stage for students’ deep mathematical thinking and understanding
• build up students’ 21st century skills and strategies
• provide an ideal forum for teaching the Common Core Standards for Mathematical Practice
• develop self-confidence and mathematical competence in every learner.

Wendy explains the core elements of math workshop and then provides detailed strategies for implementing the workshop structure. Effective routines and abundant examples are provided for each component of the workshop, including:

• planning Openers that “hook” learners with engaging tasks
• using Minilessons to model thinking and problem solving
• managing Work Time for both group and independent learning
• creating classroom routines that support Conferring
• ensuring deep understanding with Sharing and Reflecting opportunities.

Minds-on Mathematics shows how to make the workshop model come to life in your math classroom, and proves that when we provide math learning experiences that support students to become critical thinkers and problem solvers, to stretch and think in new ways, and then invite them to communicate their ideas to others, we inspire them to “get” math like never before.

Wendy Ward Hoffer is a staff developer with the Denver-based Public Education & Business Coalition (PEBC). She works with teachers locally and nationally to promote rich thinking in all content areas, but especially math and science. Wendy is the author of the popular Heinemann title Science as Thinking: The Constants and Variables of Inquiry Teaching.