

The Instructional Coach's
"BETTER THAN
GOAL SETTING"
GUIDE



"BETTER THAN GOAL SETTING" GUIDE

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Before you begin this process with teachers, there are a few things you can do to ensure it will be as effective as possible.

1. Put your game face on.

If a teacher tries to move the conversation to "But these kids-", it is your job as a coach to move them back to something productive. Try saying...

- If that's the struggle our kids are having, what change can we make to support them in growing?
- The only person we can control in the classroom is ourselves. What can we do differently to respond to this problem?
- How can we create a different environment to where that's not a problem?
- Is there something we can do differently to prevent that from happening?

2. Know your teachers.

Some of the components of this process include creating a (realistic) plan and setting up check-ins. If you don't know your teachers well, you won't know how much support or scaffolding they'll need to actually follow their plan, or what kinds of check-ins might serve them and their kids best. You also might walk into a mine field if you're not sure what kinds of challenges your teachers are already having.

3. Look at data or student work.

Make sure that you and your teachers know where your students are strong and where they are in need of growth. Focus your efforts on the areas that need to grow.

4. Prepare your tools.

This includes any resources that might help teachers figure out what decisions they'd like to make and anything that can help them create a realistic plan.

Possible tools include...

- * Data
- * Student work samples
- * Planning calendars
- * Classroom schedules
- * Curriculum guides

STEP 1: MAKE A DECISION

It's best when this is a decision that comes from teachers. You can decide whether it's a grade level decision or if each teacher will make a decision of their own. But either way, make sure that they believe in and agree to this decision. If you try to force a decision on an individual or group of teachers, it will not create change. It will create resentment, though!

The important thing is that this decision represents an action the teacher will take. We're not formatting this as a goal for a reason. You can start by looking at data and student work, but that's not the end game of this conversation. Keep them moving until they make a decision of an action they will make. Avoid, "My students will..." That's obviously what we want, but we can't control students. The only way to make change happen is to ask, "What will I do differently?"

To get teachers thinking about this, ask them to consider:

- * What is something you believe would make a difference for your students, but you haven't found the time to do it?
- * Have you learned something in a professional development that you'd like to try out?
- * Where are your students stuck? What can we do differently to help them grow?

Make sure the decision is an action teachers can take such as...

- * I will utilize fluency folders for 10 minutes every day.
- * I will meet with all of my guided reading groups every week.
- * I will model writing in front of my students instead of putting up a finished piece to discuss.
- * I will communicate with students' parents on a weekly basis about their behavior.
- * I will analyze the data from each math assessment to plan for remediation and review.
- * I will use a hands-on strategy to introduce each new math concept.
- * I will integrate reading strategies into my science instruction every week.

It has to be something that is easily evaluated. Teachers need to be able to ask themselves, "Did I do it or not?"

STEP 2: MAKE A [REALISTIC] PLAN

Plans are probably the most important part of this process. Without a plan, everybody will pat themselves on the back for making great decisions and then they won't actually do anything differently in their classrooms. A plan is the key to making action actually happen. Without a plan, decisions are wishes.

Realistic plans include specific steps and dates to roll out those steps. They take reality into consideration. Instead of expecting the ten minute fluency read to magically fit into their existing schedule, get real! Look at their schedule and figure out what's getting bumped so you can fit this in. If you try to cram 100 minutes into 90 minutes, no one will be happy, and teachers and kids will be unsuccessful.

Here are some things to think about when creating your plan.

- * Is this best for kids?
- * Do we need to learn more about this, or are we ready to start?
- * What kind of support is needed from the instructional coach or administration?
- * Why haven't we done this before? What obstacles get in the way?
- * What materials do we need to make this happen?
- * What time of day will we do this?
- * How frequently will we do this?
- * What will we do if we have an unexpected change in our schedules?
- * When is a good time to check in to make sure the plan is working? How will we conduct that check in?

STEP 3: TAKE ACTION! FOLLOW THE PLAN!

Obviously, this step has to be undertaken by the people who are working with kids, right? But you might have some components that you can support teachers through. You may find resources to make rolling out the plan a little less stressful. You could pop in and ask how it's going, just to see if they need any additional support. You can model, coteach, or confer with students. You can take a photo or a video of the initiative in action in one teacher's room and send it to the others, to give them an idea of what they can do to make it work.

Basically, your job is to support teachers in making the plan happen.

STEP 4: CHECK IN.

Ok, remember when I said that the most important step was step 2? Well, this one is a close second. Your job as the coach in this situation is to support teachers by providing the check-ins that they need. I've actually had teachers tell me, "I know we all know we're supposed to do guided reading regularly, but when I know you're going to check on my binder and my lessons, it reminds me to make sure I'm consistent."

Some teachers don't love it when you check in, but if that's part of your job as determined by your administration, it's still got to happen. So here are a few ways you can check in.

- * **Verbal Check-in:** Ask, "How's our plan going?" This works well for some teachers, but not for others. Use your best judgment and your knowledge of your faculty to determine whether this will work!
- * **Lesson Plans:** Have teachers provide you with a copy of a lesson plan that shows they planned for the action. (Good for some plans, but not for others – it doesn't actually tell you that they did it. Sometimes this is used to pretend that something is happening when it's not.)
- * **The Pop-In.** This is exactly what it sounds like. Ask teachers to submit their schedules to you, or look at the plan so you can see when the lesson or initiative was supposed to take place. Then just "pop in" when you expect to see the lesson in action. This will give you an idea of what it really looks like, and whether it's happening. Of course, it is possible that you might pop in on a day that's not great. You might have to pop in a few times to get a good idea of whether it's happening or not.
- * **Work samples:** Schedule a follow-up PLC. Have teachers bring samples of the student work associated with the lesson or initiative.
- * **Photo Feature:** Teachers will submit photos of the lesson or initiative in action. They can post them on a bulletin board outside their room or text or email you. The best part of getting emailed or texted photos is that you can feature those teachers and their work in a school newsletter, at a faculty meeting or at a professional development. This can help other teachers get ideas about what this initiative could look like, or to remind them that they should try it!

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BETTER THAN GOAL SETTING

Instead of setting resolutions we'll all forget anyway, let's make a plan and take action.

1. Make a decision: what habit or action will you take this year to positively impact your instruction or school?

2. Make a realistic plan. What do you need to have in place to make this happen? Include steps, time frames, and dates that will help you stay focused and on track.

3. Take action! Follow your plan.

4. What checkpoints will help you follow through?
Set dates and actions of checkpoints.

SAMPLE WORKSHEET

BETTER THAN RESOLUTIONS

Ms. Beltran 4-2

Instead of setting resolutions we'll all forget anyway, let's make a plan and take action.

1. Make a decision: what habit or action will you take this year to positively impact your instruction or school?

Integrate content area reading into my literacy block to support science instruction.

2. Make a plan. What do you need to have in place to make this happen? Include dates that will help you stay focused and on track.

1. When we plan for readings, bring science curriculum calendar.
2. Subscribe to Science Weekly.
3. Designate one science-related article a week for literacy block.
4. Plan strategies to use during PLC and put them in the lesson plans.

3. Take action! Follow your plan.

4. What checkpoints will help you follow through?

Set dates and actions of checkpoints.

1/30/19 Bring Science curriculum calendar to PLC

2/14/19 Bring student work samples to PLC

2/28/19 Post article + response on bulletin board outside of door

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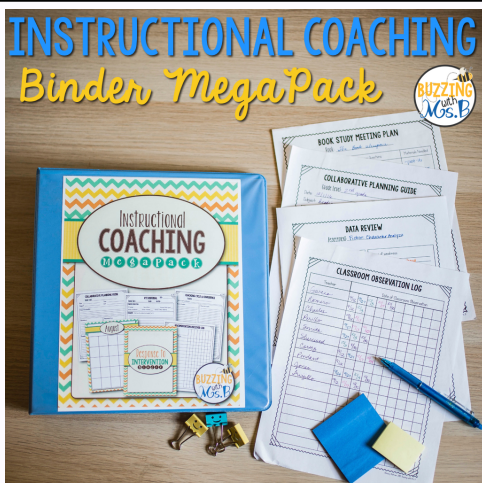


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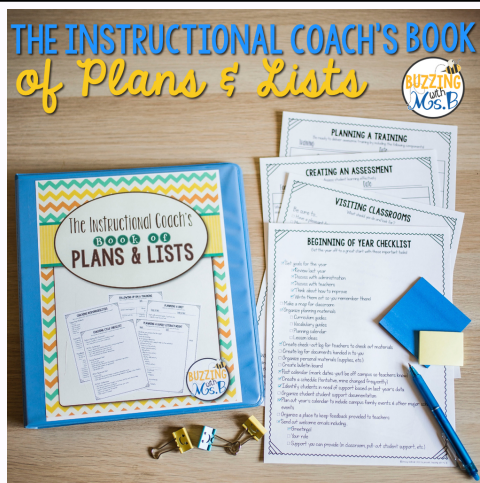
All photos in this resource were taken by myself or Fernie Ceniceros, fcenicerosphoto@gmail.com

Other coaching resources you might enjoy!



This instructional coaching MegaPack is hundreds of pages full of forms, printable and fillable, organizational tools, and structures for helping you coach your teachers! BONUS: 15 different styles of binder covers, calendars, and spines!

<http://bit.ly/IPEWAAJ>

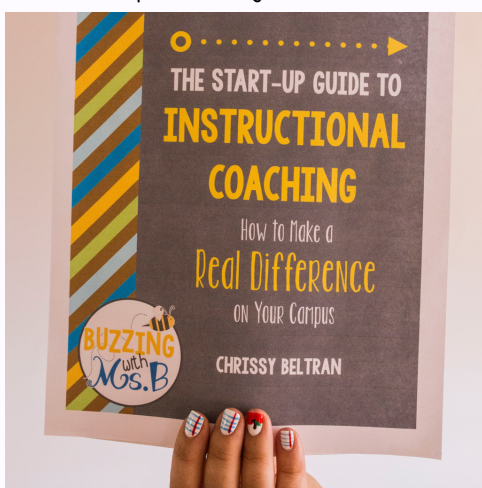


The instructional Coach's Book of Plans & Lists is over 35 pages of checklists and planners to help you tackle all of your coaching responsibilities! Planning PD, getting organized, providing support to teachers and more!

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The Start-Up Guide to Instructional Coaching is an easy-to-read and easy-to-implement guide to get your coaching journey started off on the right foot! Begin with confidence with the tips from this book!

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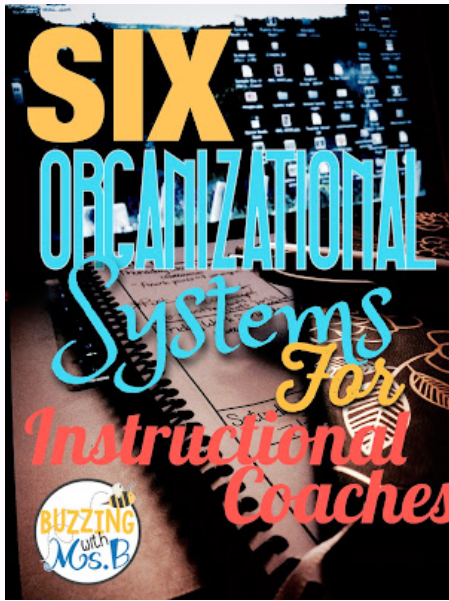


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