3 Common Coaching Challenges

(And How To Tackle Them With Grow)

As we enter the final stretch of this school year, teachers have a final opportunity to build students' skills and knowledge—and coaches have a last chance to identify instructional improvements and provide strategic, targeted, and actionable feedback.

But three common challenges can hinder these efforts.
To help you navigate each one and lead your coaches and teachers to the finish line, we've compiled top strategies, tips, and tricks from fellow Grow users.

1

Unreceptive teachers

The Challenge: At some point, every coach and coaching leader encounters a teacher who does not agree with or is otherwise unreceptive to feedback about their instructional practices. Though tough at first, building trust consistently is key to easing this friction so collaborative coaching can happen.

Ways to Grow:

✓ **Ground any conversation with a hesitant teacher in data**. Ask yourself and your coaches: Do we have the right instructional data (observations, student academic data, etc.) and the right, relevant feedback for this teacher's growth? Are we logging this information clearly and consistently in Grow—as evidence of both their strengths and opportunities for improvement?

> ❝
> We have to go into the tough conversation prepared. ... Ensure everything is grounded in data and that a coach is providing the right feedback [and] asking the right question ... See a data point (qualitative or quantitative) and norm on what the desired state is."
>
> **Dr. Raymond Barnes, Chief of Schools**
> Savannah-Chatham Public School Systems, GA

✓ Encourage your coaches to **listen to a hesitant teacher with an open mind**. Asking questions like, "What about what I'm coaching or suggesting do you disagree with?" can open the door to shared understanding and trust.

✓ Even less-than-positive feedback from a teacher offers you the opportunity to validate and **communicate how coaching is impacting your organization**. Review your reports in the Grow platform to identify the bright spots. Then share those stories with coaches and their teachers, highlighting successes seen in other classrooms and any school- or district-wide trends of note.

2

Too much analysis, not enough coaching

The Challenge: Coaching can generate immense volumes of data, which is both a boon and a potential blocker for coaches trying to provide targeted feedback to teachers. If you notice that coaching touchpoints (at leadership meetings, in PLCs, etc.) always center analysis over action, it may be time to flip the script.

> **"When our leaders meet, we aren't looking at information collected in observations. We've already done that analysis [in Grow] ... so we can focus on teachers' struggles, their advantages, and actions like crosswalks before issues arise."**
>
> Dr. Bryan Willis-Reese, Principal at Allgood Elementary School, DeKalb County Schools, GA

Ways to Grow:

☑ Look at the agenda for one regularly occurring coaching touchpoint, such as a leadership meeting. Ask yourself: **What coaching data in Grow do we need to have already analyzed** for this meeting to be most actionable for coaches and/or teachers?

☑ **Clarify what data or reports in Grow each team member should review** ahead of that coaching touchpoint. Set clear expectations for analyses or observations you want them to bring to the meeting. Alternatively, you can send a list of questions ahead of time for each attendee to answer using Grow, letting them select the most essential data dashboards and reports to review.

☑ During this coaching touchpoint, dedicate a limited amount of time to allow each attendee to share their findings. You can open the Grow platform to review data as you discuss, but encourage your team to **prioritize action planning over reanalyzing data**.

3

Feedback or action step overload

The Challenge: How often do teachers hear different feedback or action steps from the individuals supporting them? While intentions may be good, too many focus areas for instructional improvement can overwhelm teachers. It may also create confusion about which opportunities matter most for student learning goals, and their own professional growth.

Ways to Grow:

✓ Review recent coaching feedback and action steps logged in the Grow platform for your teachers. How many of each does a teacher have on average? **Are both the feedback and action steps documented relevant** to their individual coaching goals? To school- or district-wide strategic goals?

✓ Work with coaches to **prioritize identifying one piece of feedback and one related action step** with each coaching cycle. The more targeted the focus, the more manageable it becomes for a teacher to shift their practice within that timeframe.

✓ Using Grow, **hold other leaders accountable for rallying behind that one piece of feedback** or that one action step. Encourage them to open the platform and familiarize themselves with recent coaching data before stepping into that classroom or holding that hallway conversation.

No matter what challenges you face with coaching, Level Data is here to ensure Grow supports your success. Visit the Grow Online Community to review FAQs and find resources, or use the Support Portal to ask a question.

Level Data

leveldata.com/Grow