

1 Key Coaching Strategy to Help Students Get Started [EXECUT...

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SPEAKERS

Seth Perler

 Seth Perler 00:01

Hello parents and teachers! What's up? In this video, parents and teachers, I'm going to talk to you about a coaching strategy that I use with my students. And this will specifically help both you parents and teachers to get clarity about what they are supposed to be doing, and how to help them start. So my name is Seth Perler. I'm an executive function coach. And what I do day in and day out is I help struggling students navigate this thing called education so they can have a good life. And my students are notoriously resistant to doing things. "I don't want to, I don't feel like, this is stupid. Why do I have to do this? I'll do it later. I'll do it tomorrow, I'll do it in five minutes," anything but doing it now. And they really do have trouble getting started and taking action because of two things. (1) One, they really don't have clarity about where to start. They really don't have a clear idea of what needs to be done. (2) Two, they really don't know how to start. So first, they don't have the clarity about what needs to be done, then they don't know how to get the train rolling. So these are executive function skills. There are many executive function skills that need to be built to get to be able to do those things. But what I'm going to do is explain how I work with the kids to figure these things out. How to how to figure out what they need to do and how to help them get started. So a little background, I do a lot of co-working with my students online. And when I'm working with a student in person, in my office, it's a lot easier to get that moving because I can see their computer, I can see their backpack, I can see their planner, and I can see them face to face, and it's a lot easier. So

how do I do it when it's online? It's more challenging. So this strategy is really going to help you. It'll really break down some ideas for you.

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I'm really going to break this down to a few different parts. I'm gonna help you figure out where they're at, meaning what they need to be doing. Figure out what they need to do to start. And then if they need more support, I'm going to tell you what to do. I'm going to tell you what I do after I get started with them. And then I'll give you sort of a bonus question that I often use, which is an amazing question. And then I'll sort of walk you through what a best case scenario looks like after I've been coaching them for a while and they really understand it so that you, the parent teacher can understand how it could look or should look.

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Step one: I'm going to give you some great strategies and questions. So if you're taking notes, I have some amazing questions that are very, very powerful. The way they're framed, they get the information you are looking for. So step one is we have to figure out where they're at figure out what needs to happen. So what I want to be able to start off with is I want to be able to look at my students say "Hey, what's up? So what's your NOP? And they should be able to tell me. Well, you don't know what the NOP is. The NOP or the MIT is their Number One Priority or their Most Important Thing. Some kids like MIT some like NOP, what is your NOP? What is your number one priority today? What is the most important thing, if you didn't get anything else done today, what is your NOP? What's your number one priority? Parents and teachers, these kids don't have that. The kids who struggle with executive function are not great at prioritizing yet. These are skills we develop. So asking that question allows their brain to practice prioritizing. Okay, so that's a great question. So ideally, I can say, "Hey, what's your NOP?" And they can answer that. If they can't answer that I might say, "Hey, how's it going?" And all these questions I'm about to say to you or me fishing. I'm trying to figure out what they need to do. "Hey, how's it going?" That's a way I get the information. "Hey, what's up? What's up with you today? What do you got going on?" Sometimes I'll say to them, "What's your temperature on a scale of one to 10? What is your temperature with your schoolwork or homework or whatever today? And why?" So they say, "Oh, it's a six." Cool, why? Because blah, blah, blah, cool. What would make it a seven? So I always ask, what would make it one more? Next one I do oftentimes is called a high-low. I say, well, what's your high-low today was school. And they'll say, "Oh, well, my high, the best thing about school today is this. And the worst thing about this," again, I'm fishing. When they tell me their high and their low, that helps me know where to guide them. When they tell me their temperature it helps me

know where to guide them. And then sometimes I'll say, "So what's your number one priority? Or what's going on?" And they're like, "I don't know." And they just keep saying, "I don't know. I don't know. I don't know." So the magic question that I ask at this time, and this will be more difficult for you parents, of course, because they're going to be more resistant to you parents than they would be to me or teachers. But if they keep saying "I don't know what I have to do, I don't know." And they're just trying to avoid. Then I say, "Well, what if you had to guess?" so I'll say "What do you have to do tonight? Or which number on priority?" And they're like, "I don't know." And I say, "Okay, well, what if you had to guess?? And something about that question allows the brain to think differently, and then I shut my mouth and I wait. I don't look them directly in the eye. I give them space. I say "What if you had to guess? I'll wait, take your time, take as much time as you need to figure it out." And some kids really need a lot of processing. Sometimes you'll wait like 10 or 12 seconds and finally they'll start talking. And then you're like, Oh, my gosh, I thought that silence lasted forever. So be patient so you can ask them, "What if you had to guess?" Another question I will ask is, I'll say, "Okay, cool. So about tonight, do you want me to give you ideas or do you have some?" And what that does is, I'm guessing at this point, when I asked that question, they're gonna say they want my ideas, but I have to get the buy-in. And this is especially important for parents. They have to feel agency, they have to feel buy-in, they have to be a part of the process, they have to feel like it's their idea. So "Do you want me to give you ideas? Or do you have some?" And then they'll say, "Yeah, what are your ideas?" And so when I say that, see, what happens is a lot of times these kids will say, "Oh, I don't have any homework," they really may have homework, or they may have long term things they're supposed to be working on or they may have executive function things they should be working on. Like updating their planner or working with their inbox, other responsibilities, looking at the portals, looking at their grades. So they may have things to do, but they're thinking "I don't have homework." That's the at least the thought. So asking, "Do you want me to give ideas?" a lot of times I propose some of those things.

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So then, I will often say this question. Now, this is an amazing, amazing magic question. Particularly for the kid who does want executive functionality. They do want to be more successful, they do want less stress, they have that maturity, because I definitely get a lot of students who aren't even there yet. There's no buy-in yet. But for the kid who's like, "Yeah, I want to I want my life to be easier. I want to do better at school," and blah, blah. This question is amazing. So I say, "Is there something that you should be doing today that you really don't want to do? That's really daunting? Like, what's the thing today that you want to do the least?" It's a great question because when we find that out, and when you approach the kids compassionately, empathetically, with patience and kindness and

tolerance and openness, when you approach them that way it's not like "What do you got to do? I know you got homework," you know, when they can feel really emotionally safe. And you asked that question, "What should you be doing? What should you be doing that you really don't feel like doing? It just seems daunting. Like, what's the thing you want to do least?" When I asked that question in a way that's safe for them, allows them to share it, but the problem with those things are is that they often really don't know how to start. And that's where the opportunity is, for me as a coach, or you as a parent, or you as a teacher. Now that we know that they have this daunting thing and imagine something for you, for the listener, you right now, something daunting for you. It is one of your least favorite things. It's daunting. It's hard to get started, and they really need to learn the skills around how to even know how to start because they don't know how to do that.

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Step 2: So anyhow, those are how I figure out where they're at. And the next thing that I do, so that was step one, and step two, is how do I help them get started? How do I help them figure out, and this one's really simple, a lot simpler than the previous one. And what I usually ask is this one question. So here, I don't have like 10 strategies for you have one. "What's the next thing you need to do to get started?" That may sound like a simple question, parents and teachers. But it is really powerful, because they're not thinking it intuitively yet. Now, for you, or certain students, that may be real easy, but for these kids, they don't even ask themselves that question. So for us to ask them, "What's the next thing you need to do to get started?" Sometimes they'll say, "Uh, get out my backpack." And I'll say, "Okay, where's your backpack?" And they'll be like, "Downstairs," I'll say, "Okay, go get it right now." Even just their backpack being downstairs is an interference. Or they might say, "I have to find it online." I'll say, "Okay, cool. Go find it right now." So they just need a little help getting the ball rolling. So that's, that's the second place. How do we figure out what they need to do to start, we ask the question, what's the next thing you need to do to get started? Sometimes they will say, "I don't know." And then what I usually do at that point and say, "Cool, well, if you didn't know, what would it be?" Kind of like the question I was mentioning before. "Cool. Well, if you didn't know, what would it be?" And then I'll say, "Cool. I'm still listening. Take your time. What do you need to do to get started?" and I'll look away and just wait. That way time is really important. Now if it's too much wait time and I can tell they really don't know, then I'll say, "Do you want me to help you? How can I be helpful?"

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Step 3: Okay, so next number three. So that was one, how do we figure out what they have to do. Two, how do we help them get started. Three, sometimes they need more support.

So if they need even more support, and they're really just they're new the executive function game, they really don't have a lot of skills around getting stuff done. A lot of times these kids have so many missings, they're failing classes, particularly in middle and high school. So I will say things like, "Cool. Now, we figured out what you need to do tonight." If I'm online with them, I'm saying, "Where are you gonna do it?" Anytime we can help the kids get concrete on the thing, the more likely they are to do it. Because sometimes they don't even know where they're going to do their homework, everything is so random. So they'll say, "The kitchen table." "Cool. What time are you gonna do it?" "Later today." "No, what time are you gonna do it?" "Two o'clock." "Okay, cool. Two o'clock? What time is it now?" You know? So I might say things like that. And then I'll say, how will you get started? And just asking these questions, again, the kid has to visualize these things. So how will you get started? Well, I'll just start. A lot of times, I'll accept that answer. But sometimes they'll say, well, I'll put my stuff on the desk and start or whatever. But I just want them to think through how they're going to start because they haven't visualized themselves starting. And that's very important. And then sometimes they'll say, "What if you get distracted? What will you do?" Because they haven't considered that either. So that's a great one. And then the last one that I often do is I say, "How can I be helpful? How can I be helpful?" Now parents, often, often, often, you know, you the parent, you know, logically what needs to be done. So parents are often like, "This needs to be done. Let me logically explain this to you. Let me use reason." It comes across as nagging, it comes across as micromanaging. The kids are more resistant, they don't want to hear it. It comes across as lecturing. So you're really framing it, how can I be helpful? Now, if you've been in that role of your the executive function for a long time, they're not going to know how to answer you, the parent, on how can I be helpful for a while. It's gonna take a while for them to get used to that you're actually going to listen to them. So don't expect that to be an overnight fix. So that was number one, two, and three, that was like, how do we find out what they need to do? How do we help them get started? What if they need support?

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Step 4: Number four, what I do is I say, so if I'm working with kids online, and my co-working groups or something I'll say, "All right, cool. Once you get started, and I will check on you in five minutes or 10 minutes, or I'll check on you in a little bit." Okay. And I say, Okay, why do you parents and teacher think I say, "okay,"? It's because I'm getting buy-in. They're agreeing to it. They're saying, "Yeah, okay, I'll see you in a couple minutes." So I want to know that they are open to receiving mail.

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Step 5: Number five, this is sort of a bonus question that I often will throw in it all different coaching times, this bonus question you might want to write down. And bonus question is this, What would it take? What would it take? So you, the parent or teacher watching this right now, I want you to think about something in your life that you want to do, but you're resisting. You don't feel like doing it. Something you should do. You know, you should do you want to get it done, or you want to do it. But it's daunting. Okay. Now, let me ask you this question. What would it take to get started on that thing? What would it take? And for you to talk that out to me, if I was coaching you, or for the students to talk that out to us. What would it take to get X, Y and Z done? To get started on this? To feel better about math? What would it takes to accomplish a science lab? What would it take to you know, get the reading journal done? What would it take to email your teacher? So what would it take is a great question. All right, best case scenario, here's what happens. So once I've been coaching a child, so you parents and teachers, this is where we want to get to. You want to be able to get to the place where you can do three things. So basically, you start out with a question, "Hey, what's up? So what's your NOP tonight? What's your number one priority?" And the student can actually answer, "Oh, well, my number one priority is blah, blah, blah." And you, in your gut, you can be like, okay, they sound like they actually know what they're talking about. You have some faith in that. Then two, you can ask, "Well, what's something you should do today, but you really don't want to?" And sometimes they'll say, "Oh, well, it's that thing that I just told you." Or they'll say it's another thing. I often will ask that just because sometimes there's something really lingering, that really does need to get done, but it's not the NOP, it's not the number one priority, but it's really a big one. And then three, I say, "Cool, what's the next thing you need to do to start?" and if I've been coaching them for a while, they're able to say, "Well, I need to go get organized at my desk, get myself stuff together, open up the laptop, find it and start." So that's your ideal scenario once they've really been getting some of this executive function down and better.

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Anyhow, my name is Seth Perler. I'm an executive function coach based in Boulder Colorado. Not really, I moved to Maui, Hawaii. If any of you are in Hawaii, aloha! Say hello to me. I'd love to meet you someday. And my website is SethPerler.com. Parents and teachers please support me. Give my video a thumbs up if this helped you. Put a comment below. What did you think of this video? What ideas do you have to help kids get started and figure out what they're doing? Give us some ideas and strategies that you use. Or what doesn't work? What's frustrating you? Let us know in the comments, give it a thumbs up, subscribe, that helps my stuff grow. And share my blog and my videos with other people. If you subscribe on my site, I have all kinds of freebies and I send you an update every Sunday. That's all I gotta say. I hope you have an awesome day, aloha to you. Be

well, take care, have a fantastic connection. Joy, fun, and peace with your family today.
Be well.