We're Meeting to Coach About Math, Why Aren't We Making Progress?

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Background

- Qualitative study

- Elementary mathematics coaches
  - Large urban district
  - Extensive training on mathematical content knowledge and mathematical pedagogical knowledge
  - Extensive training on instructional and content focused coaching
  - Targeted placements in elementary schools requesting coaching supports
  - In years 1-3 of coaching roles

Why is it some coaching conversations feel really productive, and others do not?

What do we coach about?

Mathematical Goals

Mathematical Problem Design

Students' Mathematical Thinking

Other?

What We Want Teachers To Do:

Set Clear Mathematical Goals

- Find examples to make a mathematical point
- Link representations to underlying ideas
- Appraise/adapt content of textbooks
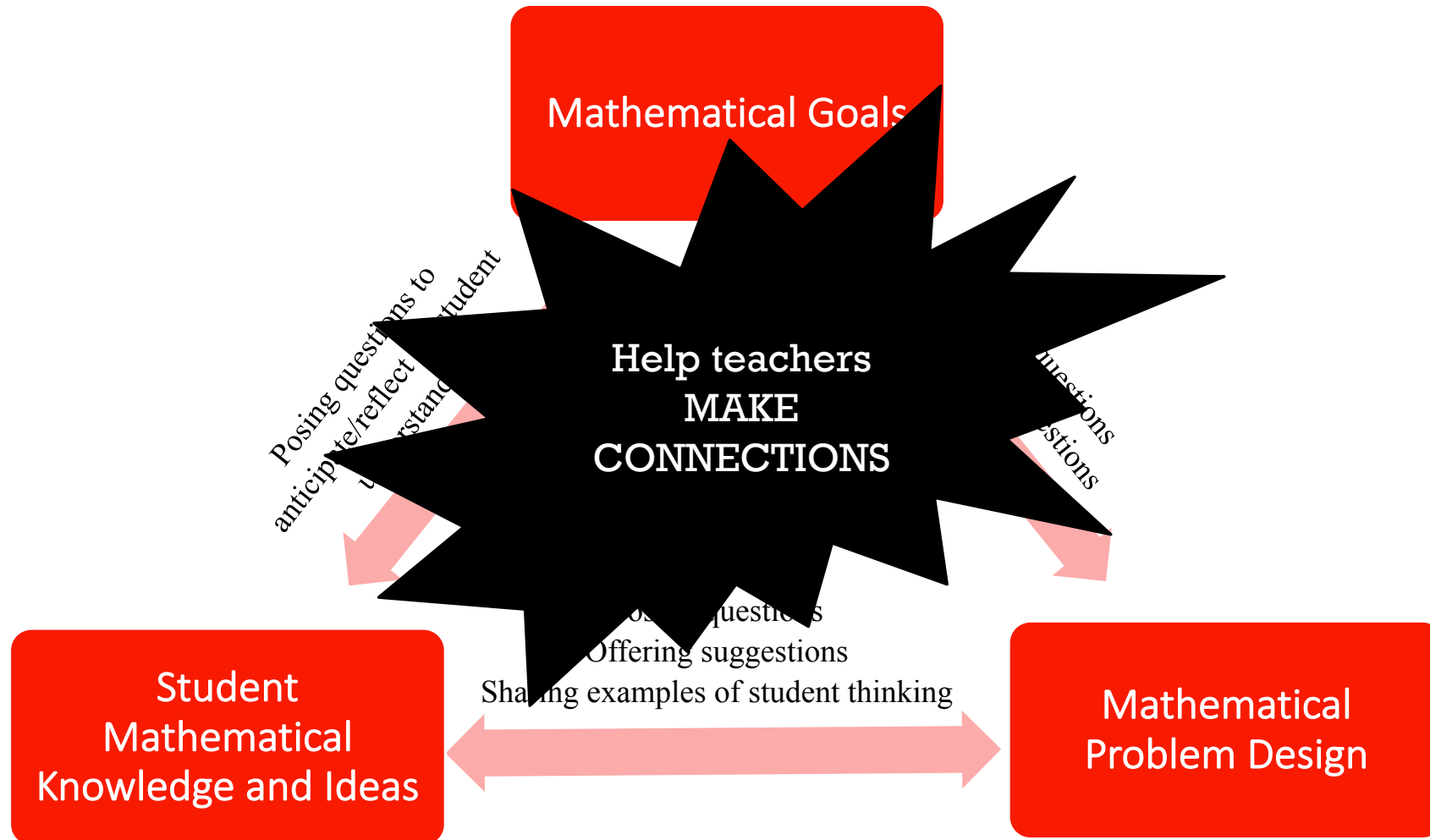
Use Intentional Mathematical Problem Design

- Present mathematical ideas
- Pose productive questions
- Modify tasks

Assess and Analyze Students' Mathematical Thinking

- Recognize what is involved in using a representation
- Evaluate plausibility of student claims
- Give/Evaluate mathematical explanations

(*Adapted from* Ball, Thames, Phelps, 2008)

What Coaches Do To Help Them Get There: Coaching "Moves"

Mathematical Goals

Help teachers
MAKE
CONNECTIONS

Posing questions to
anticipate/reflect student
Understand student

questions
questions

Offering questions
Offering suggestions
Sharing examples of student thinking

Student
Mathematical
Knowledge and Ideas

Mathematical
Problem Design

(Jakopovic, 2017)

Professional Learning Focus Areas

What Coaches Do To Help Get Them There: Coaching Cycle Focus

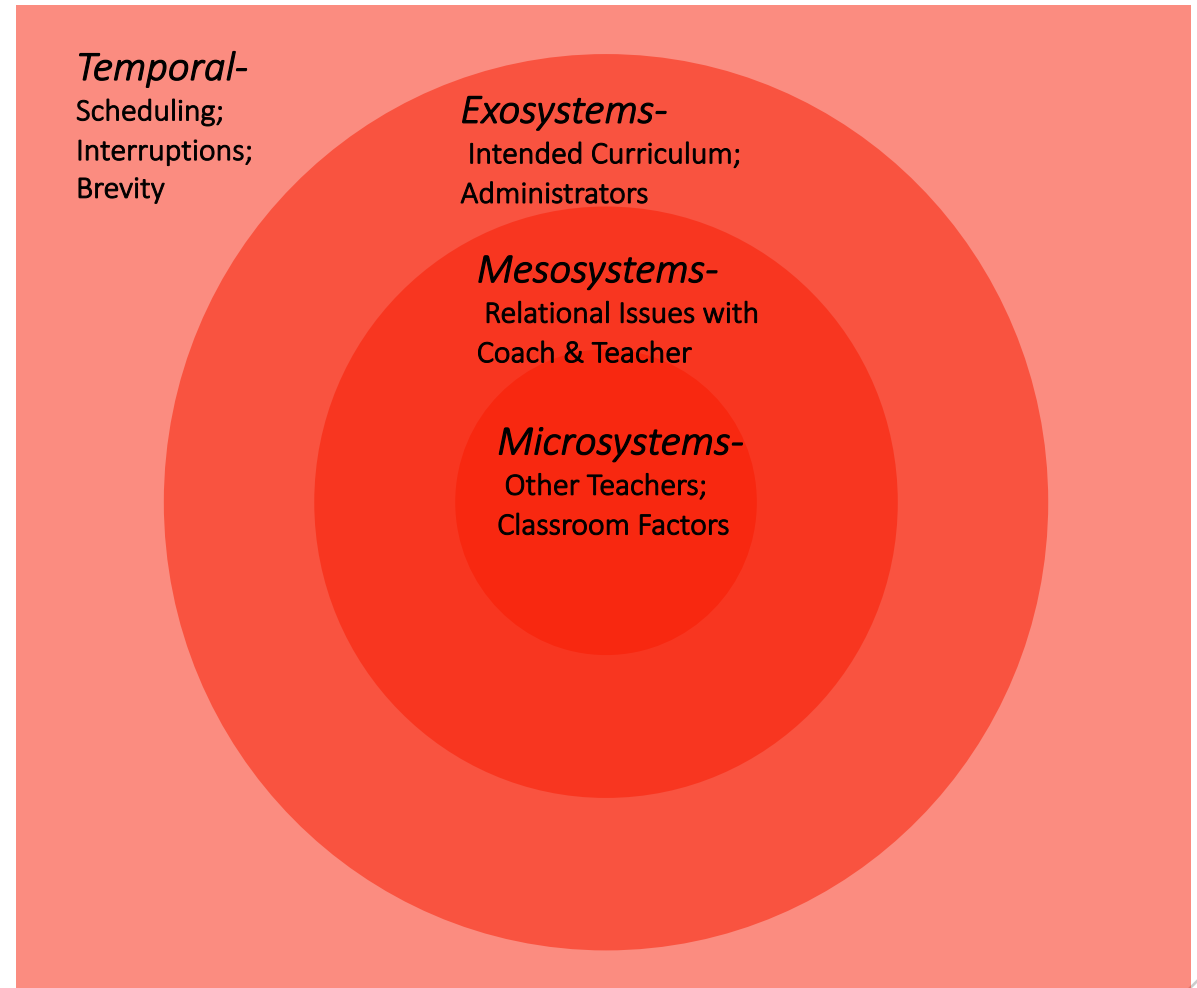| Content Knowledge & Worthwhile Tasks	Engaging Students	Questioning & Discourse	Formative Assessment	Student Work Analysis	Differentiation

(McGatha, Bay-Williams, McCord Kobett, & Wray, 2018)

We know what the goal is, why is it that sometimes we can't seem to reach the destination?

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Potential Contextual Factors That Can Influence Coaching Conversations with Teachers

Temporal-
Scheduling;
Interruptions;
Brevity

Exosystems-
Intended Curriculum;
Administrators

Mesosystems-
Relational Issues with
Coach & Teacher

Microsystems-
Other Teachers;
Classroom Factors

(Jakopovic, 2017; *Adapted from* Smith, Hayes, & Lyons, 2016)

So how do we mitigate factors and keep the conversation moving forward?

Scenario 1:

The way we say it matters, so say what you mean and mean what you say.
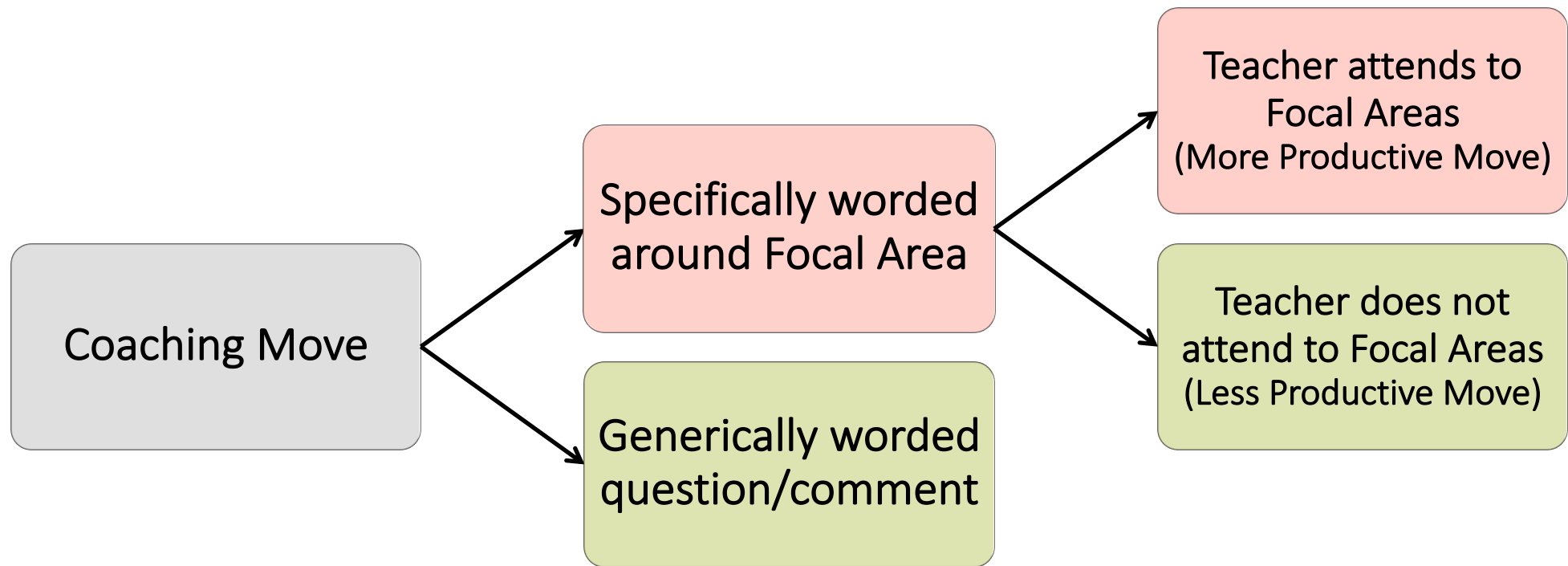
Read & Discuss:

- What were the potential coaching pitfalls in this scenario?

- What focal area(s) might be worth diving into with the classroom teacher in this scenario?

- What could the coach say/do to better focus the conversation?

Tip #1:

Enter the conversation with focus

Scenario 2:

Tipping the conversational balance...

Read & Discuss:

- What were the potential coaching pitfalls in this scenario?

- How might you restructure this conversation to engage the teacher?

- What focal area(s) might be accessible to this teacher as a starting point?

Read & Discuss:

Scenario 3:

Sticking to the script too tightly can derail the conversation.

- What were the potential coaching pitfalls in this scenario?

- How might you restructure this conversation to engage the teacher?

- What focal area(s) might help the teacher dig into the lesson more deeply?

Tip #2:

Be responsive

Talk Moves Aren't Just for the Classroom…Our Patterns of Conversation Matter

- **Active Listening**
  - No interruptions, seeking to understand
- **Paraphrasing**
  - Let the teacher talk more, restate the "big ideas"
  - Keep it focused on the teacher, not you
- **Posing Questions**
  - Pose questions using plurals
  - Embed tentative language
  - Use open ended questions to express your thinking
  - Embed positive presuppositions

(McGatha, Bay-Williams, McCord Kobett, & Wray, 2018)

Read & Discuss:

Scenario 4:

"I only have ten minutes to talk today…"

- What does the coach do to engage the teacher productively in a limited amount of time?

- Which focal areas are addressed?

- What would you say/do differently if you were the coach?

Tip #3:

Be intentional in developing the teacher's ability to "notice" the focal areas on their own

There's no magic bullet, but the way we craft coaching conversations matters…

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The Take Aways

- Coaching moves are neither inherently productive or unproductive, it's how we use them.
  - How do we encourage two-way participation from reluctant teachers?
  - How can develop "professional noticing" around mathematics focal areas in our teachers?
  - How do we maximize the time we have?

Thank you

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