

## Teachstone Blog

# Coaching Tip: Dealing with Distractions While Using Video Models

by **Emily Doyle**

**28**

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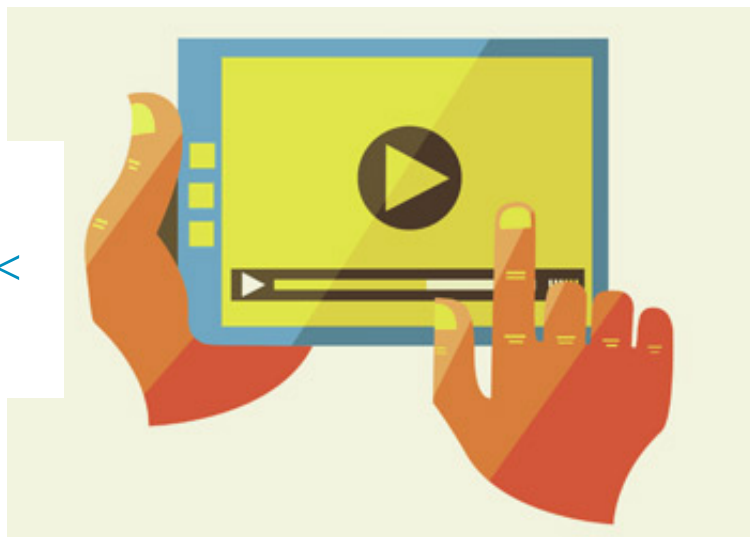
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*Editor's Note: This post was originally posted on June 7, 2014. We have revamped the content so it's accurate and fresh.*

Teachers that watch videos of effective classroom interactions are more likely to improve their own interactions. Knowing this, Teachstone created and continues to cultivate a robust [CLASS Video Library](#), featuring real teachers effectively interacting with children. In order to help coaches and mentors make the most of their Video Library usage with teachers, Teachstone also created the [Video Library Companion](#), a roadmap for planning and facilitating effective conversations around the videos.

With all these tools at a coach's disposal, one would think that leading a discussion around classroom videos would be a breeze. But what happens when a teacher becomes fixated on a distracting element of a video—something unrelated to your planned discussion around a specific

dimension or indicator, but potentially derailing nonetheless? Examples of distracting elements might include:

- “The teacher was chewing gum while reading the story.”
- (During a Concept Development discussion) “I didn’t see the teacher smile once!”
- “That might work if I didn’t have twenty children in my classroom!”
- “The book she is reading is not appropriate for those kids.”

What can you do when conversations get sidetracked like this? Here are some tips:

**1. Prepare in Advance:** Watch videos models in advance, and if you notice any potential distractions, prepare the teacher for what she is about to see and describe, specifically, what to look for in the video that relates to your work together.

**2. Acknowledge the comment,** but remind the teacher that the point of your conversation is to look for and discuss CLASS interactions around just one dimension. Use the dimension-specific questions from the [Video Library Companion](#) to reorient the conversation.

**3. Affirm the observation and follow the teacher’s lead.** For example, if the teacher remarks, “That might work if I didn’t have twenty children in my classroom!” you might respond, “You’re right. It is much easier to have an extended feedback loop when you’re interacting with just one or two children. Do you want to talk about some strategies for facilitating group feedback loops or ways you might work with your assistant to build in more one-on-one time with children?”

**4. Affirm the observation and offer clarification or additional information.** For example, if the teacher notices, “I didn’t see the teacher smile once!” during a Concept Development video, you might respond: “Excellent point. You’re right on the money—fostering a warm environment goes a long way toward laying the groundwork for Concept Development interactions; however, right now we’re just looking for Concept Development interactions. Smiling falls into the Positive Climate dimension.”

While we’re on the topic, guess what? Our newest product in development, [MyTeachstone](#), will feature a robust professional development library—including videos with information pointing out possible distractions, a list of behaviors to “look for,” and discussion questions that will aid these important video-related conversations.

How do you support teachers in making the most of video models? Use the comments below to share tips with your fellow coaches.



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**Mamie Morrow** 6/19/2014, 11:00:26 AM

Thanks, Emily. These are great ideas of ways to handle these distractions when watching videos with teachers. I find teachers get even more distracted when they watch videos of their own teaching. I have found preparing teachers in advance to observe a specific interaction they had with a child or a group of children to be key in helping them to focus their attention while watching videos.

Reply to *Mamie Morrow*

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