

Teacher-Student Interactions: The Key to Quality Classrooms

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The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) describes ten dimensions of teaching that are linked to student achievement and social development. Each dimension falls into one of three broad categories: emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support.

Every day, teachers make countless real-time decisions and facilitate dozens of interactions between themselves and their students. Although they share this commonality, educators all over the country often talk about these decisions and interactions in different ways. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), developed at the University of Virginia's Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning, helps educators view classrooms through a common lens and discuss them using a common language, providing support for improving the quality of teacher-student interactions and, ultimately, student learning.

How is the CLASS organized?

The CLASS describes ten dimensions of teaching that are linked to student achievement and social development. Each of the ten dimensions falls into one of three broad categories: emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support.

Emotional support refers to the ways teachers help children develop warm, supportive relationships, experience enjoyment and excitement about learning, feel comfortable in the classroom, and experience appropriate levels of autonomy or independence. This includes:

- **Positive climate** — the enjoyment and emotional connection that teachers have with students, as well as the nature of peer interactions;
- **Negative climate** — the level of expressed negativity such as anger, hostility or aggression exhibited by teachers and/or students in the classroom;
- **Teacher sensitivity** — teachers' responsiveness to students' academic and emotional needs; and
- **Regard for student perspectives** — the degree to which teachers' interactions with students and classroom activities place an emphasis on students' interests, motivations, and points of view.

Classroom organization refers to the ways teachers help children develop skills to regulate their own behavior, get the most learning out of each school day, and maintain interest in learning activities. This includes:

- **Behavior management** — how well teachers monitor, prevent, and redirect misbehavior;
- **Productivity** — how well the classroom runs with respect to routines, how well students understand the routine, and the degree to which teachers provide activities and directions so that maximum time can be spent in learning activities; and
- **Instructional learning formats** — how teachers engage students in activities and facilitate activities so that learning opportunities are maximized.

Instructional support refers to the ways in which teachers effectively support students' cognitive development and language growth. This includes:

- **Concept development** — how teachers use instructional discussions and activities to promote students' higher-order thinking skills and cognition in contrast to a focus on rote instruction;
- **Quality of feedback** — how teachers expand participation and learning through feedback to students; and
- **Language modeling** — the extent to which teachers stimulate, facilitate, and encourage students' language use.

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