Overview of the CLASS

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System PreK (CLASS PreK; Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2005) is a system for observing and assessing the quality of interactions between teachers and students in preschool classrooms. The CLASS examines social-emotional and instructional interactions that contribute to student’s social competence and academic achievement. The CLASS measure includes 10 subscales organized into three domains: (1) Emotional Support, (2) Classroom Organization, and (3) Instructional Support. Each subscale is scored on a 7-point scale, with a score of 1 and 2 considered to be in the low-range; 3, 4, and 5 are mid-range; and 6 and 7 are high range.
Emotional Support

What is Positive Climate?
Classrooms have a high positive climate when teachers and students:
* Have positive relationships with one another and clearly enjoy being together.
* Are enthusiastic about learning and spending time in the classroom.
* Are respectful of one another.

What is Negative Climate?
Classrooms have a high negative climate when teachers and students:
* Get frequently irritated and angry with one another.
* Are not able to diffuse negative situations such that these situations escalate.
* Make fun of one another in mean spirited ways.

What is Behavior Management?
Classrooms have a high positive climate when teachers and students:
* Rules and expectations are clearly and consistently communicated.
* Behavior management is proactive, rather than reactive.
* Students receive consistent praise for meeting expectations.

Classroom Organization

What is Positive Climate?
Students are most likely to behave appropriately in the classroom when:
* Rules and expectations are clearly and consistently communicated.
* Behavior management is proactive, rather than reactive.
* Students receive consistent praise for meeting expectations.

What is Negative Climate?
Highly productive classrooms:
* Have clearly defined learning activities provided for students throughout the day.
* Everyone knows what is expected of them and how to go about doing it.
* Transitions happen quickly and efficiently.

What is Productivity?

What are Instructional Learning Formats?
Teachers provide high quality learning formats when they:
* Provide interesting and stimulating materials and instruction.
* Provide instruction using many modalities.
* Look for opportunities to actively engage students.

What is Teacher Sensitivity?
Teachers are sensitive when they:
* Consistently respond to students and are effective in addressing students' questions, concerns, and needs.
* Know their students well enough (academically and socially) to anticipate areas of difficulty and provide appropriate levels of support.
* Help students see adults as a resource and create an environment in which students feel safe and free to explore and learn.

What is Regard for Student Perspectives?
Teachers with a high regard for students' perspectives:
* Place an emphasis on students' interests, motivations, and points of view.
* Promote students' autonomy.
* Encourage students to talk and share their ideas.

Instructional Support

What is Concept Development?
Students gain the most in-depth understanding of concepts when teachers:
* Focus on the process of learning, rather than concentrating solely on rote instruction and recall of facts.
* Provide students with opportunities to use analysis and reasoning in their approach to problems.
* Bring concepts to life by applying them to students' everyday world.

What is Quality of Feedback?
Feedback to students works best when it:
* Focuses on the process of learning, rather than simply on getting the right answer.
* Provides students with specific information about their work.
* Helps students reach a deeper understanding of concepts than they could get on their own.

What is Language Modeling?
In classrooms offering high quality Language Modeling, teachers:
* Intentionally encourage, respond to, and expand on student talk.
* Engage in meaningful conversations with students.
* Consistently expose students to a variety of language uses and forms.

This handout was constructed in part with information obtained from: http://classobservation.com/, retrieved July 24, 2007.

*For more information, please contact Tracy Morgan at tmorgan@umn.edu.