

Overview of CLASS Domains and Dimensions

Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
Positive Climate Teacher Sensitivity Regard for Adolescent Perspectives	Behavior Management Productivity Negative Climate	Instructional Learning Formats Content Understanding Analysis and Inquiry Quality of Feedback Instructional Dialogue

Emotional Support Domain

Positive Climate reflects the emotional connection between the teacher and students and among students and the warmth, respect, and enjoyment communicated by verbal and nonverbal interactions.

Needs development:

- All indicators are absent or only minimally present.
- Teachers and students appear disinterested in one another. Affect in the classroom is flat, and there are rarely instances of teachers and students smiling, sharing humor, or laughing together.
- There are no, or very few, positive communications among the teacher and students; the teacher and students do not provide positive comments or indicate positive expectations of one another.
- There is no evidence that students and the teacher respect one another or that the teacher encourages students to respect one another.

Moderate performance:

- There are some indications that the teacher and students share a warm and supportive relationship, but some students may be excluded from this relationship, either by the teacher or the students.
- Some relationships appear constrained—for example, the teacher expresses a perfunctory interest in students, or encouragement seems to be an automatic statement and is not sincere.
- Sometimes, teachers and students demonstrate respect for one another.

Excellent performance:

- There are many indications that the relationship among students and the teacher is positive and warm.
- The teacher is typically in close proximity to students, and encouragement is sincere and personal.
- There are frequent displays of shared laughter, smiles, and enthusiasm.
- Teachers and students show respect for one another (e.g., listening, using calm voices, using polite language). Positive communication (both verbal and nonverbal) and mutual respect are evident throughout the session.

Emotional Support Domain

Teacher Sensitivity encompasses the teacher's timely responsiveness to the academic, social-emotional, behavioral, and developmental needs of individual students and the entire class.

Ratings in the Low Range.

- In these sessions, the teacher has not been aware of students who need extra support and pays little attention to students' needs.
- The teacher is unresponsive to and dismissive of students' academic and social-emotional needs and cues for support.
- The teacher is not effective in addressing students' needs and does not appropriately acknowledge situations that may be upsetting to students.
- The teacher is not effective at helping students solve problems; thus, student problems or confusion persist.
- Students rarely seek support from the teacher and minimize conversation with the teacher, not sharing ideas or responding to questions.

Ratings in the Middle Range.

- The teacher is sometimes aware of student needs or aware of only a limited type of student needs, such as academic needs, not social-emotional needs.
- The teacher does not always realize a student is confused and needs extra help or when a student already knows the material being taught.
- The teacher may be responsive at times to students but at other times may ignore or dismiss students, and the teacher does not respond to students' academic and social-emotional needs.
- The teacher may respond only to students who are upbeat and positive and not support students who are upset.
- Sometimes, the teacher is effective in assisting students, but not always.
- Students sometimes seek support and share ideas with the teacher, although the types of interactions are not consistent or observed across the majority of students.

Ratings in the High Range.

- The teacher's awareness of students and their needs is consistent and accurate.
- The teacher is consistently responsive to students' academic and social-emotional needs and cues for support.
- The teacher consistently addresses students' problems and concerns and is effective in doing so.
- Problems and confusions of students are resolved.
- Students are obviously comfortable with the teacher and share ideas, work comfortably together, and ask and respond to questions, even difficult questions.

Emotional Support Domain

Regard for Adolescent Perspectives captures the degree to which the teacher is able to meet and capitalize on the social and developmental needs and goals of students by providing opportunities for student autonomy and leadership. Also considered are the extent to which student ideas and opinions are valued and content is made useful and relevant to students.

Ratings in the Low Range.

- At the low range, the teacher exhibits an inflexible, rigid adherence to his or her plan, without considering student ideas or allowing students to make contributions.
- The teacher rigidly adheres to the structure of the class and does not follow students' leads.
- The teacher does not connect the class content or materials to student experiences and does not present students with information about how or why the material is of value.
- Students have few, if any, meaningful choices within the lesson and are not provided opportunities for leadership or responsibility. There are few opportunities for students to talk and express themselves.
- Peer-peer interactions that are meaningful within the context of the lesson are discouraged.

Ratings in the Middle Range.

- The teacher exhibits control at times and at other times follows the students' lead and gives them some choices and opportunities to follow their interests.
- The material is sometimes meaningfully connected to student experiences, and sometimes the teacher explains how or why the material is of value to students.
- Students have some choices within the lesson for leadership or responsibility, although the opportunities may be somewhat controlled by the teacher.
- The teacher provides only superficial opportunities for peer-peer interactions.

Ratings in the High Range.

- The teacher is flexible in following student leads, interests, and ideas and looks for ways to meaningfully engage students.
- The material is meaningfully connected to the experience of students and presented in a way that students understand how or why it is of value to them.
- Students are provided with meaningful choices within lessons and are given authentic opportunities for responsibility and leadership.
- The teacher promotes meaningful opportunities for peer-peer interactions that are integral to the lesson.

Classroom Organization Domain

Behavior Management refers to the teacher's use of effective methods to encourage desirable behavior and prevent and redirect misbehavior.

Ratings in the Low Range.

- At the low range, behavior expectations for students are absent, unclear, or inconsistently enforced.
- The teacher does not monitor the classroom effectively and responds only reactively to student disruption, which is frequent.
- There are frequent instances of misbehavior in the classroom, and teacher attempts to redirect misbehavior are ineffective.
- The teacher ignores some behavior. A number of students exhibit defiant behavior.
- The misbehavior is frequent and/or the classroom is chaotic. A large amount of instructional time is lost.

Ratings in the Middle Range.

- Although rules and expectations may be stated, they are not consistently enforced, or the rules may be unclear and difficult to follow.
- Sometimes, the teacher proactively anticipates and prevents misbehavior, but at other times the teacher ignores behavior problems until it is too late.
- The teacher sometimes misses early indicators of problems.
- Misbehavior may escalate because redirection is not always effective.
- Episodes of misbehavior are periodic but generally brief and limited to a small number of students.

Ratings in the High Range.

- In the high range, the rules and guidelines for behavior are clear, and they are consistently understood by everyone in the class.
- The teacher is consistently proactive and monitors the classroom, preventing problem behaviors from developing.
- The teacher's strategies to redirect misbehavior do not result in a loss of instructional time.
- Students are compliant and there are few, if any, instances of misbehavior.

Classroom Organization Domain

Productivity considers how well the teacher manages instructional time and routines so that instructional time is maximized. This dimension captures the degree to which instructional time is effectively managed and downtime is minimized for students.

Ratings in the Low Range.

- At the low level, the teacher provides few or no tasks for students.
- There are lengthy and frequent disruptions that cut into learning time.
- The class is disorganized, and students do not know what to do.
- Students spend a lot of time in transition, and the teacher does little to facilitate more effective transitions.
- The teacher does not have activities organized and ready, seems to be caught up in last-minute preparations, or is unprepared.

Ratings in the Middle Range.

- At the middle range, most of the time students have tasks, but learning time is sometimes limited because of disruptions and/or inefficient completion of management tasks.
- Some routines are in place, but also there are times of uncertainty and disorganization. Students spend more time than necessary in transitions, and the teacher does not consistently facilitate transitions.
- The teacher is mostly prepared for activities and/or the lesson but takes time away from instruction for last-minute preparations.

Ratings in the High Range.

- The classroom runs very smoothly.
- The teacher provides a steady flow of tasks for students, so they do not have downtime and are not confused about what to do next.
- The routines of the classroom are efficient, and all students know what is expected and how to go about doing classroom tasks and activities.
- Transitions are smooth, and there is little downtime from one lesson or activity to another.
- The teacher is fully prepared for the lesson.

Classroom Organization Domain

Negative Climate reflects the overall level of expressed negativity in the classroom. The frequency, quality, and intensity of teacher and student negativity are key to this dimension. For the purposes of this report, we have inverted the observers scores, to be consistent with the range scores across all dimensions. Therefore a high range score in this dimension indicates an absence of negative climate, and a low range score indicates the presence of negative climate.

Ratings in the Low Range.

- The teacher has not described clear learning targets.
- The teacher communicates in a disorganized and unclear way and does not draw student attention to the objectives of the lesson.
- The teacher offers information in a single mode, with little or no variety in strategies or materials. Students have little opportunity to interact with materials and activities.
- The teacher is uninvolved in the work of students and appears disinterested in their work or class participation.
- The students do not appear interested or engaged in the lesson.

Ratings in the Middle Range.

- At the middle range, the teacher may have discussed learning objectives, although the objectives are not always clear.
- The teacher may use preview and/or summary statements, but these statements are brief and not in depth; the statements do not focus students' attention on the learning objectives.
- Students are sometimes given information in a variety of modalities, strategies, and/or materials, and students have some opportunities to interact with materials and activities, although not in depth.
- The teacher intermittently facilitates student involvement through questioning, appropriate pacing, and the active display of interest and engagement in students' work.
- At other times, the teacher seems uninvolved and uninterested.
- Some of the time, the students are interested or engaged in the instruction, or they are mildly engaged.

Ratings in the High Range.

- The teacher clearly communicates learning objectives and gains students' attention on the objectives.
- The teacher presents information through multiple modalities and strategies and uses multiple materials.
- Students have consistent opportunities with materials and activities.
- The teacher actively facilitates students' involvement through questioning, appropriate pacing, and the active display of interest and engagement in students' work and participation.

Students are consistently interested and engaged.

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Instructional Support Domain

Instructional Learning Formats refer to the ways in which the teacher maximizes students' engagement in learning through clear presentation of material, active facilitation, and the provision of interesting and engaging lessons and materials.

Needs development:

- The teacher has not described clear learning targets.
- The teacher communicates in a disorganized and unclear way and does not draw student attention to the objectives of the lesson.
- The teacher offers information in a single mode, with little or no variety in strategies or materials.
- Students have little opportunity to interact with materials and activities.
- The teacher is uninvolved in the work of students and appears disinterested in their work or class participation.
- The students do not appear interested or engaged in the lesson.

Moderate performance:

- At the middle range, the teacher may have discussed learning objectives, although the objectives are not always clear.
- The teacher may use preview and/or summary statements, but these statements are brief and not in depth; the statements do not focus students' attention on the learning objectives.
- Students are sometimes given information in a variety of modalities, strategies, and/or materials, and students have some opportunities to interact with materials and activities, although not in depth.
- The teacher intermittently facilitates student involvement through questioning, appropriate pacing, and the active display of interest and engagement in students' work.
- At other times, the teacher seems uninvolved and uninterested.
- Some of the time, the students are interested or engaged in the instruction, or they are mildly engaged.

Excellent performance:

- The teacher clearly communicates learning objectives and gains students' attention on the objectives.
- The teacher presents information through multiple modalities and strategies and uses multiple materials.
- Students have consistent opportunities with materials and activities.
- The teacher actively facilitates students' involvement through questioning, appropriate pacing, and the active display of interest and engagement in students' work and participation.
- Students are consistently interested and engaged.

In brief: Do teachers clearly present engaging lessons?

Instructional Support Domain

Content Understanding refers to the depth of the lesson content and the approaches used to help students comprehend the framework, key ideas, and procedures in an academic discipline. At a high level, this dimension refers to interactions among the teacher and students that lead to an integrated understanding of facts, skills, concepts, and principles

Ratings in the Low Range.

- At the low range, the focus of the class is mainly on presenting discrete pieces of topically related information, absent broad, organizing ideas.
- Class discussion and materials fail to effectively communicate the essential attributes of the concepts and procedures to students.
- When presenting new information, the teacher makes little effort to elicit or acknowledge students' background knowledge or misconceptions or to integrate previously learned material.
- Content or procedural knowledge is not accurate or presented clearly.

Ratings in the Middle Range.

- The focus of the class is sometimes on meaningful discussion and explanation of broad, organizing ideas.
- At other times, the class is focused on discrete pieces of relevant information.
- Class discussion and materials communicate a few of the essential attributes of concepts and procedures, but examples are limited in scope and not consistently provided.
- The teacher makes some attempts to elicit and/or acknowledge students' background knowledge or misconceptions or to integrate information with previously learned material.
- These moments are limited in depth and not consistent.
- Content and/or procedural knowledge is sometimes effectively and accurately conveyed to students.
- At other times, the information is confusing and/or inaccurate.

Ratings in the High Range.

- At the high range, the focus of the class is on encouraging deep understanding of content through meaningful, interactive discussion and explanation of broad, organizing ideas.
- Class discussion and materials consistently and effectively communicate the essential attributes of concepts and procedures to students.
- New concepts and procedures and broad ideas are consistently linked to students' prior knowledge in ways that advance understanding and clarify misconceptions.
- Content and procedural knowledge is effectively and accurately communicated to students.

Instructional Support Domain

Analysis and Inquiry assesses the degree to which students are engaged in higher level thinking skills, such as inquiry, analysis, reasoning, and creating, through the application of knowledge and skills to novel and/or open-ended problems, tasks, and questions.

Needs development:

- Students do not engage in higher order thinking skills through analysis and inquiry.
- Instruction is rote, and the teacher offers no opportunities for students to engage in novel or open-ended tasks.
- Students are not challenged to apply previous knowledge and skills to a new problem.
- Students are not encouraged to think about, evaluate, or reflect on their own learning or to plan their own learning experiences.

Moderate performance:

- Students occasionally engage in higher order thinking through analysis and inquiry, but these episodes are brief or limited in depth.
- The teacher provides opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills within familiar contexts, with teacher guidance available, but does not provide opportunities for analysis and problem solving within novel contexts and/or without teacher support.
- Students have occasional opportunities to think about their thinking through explanations, self-evaluations, reflection, and planning.
- These opportunities are typically brief and limited in depth.

Excellent performance:

- Students consistently engage in extended opportunities to use higher order thinking through analysis and inquiry.
- The teacher provides opportunities for students to independently solve or reason through novel and open-ended tasks, requiring the students to select and utilize or apply existing knowledge and skills.
- Students have multiple, extended opportunities to think about their own thinking through explanations, self-evaluations, reflection, and planning.

In brief: Do students have the opportunity to apply higher order thinking?

Instructional Support Domain

Quality of Feedback assesses the degree to which feedback expands and extends learning and understanding and encourages student participation. In secondary classrooms, significant feedback also may be provided by peers. Regardless of the source, the focus here should be on the nature of the feedback provided and the extent to which it motivates learning.

Ratings in the Low Range.

- The feedback is nonexistent or perfunctory.
- Students are not provided with assistance, hints, or prompting from the teacher or peers when participating in classwork but are left to complete work without assistance.
- The teacher and/or peers move on quickly after a student has provided an answer or presented work, without building on student responses in a way that clarifies learning.
- Students rarely receive encouragement or affirmation of their work or participation.

Ratings in the Middle Range.

- There are occasional feedback loops between the teacher and students or among students, but, at other times, feedback is perfunctory.
- The teacher and/or peers sometimes scaffold student learning, but the interactions are brief and not of sufficient depth to allow students to fully perform at a higher level.
- The teacher and/or peers sometimes build on student responses to expand students' learning and understanding, but these exchanges are brief and/or limited in depth.
- The teacher and other students occasionally offer encouragement of students' efforts that increases involvement and persistence, but this encouragement is brief and/or not consistent.

Ratings in the High Range.

- There are frequent feedback loops between the teacher and students or among students, which lead students to obtain a deeper understanding of materials and concepts.
- The teacher and/or peers often scaffold student learning, allowing students to perform at a higher level than they would be able to perform independently.
- The teacher and/or peers often build on student responses in a way that expands students' understanding.
- The teacher and other students often encourage students' efforts in a way that increases involvement and persistence.

Instructional Support Domain

Instructional Dialogue is the purposeful use of content-focused discussion among teachers and students that is cumulative, with the teacher helping students link ideas together in ways that lead to deeper understanding of content. Students take an active role in these dialogues.

Needs development:

- There are no or few discussions in the class, discussions are unrelated to content or skill development, or discussions contain only simple question-response exchanges between the teacher and students.
- The class is dominated by teacher talk, or there is no discussion.
- The teacher and students ask closed-ended questions; rarely acknowledge, repeat, or extend other students' comments; and/or appear disinterested in other students' comments.
- Many students are not engaged in instructional dialogue.

Moderate performance:

- There are occasional content-based discussions in class among teachers and students. However, the discussions are brief or quickly move from one topic to another without follow-up questions or comments.
- The class is mostly dominated by teacher talk, but there are times in which students take a more active role, or there are distributed dialogues that involve only a few students in the class.
- The teacher and students sometimes use facilitation strategies that encourage more elaborated dialogue, but the strategies are brief, inconsistent, or ineffective and do not consistently engage students in extended dialogues.

Excellent performance:

- There are frequent, content-driven discussions in the class between teacher and students or among students that build depth of knowledge through cumulative and contingent exchanges.
- Class dialogues are distributed such that both the teacher and the majority of students take an active role or students are actively engaged in instructional dialogues with each other.
- The teacher and students frequently use facilitation strategies that encourage more elaborate dialogue, and students are observed responding to the techniques by fully participating in extended dialogues.

In brief: Is dialogue driving learning?