

Position Paper on CLASS and Conscious Discipline®

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is an observation instrument used in preschool through third-grade classrooms to assess classroom quality. The dimensions of the CLASS are based solely on interactions between teachers and students in classrooms and can be grouped into three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. “The CLASS dimensions are based on development theory and research suggesting that interactions between students and adults are the primary mechanism of student development and learning (Pianto, La Paro, & Hamre, p. 88).” This is the same research that forms the basis of Conscious Discipline® and supports why the school family is a foundational component of how a positive school climate is created.

Much research exists that provides evidence of the importance of these three domains. Within the Emotional Support domain the focus centers on the evidence that “children who are motivated and connected to others in the early years of schooling are much more likely to establish positive trajectories of development in both social and academic domains. Teachers’ abilities to support social and emotional functioning in the classroom are therefore central to any conceptualization of effective classroom practice (Pianto et al, p. 3).” Conscious Discipline® is an emotional intelligence and classroom management program. The CLASS Emotional Support domain was associated with growth in children’s expressive and receptive language scores as well as decreases in teacher-reported behavior problems (Pianto et al, p. 104).

The Classroom Organization domain contains three detailed dimensions that are based on work that “suggests that students exhibit better self-regulation in well-regulated classroom environments (Pianto et al, p. 4).” More specifically, “with regard to behavior management, classrooms with positive strategies for preventing and redirecting behavior tend to have students who make greater academic progress (Pianto et al, p. 4).” Conscious Discipline® is founded on brain principles that support and enhance the self regulation of adults and children.

Research on children’s cognitive and language development provides the theoretical foundation for dimensions of the Instructional Support domain. “In classrooms in which the teacher promoted higher-order thinking and creativity and gave verbal feedback relevant to performance, children’s receptive and expressive language, understanding of prereading concepts, and applied mathematics skills all increased (Pianto et al, p. 104).” Conscious Discipline® moves teachers from judging children to describing their actions and efforts. This shift improves verbal feedback and higher order thinking. It is based on safety, connection and problem solving; moving well beyond rewards and punishment into critical thinking. Instructional Support was the most consistent and robust classroom quality dimension for predicting growth across time. Interactions between adults and children are the key mechanism through which Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support are provided to children in the early years of schooling.

We would expect classrooms using Conscious Discipline® to show significant gains in scores on the CLASS, specifically in the following dimensions: Positive Climate, Negative Climate, Teacher Sensitivity, Regard for Student Perspectives, & Behavior Management. Conscious Discipline is a program for teachers who are ready to

teach the whole child through a whole curriculum. It is for teachers who are ready to transform competitive environments into caring school families, troubled children into caring class members, and curious children into compassionate, happy learners. As a result, all scores on the CLASS would be expected to improve in classrooms using Conscious Discipline®. It is exciting that these dimensions are being assessed and improvement can be measured as part of school improvement. Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support domains identified in the CLASS are fundamentally important to achieving academic success.

The components of Conscious Discipline® are:

1. Creating the School Family™
 - a. Teacher to Teacher Relationships
 - b. Teacher to Student
 - c. Student to Student
 - d. Fostering caring, contributions, and compassion as class and school norms
2. Seven basic skills of Discipline teach:
 - a. Self-regulation to children
 - b. Promote cooperative problem solving
 - c. Empower victims and bullies to successfully function in inclusive environments
3. Seven powers of self control
 - a. Self regulation for adults
 - b. Brain compatible tools for understanding self and others

Table 1: The Skills and Powers of Conscious Discipline® help to meet the criteria of the CLASS Assessment

CLASS Dimensions	Conscious Discipline®	Conscious Discipline® Skills Description	Seven Powers of Self Control
Emotional Support <i>Positive Climate</i> <i>Negative Climate</i> <i>Teacher Sensitivity</i>	Chapter 1: “Composure,” pp. 23-54 a. Safe Place b. Circle Time/Morning Meetings k. Safe Keeper Ritual l. Brain Smart® Start	Being the person you want others to become. Composure is self control in action. Self control is guiding yourself from the lowers centers of your brain to the higher centers of your brain so that you may choose how to respond to life events.	Perception: No one can make you angry
<i>Regard for Student Perspectives</i>	Chapter 2: “Encouragement,” pp. 55-87 c. Meaningful Jobs d. Friends and Family e. Ways to Be Helpful m. Appreciation Ritual n. New Student & Greeting/Goodbye Rituals	Creating a sense of belonging for all children by building the School Family™ which values interdependence. Social successes prime the brain for academic achievement. Relationships, embedded	Unity: We are all in this together

	<p>o. Kindness Ritual</p> <p>Chapter 5: "Positive Intent," pp. 157-186 h. Celebration Center r. Cheer Card Rituals</p> <p>Chapter 6: "Empathy," pp. 187-222 i. We Care Center s. Absent Child & Welcome Back Rituals</p> <p>Chapter 7: "Consequences," pp. 223-251 j. Class Meetings/Circle Time t. Connecting Rituals & Group Commitments</p>	<p>in a school family, are the motivation and cradle of all learning.</p> <p>Seeing the best in others while improving self-image and building trust. Cooperation is fostered by joining with someone to solve a problem.</p> <p>Helping children accept and process their feelings so as to see the world from others' perspectives. Empathy wires the brain for self-control, allowing children access to higher cognitive processes.</p> <p>Helping children learn from their mistakes by helping them reflect on their choices and motivate them to make changes in their behavior.</p>	<p>Love: See the best in others</p> <p>Acceptance: This moment is as it is</p> <p>Intention: Mistakes are opportunities for learning</p>
<p>Classroom Organization</p> <p><i>Behavior Management</i></p> <p><i>Productivity</i></p> <p><i>Instructional Learning Formats</i></p>	<p>Chapter 3: "Assertiveness," pp. 89-130 f. Time Machine/Instant Reply p. S.T.A.R. & Wish Well Rituals</p> <p>Chapter 4: "Choices," pp. 131-156 g. Picture Rule Cards q. Daily Routine</p> <p>Chapter 7: "Consequences," pp. 223-251 j. Class Meetings/Circle Time t. Connecting Rituals & Group Commitments</p>	<p>Setting limits respectfully by focusing on the behavior you want; teaching others how to treat you.</p> <p>Building self esteem and willpower while reducing impulsivity. Empowering children while setting limits so that learning is optimized.</p> <p>Helping children learn from their mistakes by helping them reflect on their choices and motivate them to make changes in their behavior.</p>	<p>Attention: What you focus on, you get more of</p> <p>Free Will: The only person you can make change is yourself</p> <p>Intention: Mistakes are opportunities for learning</p>

<p>Instructional Support</p> <p><i>Concept Development</i></p> <p><i>Quality of Feedback</i></p> <p><i>Language Modeling</i></p>	<p>Chapter 2: “Encouragement,” pp. 55-87 c. Meaningful Jobs d. Friends and Family e. Ways to Be Helpful m. Appreciation Ritual n. New Student & Greeting/Goodbye Rituals o. Kindness Ritual</p> <p>Chapter 5: “Positive Intent,” pp. 157-186 h. Celebration Center r. Cheer Card Rituals</p> <p>Chapter 6: “Empathy,” pp. 187-222 i. We Care Center s. Absent Child & Welcome Back Rituals</p> <p>Chapter 7: “Consequences,” pp. 223-251 j. Class Meetings/Circle Time t. Connecting Rituals & Group Commitments</p>	<p>Creating a sense of belonging for all children by building the School Family™ which values interdependence. Social successes prime the brain for academic achievement. Relationships, embedded in a school family, are the motivation and cradle of all learning.</p> <p>Seeing the best in others while improving self-image and building trust. Cooperation is fostered by joining with someone to solve a problem.</p> <p>Helping children accept and process their feelings so as to see the world from others’ perspectives. Empathy wires the brain for self-control, allowing children access to higher cognitive processes.</p> <p>Helping children learn from their mistakes by helping them reflect on their choices and motivate them to make changes in their behavior.</p>	<p>Unity: We are all in this together</p> <p>Love: See the best in others</p> <p>Acceptance: This moment is as it is</p> <p>Intention: Mistakes are opportunities for learning</p>
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