

# Suggestions for Improving Teacher Practice on CLASS Dimensions

## EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

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

- Greet children with enthusiasm.
- Use respectful language, such as addressing each child by his name, and for children learning English, use words in their home language.
- Take a moment to check-in with each child during the course of the day to see how they're doing and what their needs are.
- Use some words in each child's home language.
- Check your pace. Slow down when possible and enjoy the children.
- Be available to support children's successful engagement in activities.
- Look for the bright side of situations; laugh at the "small stuff", such as milk spilling during snack.
- Encourage children to engage with one another cooperatively; when appropriate, to work together, to talk and listen, and to assist one another in completing tasks.
- Model positive and respectful ways of engaging children, by standing close to them, reflecting their emotions, and by responding to their attempts to communicate both verbally and nonverbally.
- Learn how to pronounce each child's name correctly.

**Additional suggestions:**

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### EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

**Negative Climate:** *Reflects the overall level of expressed negativity in classroom; the frequency, quality and intensity of negative behaviors of adults or children (e.g., irritability, anger, yelling, threatening).*

**Additional Suggestions:**

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## EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

**Teacher Sensitivity:** *Encompasses teacher's awareness and responsiveness to students' emotional & academic needs; high levels of sensitivity facilitate students' ability to actively explore/learn because of consistent comfort, reassurance and encouragement.*

- Use every opportunity, including routines such as mealtime, to gather information about and respond to children's needs.
- Be "in-tune" with the children, anticipating when they may need support engaging in activities and with other children.
- Use verbal and nonverbal cues to let individual children know you are aware of their level of involvement throughout the day (e.g., sit near a child who appears to be struggling and offer support if necessary.)
- When children who are dual language learners are having trouble understanding what is being said in English find other ways to communicate the message. For example, rather than ask an open-ended question use a simpler close-ended question.
- Consistently respond to children based on their individual styles, needs and abilities (e.g., provide words for a child who is upset or struggling to communicate with someone else).
- Be available to children as a "secure-base" where they can go to get support when necessary in order to complete complex tasks and address higher-risk social situations (e.g., engage a group of children on the playground, by offering suggestions and modeling how they can include a new child who is observing them in their game of chase).

**Additional Suggestions:**

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## EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

**Regard for Student Perspectives:** *Captures the degree to which the teacher's interactions with students and classroom activities place an emphasis on children's interests, motivations & points of view and encourage their responsibility & independence.*

- Follow children's interests throughout the day (e.g., make a chart of mittens vs. gloves on the first snow day when children become interested in who is wearing a mitten verses a glove.)
- When interacting with children who are Dual Language Learners, do not force children to respond in English. Validate children's language choices by accepting responses in their home language.
- Offer a range of opportunities for children to express their ideas in the context of both planned and unplanned activities.
- Provide a balance of adult and child-directed activities where children can make guided decisions based on teacher's clearly identified expectations (e.g., where to sit at Circle Time.)
- Plan routines and experiences that allow children to be successful with little support. (e.g., at clean-up couple words in English with gestures, photos of toys on shelves, and children engaged in activities, along with words in children's home languages or when appropriate, sign-language.)

**Additional Suggestions:**

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## CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION

**Behavior Management:** *Teacher's ability to provide clear behavioral expectations and use effective methods to prevent and redirect misbehavior.*

- Before beginning an activity, teachers explain the behavior expectations and specifically check in with Dual Language Learners to ensure comprehension.
- Clearly and consistently state what you expect from children reminding them they are a part of a community with rules and expectations that guide each of them so all will benefit.
- Ask children to tell you what they need to do before beginning an activity.
- Use a range of techniques to remind children of your expectations.
- Redirect children using verbal and nonverbal cues such as saying a child's name, making eye contact, using gestures, and staying close to the children.
- Be aware that when Dual Language Learners are not following classroom expectations, it could be attributed to a lack of understanding what to do.

**Additional Suggestions:**

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## CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION

**Productivity**: *Considers how well the teacher manages instructional time and routines and provides activities for students so that they have the opportunity to be involved in planning activities.*

- Provide visual cues during transitions so that Dual Language Learners will know what to do and what comes next even though they may not understand what is being said (e.g., To signal the end of free choice time, the teacher walks over to the three children who are Dual Language Learners at the sand and water table. She tells them it is time to clean up while modeling putting a funnel back on the shelf and mimics washing her hands to explain they need to wash their hands when done).
- Be prepared to offer children a range of activities along with choices for what they can do when they are finished.
- Allow enough time for children to complete activities in an area of the classroom where they won't be disturbed.
- Be clear and consistent with how classroom routines are conducted.
- Provide necessary materials.
- Provide clear directions both verbally and nonverbally e.g., pictures showing how to use materials and in what order.

**Additional Suggestion:**

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## CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION

**Instructional Learning Formats:** *Focuses on the ways in which the teacher maximizes students' interest, engagement, and ability to learn from lessons and activities.*

- Provide Dual Language Learners with hands-on materials to aid their comprehension of what is being said and help them make the connection between the object and the spoken word. For example, when talking about autumn and the changing colors of the leaves, the teacher has green, red, orange, brown, and yellow leaves for the children to look at and explore. Later, the children have the opportunity to go outside and collect their own leaves.
- Stay actively involved with the children. Expand on their experiences by offering verbal and nonverbal support when necessary. For example, play alongside a child, model how to use a material, balance teacher-directed and child-initiated activities.
- Provide a range of opportunities to facilitate children's active engagement. For example, during Large Group Time provide children with different home-made musical instruments' focus their attention by asking them questions about the sounds the instruments make as they pick them up and use them.
- Tell children why and what they are going to do before they begin to engage in activities and summarize what they did after they are finished. For example, before beginning a discovery activity involving mixing colors to make new ones, tell the children they are going to learn to make a color like orange. After mixing red and yellow together ask the children what happened and what they learned.

**Additional Suggestions:**

# Suggestions for Improving Teacher Practice on CLASS Dimensions

## INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

**Concept Development:** *Measure the teacher's use of instructional discussions and activities to promote students' higher-order thinking skills and cognition and the teacher's focus on understanding rather than on rote instruction.*

- Connect concepts to Dual Language Learners' prior knowledge and experiences to make learning more concrete and relevant. For example, a teacher in a Migrant Head Start program knows that the children in her class have extensive experience traveling in cars and trucks as they migrate from one harvest site to another. She decides to do a project on transportation that will integrate their learning about math, literacy, science, and social studies.
- Have conversations that encourage children to problem solve, predict what will happen, compare, and evaluate. For example, after a cup of milk has spilled ask the children what they need to do to clean up, how many paper towels will they need, and how well the paper towels absorbed the milk.
- Provide opportunities for children to come up with a range of ideas for how they can creatively plan to complete tasks.
- Talk with children about what they are doing and what they know in relationship to what they have done and learned in the past. For example, refer to a graph of the number of mittens versus gloves worn the week before; ask questions about other things that the children wear when it is cold outside and parts of the body those objects keep warm.

**Additional Suggestions:**

# Suggestions for Improving Teacher Practice on CLASS Dimensions

## INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

**Quality of Feedback:** *Assesses the degree to which the teacher provides feedback that expands learning and understanding and encourages continued participation.*

- Use expansion, back-and-forth exchanges and follow-up questions to aid children who are learning and encourage their continued acquisition of English.
- Provide affirmation and encouragement to children who are Dual Language Learners as they begin to use expressive language in English.
- Determine what children know and consistently build on that knowledge by using verbal prompts like follow-up questions, requests for clarification, and explanations of thinking.
- Use nonverbal techniques such as modeling and repeating actions. For example, point out photos on the shelves that show where materials belong or model cleaning-up.
- Play with concepts like seriating objects from small to large. For example, when children are lining up to go outside ask them who is the tallest and who is the shortest.
- Ask children to help you understand things that happen throughout the day. For example, if a bus is late, draw the children's attention to the pattern of who is not at school in relationship to the lists of children who go on each bus that is posted in the classroom.
- Recognize and affirm children's involvement in activities. Identify what is working and what is not and encourage them to keep trying.

**Additional Suggestions:**

# Suggestions for Improving Teacher Practice on CLASS Dimensions

## INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

**Language Modeling:** *Captures the quality and amount of the teacher's use of language-stimulation and language-facilitation techniques.*

- Use gestures, body language, facial expressions and other visual cues when talking to children who are Dual Language Learners to provide context for what is being said and to aid their comprehension. For example, the teacher asks a child, "Would you like something to drink?" and acts like she is drinking from a cup.
- Promote children's engagement in both verbal and nonverbal back-and-forth exchanges.
- Use language in fun ways. Play with words to check and see if children understand what you are saying. For example, say "I gave you a cow" instead of "I gave you a hamburger".
- Repeat statement making then more and more complex. For example, "I am putting one plate at each place at the table. Now I am putting a plate with some noodles for stringing. Next I will put string on the table so that everyone will have a plate with noodles and string."
- Provide opportunities throughout the day for children to talk with one another. When necessary, help those who are struggling to respond to others by providing them with the necessary words.
- Use a lot of open-ended questions and encourage children to answer using more than one word and with new words. For example, ask children to expand on their responses by using words from their Word Wall that have been constructed over time and which are coupled with corresponding pictures.

**Additional Suggestions:**