Classroom Climate in Schools for the Deaf

Stephanie Trollo
New York University
Acknowledgements

- Ed McCormack, Trish Dimino-Pao, and Maria Bartolillo, as well as the children and teachers from the participating school
- Caroline Wagner
- Janna Sweenie
- Dr. Elise Cappella
Academic Achievement among Deaf Children

- 92% of deaf children are born to hearing parents.

- Hearing parents often have difficulty supporting children’s development:
  - Deaf parents promote more independence, are more accepting of hearing loss, and expect language at an earlier age.
  - Hearing parents do not provide adequate emotional feedback.
  - Deaf children of hearing parents are not exposed to enough language in early years.
Protective Factors

Academic Achievement

Self-Concept
Thoughts and views about oneself

Classroom Climate
Interactions and relationships, quality of the classroom

What about deaf children?
Classroom Quality

STRUCTURE
- Curriculum
- Standards
- Materials
- Training & Education

PROCESS
- Implementation
- Relationships
- Academic & Social Interactions

Children’s Academic & Social Development
Research Objectives

1. What are the classroom climates in schools for the deaf?
2. Are standard assessment tools of classroom climate adequate for use in classrooms of deaf children?
3. What, if any, modifications are needed?
4. Is classroom climate predictive academic and social outcomes of deaf children?
Setting & Participants

**Setting**
- Urban School for the Deaf in New York
  - Private school
  - Recipient of state funds for special services (4201 school)

**Participants**
- 5 classrooms and the corresponding teachers
  - K-5, class size = 6
  - Teachers
    - Certified
    - All female
Measure: The CLASS

- **Classroom Assessment Scoring System**
- Informed by both child development and education literature
- An observation system assessing classroom quality
- Predicts positive social-emotional and academic outcomes among hearing children

Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008
The CLASS: Process-Based

STRUCTURE

PROCESS

Children’s Academic & Social Development
What Does the CLASS Measure?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional Support</th>
<th>Instructional Support</th>
<th>Classroom Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Climate</td>
<td>Concept Development</td>
<td>Behavior Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Climate</td>
<td>Quality of Feedback</td>
<td>Productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Sensitivity</td>
<td>Language Modeling</td>
<td>Instructional Learning Formats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regard for Student Perspectives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What does the CLASS measure?

- **Classroom Organization**
  - Behavior Management
  - Productivity
  - Clear behavior expectations
  - Instructional formats
  - Student behavior
  - Redirection of misbehavior

- **Domain**
- **Dimension**
- **Behavioral Indicators**
## Scoring The CLASS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior Management</th>
<th>LOW (1,2)</th>
<th>MID (3,4,5)</th>
<th>HIGH (6,7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clear behavior expectations</strong></td>
<td>Rules and expectations are absent, unclear, or inconsistently enforced.</td>
<td>Rules and expectations may be stated clearly but are inconsistently enforced.</td>
<td>Rules and expectations for behavior are clear and consistently enforced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proactive</strong></td>
<td>The teacher is reactive, and monitoring is absent or ineffective.</td>
<td>The teacher uses a mix of proactive and reactive responses; sometimes s/he monitors and reacts to early indicators of behavior problems but other times misses or ignores them.</td>
<td>The teacher is consistently proactive and monitors classroom effectively to prevent problems from developing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Redirection of misbehavior</strong></td>
<td>Attempts to redirect misbehavior are ineffective; the teacher rarely focuses on the positives or uses subtle cues. As a result, misbehavior continues and/or escalates and takes time away from learning.</td>
<td>Some of the teacher’s attempts to redirect misbehavior are effective, particularly when the teacher focuses on positive behavior and uses subtle cues. As a result, there are few times when misbehavior continues, escalates, or takes time away from learning.</td>
<td>The teacher effectively redirects misbehavior by focusing on positives and making use of subtle cues. Behavior management does not take away from learning time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student behavior</strong></td>
<td>There are frequent instances of misbehavior in the classroom.</td>
<td>There are periodic episodes of misbehavior in the classroom.</td>
<td>There are few, if any, instances of student misbehavior in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Procedure

- Training and reliability in the CLASS
- 3 months of participant observation with fieldnotes
- Classroom observations using the CLASS
  - Four 20-minute observation periods, followed by 10 minutes of coding and fieldnotes
  - 2 hours in the morning
  - The teachers were asked to engage in the classroom activities as they normally do
Data Analysis

**Quantitative Data**
- CLASS scores
  - Compared to means from urban regular education classrooms

**Qualitative Data**
- Weekly fieldnotes
- Notes from CLASS
  - Reviewed notes and derived themes
  - Considered themes using CLASS lens
  - Placed themes within CLASS domains, dimensions, indicators

**Mixed Methods**
Climates in Classrooms for the Deaf

- High in Emotional Support
- Redirection is problematic
- Importance of age differences
- Role of language in Instructional Support

- Domains and dimensions are generally relevant and appropriate, but modifications to the behavioral indicators are needed.
Modifications: High Emotional Support

The domain Emotional Support was negatively skewed with some of the dimensions falling more than 2 SD's above the mean.

Positive Climate
- Close Proximity
  - The teacher must be close to the students to communicate.
  - This yielded higher scores on the CLASS.

Teacher Sensitivity
- Awareness
  - Teachers must be seen by all students.
  - This teacher effort is not taken into account.
Modifications: Redirection

Behavior Management

- Any kind of redirection was problematic in these classrooms because the children need to be looking in order to communicate.
- Redirection of misbehavior should be subtle.
  - Classrooms for the deaf scored low on this indicator.
  - Teachers first need to get the child to look.

Productivity

- Maximizing learning time
  - Few disruptions during instructional time.
    - Classrooms for the deaf scored low on this indicator.
    - Teachers often had to stop and repeat.
Modifications: Age Differences

Productivity

- Kindergarteners and 5th graders look more different from each other in schools for the deaf than in regular education settings.
- Younger students are not able to adjust independently their FM’s and change their batteries (Routines).

Quality of Feedback

- Feedback involving listening and speech skills often needs to be perfunctory.
- More perfunctory feedback in the lower grades.

New behavioral indicator: Support of Speech Skills
Modifications: Role of Language in Instructional Support

Language is gaining a great deal of concern among teachers of the deaf, and they have received more training.

- **Language Modeling**
  - Hair store vs. salon
  - Advanced language

- **Concept Development**
  - To give birth vs. to be born
  - Creating

- **Quality of Feedback**
  - “State” vs. “state”
  - Scaffolding
  - Prompting thought processes

Teachers are paying much more explicit attention to language across all three Instructional Support Dimensions.
Summary and Conclusions

- With a few exceptions, CLASS domains and dimensions are relevant and appropriate.

- When compared with other urban samples:
  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional Support</th>
<th>Instructional Support</th>
<th>Classroom Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater than 1 SD above the mean</td>
<td>Between $\frac{1}{2}$-1 SD above the mean</td>
<td>Within $\frac{1}{2}$ of a SD from the mean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- New behavioral indicators might be necessary to capture accurately the instruction processes in classrooms for deaf children.
Limitations and Future Directions

- Small sample size and high levels of administrative support
- Replicating this formative research in other schools
- Teacher and provider interviews
- Adapt the CLASS to the population
- Reliability and validity study: Adapted CLASS, self-concept, achievement
  - Is classroom climate predictive of social-emotional and academic outcomes among deaf children?
THANK YOU!