

Notetaking Reflective Questions

Use these questions to check your approach to notetaking for your CLASS observations.

Ask yourself:

Did I use the dimensions and indicators to help me sort behaviors?

- Did I review my notes to make sure that interactions were sorted or moved into the correct dimensions and indicators?
- Did I use shorthand to quickly capture key elements of interactions?
- Do my notes justify the codes I've assigned?

Did I note specific interactions between teacher and children and among peers capturing the what, the how, and the how during interactions?

- Did I note how children responded to the teacher?
- Did I note how teachers responded to the children? Did I capture direct quotes?

Do my notes reflect what happened across the full cycle?

- Did I account for multiple adults, if present?
- Do my notes indicate the frequency, depth and duration of interactions?
- Did I use any timestamps (e.g. transitions, multiple adults, events, etc.)

Do my notes only include observations relevant to what the CLASS measures? (e.g. *not including notes about environmental features, the curriculum, cleaning procedures, etc.*)

Did I remain objective during the entire observation?

- If not, was I able to overcome my emotional reaction and quickly return to objectivity--capturing just the facts about what was happening?
- Did I document what the teacher did and said during the observation rather than focusing my thoughts on what I felt was missing or could have been done better?

If you answered “no” to any of the questions above, try the following:

When observing, consistently scan the room to ensure you are capturing evidence across all children throughout the observation. *(If you can't see or hear a key interaction, move closer. Reread chapter 2 of your manual and your notes from your CLASS training.)*

Look over your notes and cross out any documentation that is not related to CLASS (e.g., environmental features). Make a list of the types of notes to avoid writing in the future.

Consider ways to make your notetaking more effective. If you're using this resource during an observation training or after a calibration, review the Master Code Justifications (MCJ) to:

- Compare suggested indicator ranges (as referenced in the summary statements) to your ranges. Do your notes appropriately indicate the depth, duration and frequency of key interactions? Do your notes have specific quotes and behaviors noted?
- Compare how you sorted evidence to how it is sorted in the MCJ. (The MCJ does not document all evidence. If you captured behavioral evidence that is not included in the MCJ, refer to your manual for sorting guidance.)
- Consider how evidence is documented throughout the observation and across all dimensions.
- If you had a strong emotional reaction to something that happened, look to see how, or if, the Master Code Justification addresses that same situation. Reflect on what you can learn from this.

Reflect on the difference between documenting facts about behavioral evidence (observer's role) and looking for opportunities to help a teacher improve interactions (coach's role). Refer to “Remaining Objective” and “Seeking Perfection” in Chapter 2 of your manual.

Consider ways to overcome emotional reactions and maintain objectivity.

- When you realize that you are having an emotional response, take a deep breath and write your feelings down on a sticky note or in the margins of your scoresheet. Set the note aside, and return to recording facts about what you see and hear happening among the teacher and children.