KCCTF Evaluation CLASS Observer Certification & Reliability Observations

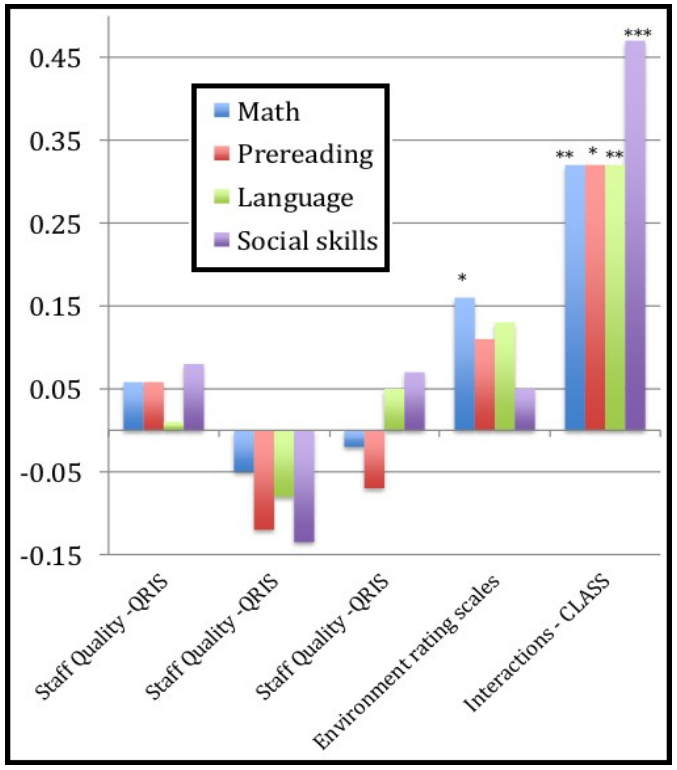
Background

The Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund (KCCTF) initiated the Common Measures Initiative (CMI) to provide a statewide overview of the outcomes and quality of programs funded by the Children's Initiative Fund (CIF). The use of Common Measures to document outcomes has contributed to the CIF programs being referred to as the "gold standard" in a Statewide Efficiency Review.

Measuring Interactions

One measure selected for the CMI was the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). The CLASS is an observational tool used to measure teacher-child interactions within classrooms. The CLASS PreK, Toddler, and Infant are used to observe positive interactions in CIF-funded early learning environments.

According to an article by Sabol, Hong, Pianta, and Burchinal published in the journal *Science* in 2013, the CLASS has been shown to predict future academic achievement and child development above and beyond other indicators, such as physical environment, class size, or staff qualifications (*see chart to the right*). Studies have demonstrated the CLASS to be an accurate measure of teacher-child interactions. The CLASS is also widely accepted and is used in multiple states and by several large organizations, including the National Head Start Association and the Gates Foundation's Measures of Effective Teaching project.



Comparison of the predictive power of various indicators, including interactions (Sabol et al., 2013).
** = large enough result to be considered meaningful*

Observer Certification

CLASS observers must achieve and maintain certification by attending training and passing a certification test annually. This requirement assures the reliable observationof classrooms consistent with the CLASS guidelines. As evaluators, we are working to dispel any concerns about bias in the observational data and to assure the reliability of observations. To support the Common Measures data quality, grantee observers must submit confirmation of their certification annually here: *CLASS Observer Certification Upload*.

Reliability Observations with WSU or Grantee Lead Observer

In addition to submitting confirmation of their certification, CLASS observers are required to conduct reliability observations during the evaluation year. These observations are being done to ensure unbiased measurement and reliability of the CLASS tool. You will be asked to complete an observation with either a WSU observer or a designated lead observer from your grant.

Expectations for reliability observations:

- If you are to observe with a WSU observer: A member of the WSU evaluation team will email you to schedule the observation.
- If you are to observe with your grant's designated lead observer: You and the lead observer are responsible for arranging the best time to conduct the reliability observation.
- Observers will complete 4 cycles (15-20 minutes of observing, then coding per cycle) in a row. Observers do not pick and choose which activities to observe. They observe whatever takes place during those 4 consecutive cycles.
- Observers must start and stop each observation cycle at the same time.
- No discussion is allowed until the entire observation is complete and all codes have been assigned.
- Following the observation, observers will complete the CLASS Scoring Summary Sheet for that observation. You will provide a copy of your Scoring Summary Sheet to the WSU or lead observer, who will then submit both their sheet and yours to WSU for reliability calculations.

Please note:

- Only scoring summary sheets are submitted to WSU. Individual cycle observation sheets and notes are NOT required for submission.
- WSU will calculate reliability, and the observer will receive overall results and feedback from WSU's Affiliate CLASS Trainer.
- Standards for reliability are set based on the percent agreement between observers.
    - The expectation is at least 70% agreement between observers to meet the KCCTF standard.
- ***Reliability checks are not punitive!*** They are necessary to ensure the consistent use of this standardized measure.
- If an observer is below the standard, they will be asked to conduct a second observation to demonstrate reliability.

If you have questions, please contact:

Senior Research Scientist & Lead Evaluator
Dr. Lynn Schrepferman
Lynn.Schrepferman@wichita.edu

Senior Research Associate &
Affiliate CLASS Trainer
Cassandra LeBrun-Martin
Cassandra.Lebrun-martin@wichita.edu

Wichita State University
Community Engagement Institute
Center for Applied Research and Evaluation