# Frequently Asked Questions
## Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)

1. *What is CLASS?*

   The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is an observation instrument developed to assess classroom quality in preschool classrooms. The advantage of using CLASS observation model is that it is designed to measure effective Pre-K instruction through the lens of teacher-student interactions. The CLASS tool measures the quality of teacher-child interactions across three domains: emotional support, classroom organization support, and instructional support. The CLASS tool focuses on interactions between teachers and students and how teachers use the high-quality materials they have. The CLASS rubric was adopted as a TEAM rubric for Pre-K observations during the 2019-20 school year.

2. *How can CLASS be used as a coaching tool?*

   CLASS provides a common language and measure of quality across early childhood programs. When used as a coaching tool, CLASS provides teachers real-time, direct feedback about their actual classroom practices. CLASS also provides early childhood teachers with ongoing, individualized, and collaborative feedback to improve their instruction. As such, the CLASS tool could be used to complement formal teacher evaluation methods and/or be used as the evaluation method for early childhood teachers.

3. *Do I have to use both TEAM and CLASS with Pre-K?*

   Districts may select to use either TEAM or CLASS as their Pre-K observation tool on the annual Evaluation Flexibility Options survey; however, beginning in the 2024-25 school year, all VPK teachers must receive coaching feedback based on annual classroom observations using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and CLASS Environment tool. The data collected from CLASS observations will be used as evidence for the district's Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) application. Beginning in the 2025-26 school year, all classroom teachers serving preschool children with disabilities, in addition to VPK teachers, will be required to receive coaching feedback based on annual classroom observations using the CLASS and CLASS Environment tool.

4. *How do I become a CLASS certified observer?*

   Reliability is achieved after participating in a two-day class and passing a test of reliability (score 80% or higher on all domains). You can sign up to take this course either from Teachstone directly https://teachstone.com/ or you can sign up to take the course with a Teachstone affiliate trainer/TDOE Early Learning Division CLASS trainer. In either case, you will be trained by an individual certified in CLASS and certified to provide the training. You can sign up for the TDOE led CLASS training by emailing Chris.Whitehead@tn.gov.

5. *How do I maintain my reliability to conduct CLASS observations?*

    Reliability must be maintained by taking a test each year. Teachstone will send you an email approximately two months prior to your current certification expiration date. You will need to go to the Teachstone store and purchase a "Pre-K-3$^{rd}$ grade CLASS" product key. This key (or registration code) will open a new set of tests for you.

6. *I am now certified and want to use CLASS as the observation portion of the TEAM evaluation on Pre-K classrooms. What are my next steps?*

    Email a copy of your reliability certificate to Liz.Newsome@tn.gov and complete this survey indicating you would like to have CLASS added to your TNCompass dashboard. Once verified by the department, your credential will be added and will appear on your TNCompass homepage under "certifications." At that time, you will be granted access to the CLASS rubric in the TNCompass platform and may begin using it to capture observation data.

7. *How do I indicate a teacher should receive observations using the CLASS rubric?*

    Observers will check the CLASS Educator box on the educator's evaluation tab. Also, the CLASS Educator Designation document contains bulk upload instructions, including screenshots, for identifying educators that will be observed using the CLASS rubric.

8. *Do I have to calculate the educator's score for each observation?*

    CLASS educator observation averages will be calculated by the TNCompass platform. Observers will simply input raw scores for each 30-minute cycle completed. No observer calculations are required.

9. *How many times must I observe a teacher using the CLASS rubric?*

    The CLASS pacing guide may be found below. As for all educators, observation pacing differentiates between license type and individual TVAAS score or LOE (as determined by the district's selection on the Evaluation Flexibility Options survey) for CLASS educators.

    Three CLASS cycles are completed each time an observer visits a classroom for the purposes of observation. In TNCompass, each cycle is referred to as an observation, so observers will input three sets of raw scores for each day they visit a classroom to complete a CLASS observation. Please see the CLASS Educator Designation document for instructions, including screenshots, for adding CLASS scores to the TNCompass platform.

# CLASS Pacing Guide

| Educator License Status | Previous Individual Growth or LOE | Minimum Required Observations | Minimum Required Observations per Domain as Listed in TNCompass | Minimum Number of Minutes per School Year |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Practitioner | Levels 1-4 | Three sets of three 30-minute cycles observing emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support with at least one occurring in each semester. | 9 Emotional Support<br>9 Classroom Organization<br>9 Instructional Support<br><br>*Total number of in-class visits is 3, including three cycles of all 3 domains each time. | 90 minutes x 3 observations = 270 total minutes |
| | Level 5 | Two sets of three 30-minute cycles observing all domains (emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support) in first and second semester. | 6 Emotional Support<br>6 Classroom Organization<br>6 Instructional Support<br><br>*Total number of in-class visits is 2, including three cycles of all 3 domains each time. | 90 minutes x 2 observations = 180 total minutes |
| Professional | Levels 1-3 | Three sets of three 30-minute cycles observing emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support with at least one occurring in each semester. | 9 Emotional Support<br>9 Classroom Organization<br>9 Instructional Support<br><br>*Total number of in-class visits is 3, including three cycles of all 3 domains each time. | 90 minutes x 3 observations = 270 total minutes |
| | Levels 4-5 | Two sets of three 30-minute cycles observing all domains (emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support) in first and second semester. | 6 Emotional Support<br>6 Classroom Organization<br>6 Instructional Support<br><br>*Total number of in-class visits is 2, including three cycles of all 3 domains each time. | 90 minutes x 2 observations = 180 total minutes |

10. *Where can I find information for adding scores to TNCompass?*

Please see the CLASS Educator Designation document for instructions, including screenshots, for adding CLASS scores to the TNCompass platform.

11. *Do CLASS observations require an observer to enter an area of reinforcement and refinement?*

Reinforcement and refinement are part of the annual VPK grant application. Reinforcement and refinement are not included in CLASS observation documentation; however, observers may elect to document feedback for each in the notes section of the observation record.

12. *What are the CLASS score conversions for TEAM evaluation?*

The conversion chart is found below.

| CLASS Average | TEAM Conversion |
|---|---|
| >= 5.5 | 5 |
| 4.5-5.4 | 4 |
| 3.5-4.4 | 3 |
| 2.5-3.4 | 2 |
| <= 2.4 | 1 |

13. *Where may I seek additional support?*

For support in using the TNCompass platform, please contact TEAM.Questions@tn.gov. For support with CLASS certification or best practices for using the CLASS rubric, contact Chris.Whitehead@tn.gov.