

The Classroom Assessment Scoring system [CLASS] in a 5-Year-Old kindergarten in Quebec : Interview with the teachers and observation

Stephanie Duval, Caroline Bouchard (Ph. D.), Pierre Pagé (Ph. D.), Christine Hamel, (Ph. D.)
Université Laval, Quebec, Canada

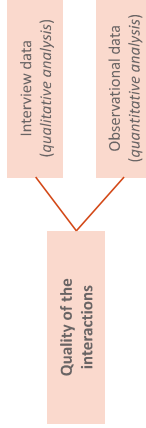
Introduction

- The quality of classroom interactions is a key element of academic success (Bodrova & Leong, 2011; Booren, Truett, & Cash, 2011; Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008; Sabol et al., 2013; Weiland, Ulvestad, Sachs, & Yoshikawa, 2013);
 - We currently know very little about how teachers define the quality of those interactions;
 - However, it is important to study these representations because they tend to influence the teaching practices (Ahn, 2005; McMullen et al., 2006);
 - On the other hand, observation of classroom interaction is a source of reliable and valid information to review the quality of the environment (Sabol & Pianta, 2012);
 - Classroom Assessment Scoring System [CLASS]* (Pianta et al., 2008) is an observation tool to measure the quality of classroom interactions, which is widely used in different studies worldwide (Mashburn et al., 2008; Pakarinen et al., 2011).

Objectives

This research have two objectives:

- Examine** how teachers perceive those interactions in the classroom in order to draw a parallel with observational data;
- Evaluate** the quality of the interactions in a 5-Year-Old kindergarten in Quebec (Canada) with the CLASS tool, in a francophone environment that differs from the US context;



Methods

Data were collected during the winter of 2014 in 12 classrooms of the *Commission scolaire de la Capitale* (Quebec, Canada).

Participants:

- 118 children (70 girls, 48 boys);
- 12 kindergartens teachers.

Tools

- Classroom Assessment Scoring System [CLASS]* (likert scales on 7 points);
- Semi-structured interviews : the teacher's representations were coded in the TAM5 Analyzer software. A reliability agreement was completed; an agreement of 89% was obtained (K Apha).

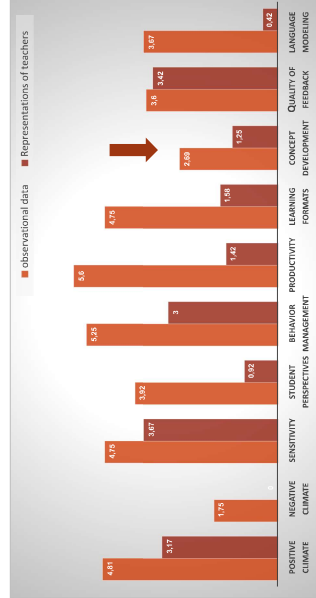
Results

Table 1

Means and standard deviations of the three dimensions of CLASS in 5-Year-Old kindergarten in Quebec (Canada)

Domains and dimensions	M	SD
Emotional support	4.92	0.50
Positive climate	4.78	0.80
Negative climate	2.75	0.47
Teacher sensitivity	4.71	0.67
Regard for student perspectives	3.91	0.72
Classroom organization	5.12	0.63
Behavior management	5.22	0.63
Productivity	5.49	0.78
Instructional learning formats	4.66	0.56
Instructional support	3.27	0.50
Concept development	2.70	0.69
Quality of feedback	3.53	0.68
Language modeling	3.58	0.60

Figure 1. Observational data and representations of teachers about the quality of interactions in the classroom.



Results

- Descriptive analyses indicate that "concept development" yields low results ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 0.69$ [see table 1]);
- The analysis of semi-structured interviews with the TAM5 software report on occurrences related to the dimensions of CLASS emerging from the teachers' representations;
- Figure 1 shows that "concept development" yielded the lowest level of quality in observed measures;
- "Concept development" is also the dimension that was least mentioned by the teachers during the interviews;
- More specifically, several elements of the sub-dimensions related to "concept development" were not mentioned, and the sub-dimension "creation" never emerged in the teachers' representations.

Conclusion

- In USA, many studies use the CLASS to examine the quality of interactions in classroom (Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning, 2013);
- In Quebec, few researchers have used in the CLASS in a francophone context (Caritin et al., 2011; Page et al., 2013). However, very few studies have observed the interaction in 5-years-old kindergarten;
- Moreover, no one has studied the representations of teachers on the quality of interactions;
- In this study, three domain of the quality of the interaction were studied :
 - 1) Emotional support
 - 2) Classroom organization
 - 3) Instructional support
- Like the US data (Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning, 2013), descriptive analyzes indicate that the level of the quality of interactions (observed data) in kindergarten classrooms is moderate;
- The domain "instructional support" is lower, and this domain was least mentioned by the teachers during the interviews (interview data);
- These results may seem disturbing, recent research shows that the three areas of CLASS are associated with the academic success of children (Curby et al., 2009; Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2009).

Implications for practice

- In class, the quality of teacher-child interactions is a factor that can promote the child's adaptation to the environment (Rimm-Kaufman, Curby, Grimm, Nathanson, & Brock, 2009);
- These results can be used as a springboard to improve the quality of classroom interactions and change the teaching practices in order to support the successful education of children;
- In fact, this study helps us understand "how" teachers perceive the quality of classroom interactions, and how these representations are deployed or not in their actual practices;
- These results will be reinvested in the initial and continuing training of teachers, particularly in regard to the support offered to the child;
- This study will illuminate the field of early childhood education, targeting the indicators of quality of the educational environment that could promote the success of children of 5 years;
- Moreover, currently in Canada and elsewhere in the world, many questions arise on educational interventions to emphasize kindergarten to support the present and future academic success. The research data will help to shed light on this question.

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