

## Observations of Middle School Environment: Classroom Field Procedures

A selected group of classrooms will be observed in each school. These will be classrooms that tend to have the longest time with students (e.g. block classes). One classroom per grade will be observed during each of the 3 visits to the school. Observations will last 20 minutes.

### ***HEADER CODES FOR CLASSROOM***

#### ***Code Subject***

01	Language arts(writing, literature, spelling, vocabulary, grammar, reading, speech)
02	Social studies, government, history, geography
03	Math
04	Science, health
05	Art, music, drama
06	Computers
07	Home room
08	Multiple subjects, integrated curriculum, block class (can't tell focus)
09	Study hall, free choice
10	Other (e.g. foreign language)

#### **Prior to each observation:**

- The observer(s) find classroom scheduled to observe. Enter quietly and find a place to sit that provides the best opportunity to see students and teacher, without calling too much attention to your presence. Most teachers will acknowledge your entry without question, though some may need to be reminded of your visit.
- We will not code a classroom if there is a substitute teacher. (Check with secretary when arriving at the school about substitutes). An alternate classroom may be scheduled in case of substitute teachers or class cancellation.
- Leave ample time to fill out header information before the observation begins: School ID#, Observer initials, Co-observer initials if reliability, Obs #, Date, Class ID#, Subject(s), Grade(s) and Time start (military time).
  - Subjects – Use above codes, there is space for 2 subjects on the form
  - Grades – Bubble all grades in class, *Other* bubble provided if needed.
- Fill in Obs bubble on back of form, *only* if completing a solo observation.

#### **During the observation:**

- Choose an advantageous location for conducting your observations. This would most likely be off to one side of the room so that you can see and hear the teacher, and view each student in the class. Be as unobtrusive as possible.
- During reliability, make sure both observers begin their stopwatches at the same time by quietly signaling each other. Do not look at each other's form or discuss observation as we need independent data from each observer.
- During the observation, take time to count kids and adults to record on ratings form.
- Notes are to be written in the margins and in between rows and are quite valuable, especially for reliabilities. Do not write notes in total boxes or other scannable fields.

**Coding procedures:**

- The observer(s) will select the lead teacher to observe – the adult who is *lead in teaching the subject at the time*. Assistant teachers or student teachers will sometimes work with small groups, or possibly the majority of the class while the regular teacher does other work. If teacher and assistant are leading student groups of equal size, then select the regular teacher to observe.
- During classroom observations, tally behaviors of all of the students in the classroom as well as the lead teacher.
- For each minute, code the classroom context that applies to the majority of the students for the majority of the minute. Fill in only one bubble that corresponds to the classroom context code per one minute segment.
- For each minute, tally codes for the teacher (PRE, APP, CRIT, T+, T-) and for the students (NC, DIS, MRV).

**After the observation(s):**

- At the end of 20 minute observation, determine whether it is best to remain in the classroom to complete paperwork, or if it wise to leave and return to staff room. When leaving, thank the teacher if it is not a disruption to the class situation.
- As soon as possible complete observation form:
  - Fill in “Time stop” (military time)
  - Make sure header in complete and accurate
  - Add up totals for each observed behavior (please double check your math!)
  - Carefully write numbers in totals boxes so they are read by scanner correctly
  - Flag any questions or important notes.
- Fill out Observer Ratings form *as soon as observation is complete whenever possible*.
- Proceed to next scheduled observation.

## Observations of Middle School Environment: Classrooms

### CODE DEFINITIONS

#### ***CLASSROOM CONTEXT***

For each minute, code the **classroom context** that applies to what the majority of the class is doing for the majority of time during the minute (fill in the bubble corresponding to the classroom context code per one minute segment).

#### **TLI *Teacher Lead Instruction***

The lead teacher is lecturing to a group of students, leading the group of students in an activity, or giving specialized instruction to individual students. Code **TLI** if the students are involved in a class discussion, working on a project in a group where the teacher/aide is directing the activities, or working one-on-one with the teacher or aide.

*Examples:* Correcting assignments together, taking turns reading out loud to the teacher/aide, brainstorming ideas with teacher/aide, receiving individualized instruction from teacher/aide. Teacher is correcting tests and teacher aide (the lead teacher) is giving a lesson.

*Non-Examples:* The student asks teacher/aide a question about the assignment he/she is working on (ISW). The student is working on an assignment and the teacher/aide checks over his/her work (ISW).

#### **ISW *Independent Seat Work***

The students are working alone on an assigned task anywhere in the classroom. Continue to code **ISW** when the teacher/aide answers the student's question or helps him/her with the work.

*Examples:* The students are working independently at their desks, on the floor, or at an assigned activity center. The students are reading to self in the reading corner. Students are doing homework, and the teacher is writing on board prepping for next lesson.

*Non-Examples:* The students are practicing reading aloud with the teacher/aide (TLI).

#### **CWG *Cooperative Work Groups***

Students are working on an assigned task in small groups or in pairs with one other student. The teacher/aide may be monitoring the groups and helping answer questions, but not directing the group's activities.

*Examples:* The students are practicing reading out loud to another student. Students are getting help with their assignment from a peer. The students are working on a lab experiment with other students.

*Non-Examples:* The students are working out of the same book as another student, but are working on assignment individually (ISW). The teacher/aide is describing a collaborative project to a group of students (TLI).

**FCT *Free-Choice Time***

Students do not have an assigned task, are not involved in a teacher/aide directed activity, and have a free choice of activities in the classroom.

*Example:* Students are moving freely between various activity centers.

*Non-Examples:* Students are assigned to a particular activity center (ISW or CWG). Students can only choose between activities specified by the teacher such as a reading or writing activity (ISW or CWG).

**TT *Transition Time***

The students are entering the classroom, are involved in changing subjects and/or activities, or are preparing to leave the classroom. Also use this code when students have no instruction of what to do. For example, during TLI when the teacher is interrupted by and starts talking to another adult, yet doesn't direct the students to an activity, code TT.

*Examples:* Students are getting books out of their backpacks for the next activity. Students are being told which activity they are to go to next. Students are cleaning off desks and waiting to be dismissed. Students are waiting to hear what to do next while the teacher/aide answers another student's question.

*Non-Examples:* Students are working on an assignment while teacher/aide talks to another adult (ISW). Students listen while teacher/aide explains what they are going to need to do for an assignment (TLI).

## ***BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN THE CLASSROOM***

To code **classroom management** and **overall student behavior**, put a tally mark each time the teacher uses the strategy for managing student behavior in the classroom and a tally mark each time a student in the classroom does not comply with the teachers' direction or is disruptive in the classroom. At the end of each minute, record information in the boxes for the next minute segment.

### **PRE *Precorrection/Prompt***

The teacher/staff person describes the expected behavior to students before an activity begins. Code Precorrection whenever the teacher reminds, prompts, models expected behavior, or has students practice the expected behavior. Do not code Precorrection/prompt if the description of expected behavior follows a student's misbehavior.

This definition has two main concepts:

- 1) Clear expectations of student behavior is provided
- 2) It occurs before the activity begins

#### *Examples:*

"Remember you're supposed to be quiet," said before the students enter the school hallway.

Before classes begin the teacher asks students "What do you have to do before the bell rings?" and student answers "Get my books out of my locker."

"When you are finished with your quiz, be sure to write your name on the top and hand it to your neighbor to correct".

#### *Non-Examples:*

"Remember you're supposed to be quiet," said to students who are talking loudly in the halls.

"It will be class time in five minutes." (No behavioral expectation stated).

"Go put that away in your locker." (Command)

### **APP *Approval***

Verbal praise or recognition of student(s) **behavior**. Also includes approving gestures or physical contact.

#### *Examples:*

"Good job." "Thank you for getting ready for class."

Pat on back. Thumbs up.

"Excellent!" "I see that Joe is waiting patiently."

The teacher says encouragingly, "I know you can do it."

#### *Non-examples:*

The teacher says, "Uh huh," as student answers a question correctly.

The teacher smiles at student (facial expressions are too vague to include).

"I like your new shoes" (approval of looks, not behavior).

The teacher nods head at student (too vague).

"Okay." (too vague).

### **CRIT *Criticism***

Verbal criticism, and gestural or physical contact demonstrating disapproval of a student's **behavior**. Also code criticism when the teacher/staff person threatens to give a punishment for misbehavior. Do not code criticism if teacher labels the student's emotions, even if they are negative emotions.

#### Examples:

"You aren't paying attention."

"Shh!"

"You are talking too loud".

Thumbs down.

"You are not trying hard enough."

"You know better than that."

"If you don't quiet down, you'll owe me break time."

"I don't like your tone." Disapproval of behavior.

"I don't like your attitude."

"Don't be so over-reactive" (disapproval of way student is expressing anger)

"Don't be such a drama queen."

#### Non-Examples:

"You seem angry."

"Don't go out." (command)

"Do you need to go back to your class?"

Teacher frowns at student.

Teacher shakes head, "No."

"I got my eye on you, Mister." (not a specific threat of punishment and not specific about behavior).

### **T+ *Tangible Reinforcer***

Teacher/staff member gives student or students tangible reinforcers for their behavior. When in doubt about the system teacher is using you may ask him/her if you find an appropriate time to do so. It is okay to confirm with the reliability assessor about what the teacher's system is/was.

*Examples:* Giving points, objects, positive referrals, or privileges (such as getting to go to the prize room later).

### **T- *Tangible Punitive Consequences***

Teacher/staff member gives student or students tangible punitive consequences for their behavior.

#### *Examples:*

Removal of points or privileges, removal of student from activity, or making a discipline referral.

Taking objects or materials away from the student.

Moving student to another part of the room.

## ***OVERALL STUDENT BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM***

### **NC *Non-comply*** to school staff directive (Tally)

Student or students do not follow a teacher or school staff directive for a behavior change (to either start doing something or stop doing something) within 5 seconds. This does not include answering an academic question incorrectly. Code one tally per non-compliance by a student or group of students per command.

#### *Examples:*

Teacher says, “Get your book out”, and student does not get her book.

Teacher says, “Open your book to page 101.” Do not worry about what page kids are on, but if books are open consider it compliance.

Teacher says, “Go sit down in your seat.” Student does not move toward a seat within a 5 second count.

#### *Non-Examples:*

The teacher says, “Tomorrow I want you to bring in your permission slip,” and student says, “I can’t go on the field trip.”

Staff person says, “Remember the rule for the hallway,” and student says, “I don’t remember.”

The teacher asks, “What time is it?” and student answers incorrectly.

Teacher says, “Go sit down in your seat.” Student is heading toward their seat within the 5 second count. If you cannot tell which seat is the student’s consider it compliance when the student sits down, unless the teacher clarifies further (e.g., that’s not your seat”).

#### *Examples of Special Situations for coding Non-Comply:*

- If staff gives a two part command “Be quiet, walk eyes up here”, code NC if all students aren’t doing both (being quite AND looking).
- If command is made to the entire class or a group of students—“you all need to stop talking now”, code one NC for any student in the class or group who is not complying (do not count each individual student not complying as separate tallies). However, if the command is directed at several individuals—“Jeremy, Monica, and Sandy you need to stop talking”, then code a NC for each student that does not comply.

### **DIS *Disruptive*** to classroom activity (Tally)

Student(s) initiate or extend a disruption in the classroom that interferes with the activity.

Disruptive means:

- 1) The behavior interferes with the activity of a single student, a group of students, the entire classroom, OR the teacher.

AND

- 2) The behavior must take the student(s) or teacher off task in a way that keeps them from what they were doing.

Further clarification of “Disruptive”:

- a. The definition requires the coder to use student and teacher reactions to judge if the behavior “interferes with the activity”. If the behavior takes another student off task, then code

Disruptive. For example, if the student is tapping his/her pencil on the desk and nobody stops working to notice, do *not* code Disruptive. However, if a student stops working and looks up at the student tapping his/her pencil, then *do* code Disruptive. Keep in mind that we are not deciding whether or not the behavior is disruptive by a reaction of displeasure versus pleasure. The only reaction we are using to determine whether the behavior is disruptive is if it takes a student or teacher away from their task (e.g., the teacher stops giving verbal instruction, a student stops reading or writing, etc.).

- b. Take the classroom norms and expectations into consideration when making this decision. For example, if the teacher says she wants everybody to work quietly without any talking, and later during that period the student pulls a peer off task by talking, code disruptive. However, if quiet talking is allowed during ISW and a student chats briefly with a peer and then they both continue working, do not code disruptive. If the classroom norm is chaotic, take into context a general expected norm of what a classroom should look like (e.g. if teacher is not clearly verbalizing expectations and is not directing students well). Code the more blatant Disruptives in this chaotic scenario.
- c. Code Disruptive when a blatant behavior occurs, even if it is ignored by others. Examples of “blatant” behavior are: physically aversive (e.g., hits student, grabs student’s paper away, scribbles on student’s book, pushes student) or verbally aversive (e.g., swears at student, yells loudly at student, calls student a derogatory name).

*Examples:*

Student “talks out” during a quiet time.

Student makes an off task verbal statement during the teachers’ instruction.

Student pushes peer’s binder, book, or paper off the desk.

Student talks to a peer who is taking a math test.

Student throws a pencil at a peer.

A group of students chat and are off task during ISW for an extended period of time.

*Non-Examples:*

Do not consider it “disruptive” if the behavior causes a student to glance up briefly, and then return to the task at hand.

During a time when quiet talking is allowed, do not code “disruptive” when brief talking occurs and then the task at hand is continued.

Student says answer out loud when there are no expectations for the student to raise her hand and be called on.

Student calls teacher/aide’s name to get their attention.

During a time when quiet talking is allowed, student shows a peer his work, the peer comments on it, then goes back to work.

*Examples of Special Situations for coding Disruptive:*

- If disruptiveness continues onto a new minute, mark a tally for disruptive in the new minute.
- If there are many small groups of students that are each being disruptive, code one Disruptive for each group, rather than one per student.
- If in the midst of Disruptive codes for several small groups of students, one student does a particularly disruptive act, code that Disruptive as well (e.g. student barks, yells, or pounds on desk).

## ***Major Rule Violations***

During the classroom observations we also will code **major rule violations** from any student in the classroom. If a student breaks a major rule, you will need to tally it and note the type of rule violation by the tally on the form. When done with the observation, at the end of the coding form put the number of **MRVs** that occurred in the left hand box and the code for type of **MRV** in the next two boxes and to whom the behavior is directed in the right-hand box. There are five rows for different categories observed. Please see the Major Rule Violations Codes below.

### *Examples:*

One student is cheating off another's paper and copying their quiz. (05 to 2-- peer)  
Dress code violation. (13 to 3-- not directed to anyone)

### *Non-examples:*

Student says, "I'll shank you" and doesn't seem to have a weapon.

### ***What is the behavior?***

- 01 Destruction of school property or property of another person
- 02 Leaving playground, classroom, or school without permission
- 03 Stealing
- 04 Having a tantrum
- 05 Cheating
- 06 Lying (must be obvious, must be observed)
- 07 Arson
- 08 Possession of weapon (e.g., knife, gun)
- 09 Possession of tobacco
- 10 Possession of alcohol or illegal drugs
- 11 Verbal aggression that breaks a school rule (e.g. swearing, derogatory name calling)
- 12 Physical aggression that breaks a school rule
- 13 Dress code violation
- 14 Other

### ***To whom is the behavior directed?***

- 1 To the teacher or another adult
- 2 To a peer
- 3 Not directed at anyone in particular, directed to an object

### *Examples of Special Situations for coding Major Rule Violations:*

- If MRV continues onto a new minute, mark a tally for MRV in the new minute.

### ***CODE HIERARCHY—Classroom Management Practices***

We want to minimize tallying one behavior with more than one code category. To do this, we will not “double code” a behavior with another that is of lesser importance. The coding hierarchy also helps when behaviors are occurring too rapidly to capture everything. In this instance, try to capture the behaviors of the highest priority.

1<sup>st</sup> priority = T + and T-  
2<sup>nd</sup> priority = App, Crit, and Pre

*Examples:*

Teacher says, “I’m giving you a point for working so well.” Code T+, do not double code with App.

Teacher says, “You owe me time after school because you are being so noisy.” Code T-, do not double code with Crit.

### ***CODE HIERARCHY—Student Behavior in Classrooms***

1st priority = Major Rule Violation  
2nd priority = Non-Comply and Disruptive

*Examples:*

A student continues to talk to another student after the teacher/aide has asked him not to, code both Non-comply and Disruptive.

A student hits a peer who laughed at him for getting the wrong answer. Code MRV (12) to peer since it has the highest priority, and do not code Disruptive.

A teacher tells student to sit back down and get to work. The student leaves the classroom. Code MRV (02) since it has the highest priority, and do not code Non-Comply.