

Strategies to Recognize and Reduce Bias in CLASS® Observations

Refer to the chart below before conducting live observations or video coding to acknowledge and reduce bias.

Before Observation	
Acknowledge Bias	Apply Strategies
<p>Overall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What behaviors, interactions, and ways of being feel “normal” to me because of my personal, family, cultural, and societal upbringing and experiences? • What are my biases, tendencies, and inclinations? • What triggers my biases? • What are the signs that my biases are being triggered? What do I feel, think, and do? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring thoughts and feelings to consciousness. • Engage in mental exercises such as mindfulness or challenging my assumptions. • Guard against initial impressions that could affect how I observe and score. • Remind myself that effective interactions can vary across people, cultures, and settings. • Review specific examples of the ways interactions can vary in the settings I am about to observe. • Explicitly commit to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Challenging your assumptions by practicing viewing what is “normal” for you as one way, not “the” way ○ Preventing bias from taking over ○ Staying true to CLASS and using the <i>CLASS Observation Field Guide</i>
<p>After Learning about the Setting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How familiar am I with the people and setting? • Is there anything about this setting that tends to trigger my biases? 	
<p>Upon Arriving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are my initial impressions? • Are my biases being triggered in this setting? In what ways? 	

Use the strategies in the next two charts below to help you stay objective while observing and scoring.

During Observation

Apply Strategies

- Apply the NICE protocol found in the field guide.
- Attend to signs that biases are being triggered or affecting what I do or don't notice.
- Remind myself to be objective.
- Note the experiences of every child.
- Look for verbal and nonverbal interactions.
- Attend to how children respond.

During Scoring

Acknowledge Bias

- Are my notes objective and detailed?
- Do my notes capture verbal and nonverbal interactions?
- Are the observed interactions sorted into the correct dimensions and indicators?
- Do the observed interactions count in more than one dimension?
- Do my notes reflect the experiences of all children?
- Do my notes include children's responses?
- Do the ranges and scores reflect the evidence?
- Are the ranges and scores free from my biases?
- Did I adjust my codes up or down based on information outside of observed interactions?

Apply Strategies

- Review my notes.
- Reread the dimension and indicator definitions.
- Review the indicator description pages to assign indicator ranges.
- Review specific examples of the ways interactions may vary in the settings I observed.
- Remember that effective interactions can vary and that behavioral markers provide just a few examples.

If I am concerned that my notes and scores do not adequately represent observed interactions, even after checking my biases and applying strategies to reduce the impact of bias, I will refer to my project-specific protocol to determine whether the observation should be considered valid.