

Guide for the

Checklist for an Ethical Classroom

Version 2 (CEC-2)

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Purpose

The *Checklist for an Ethical Classroom (CEC)* is a tool for educators. It is a way to consider the broad aspects of designing a classroom that promotes moral character development and at the same time assess one's own strengths and weaknesses, priorities and goals.

The *Checklist for an Ethical Classroom (CEC)* was developed during the Minnesota Community Voices and Character Education Project, 1998-2002.¹

Background

The *Checklist for an Ethical Classroom* is based on findings about the importance of caring classrooms and communities for ethical development and achievement. When students have good relationships with their teachers, they are more likely to feel welcome in the classroom and have a greater sense of belonging, which is related to higher motivation and achievement (Klem & Connell, 2004; McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002; Roeser, Midgley & Urdan, 1996). Teacher caring and support are related to increased student engagement in learning (Libbey, 2004), especially among at-risk students (Connell, Halpern-Felsher, Clifford, Crichlow & Usinger, 1995; Croninger & Lee, 2001).

Organizational climates and cultures shape perceptions and behavior (Power, Higgins & Kohlberg, 1989). When classrooms have climates of mutual respect and caring, students feel greater physical and psychological safety, leading to a greater sense of belongingness (Anderman, 2003; Ma, 2003). In a caring classroom, discipline is not punishment but is coached character development (Watson, 2003). Prosocial behavior is nurtured in communities that foster flourishing and the "developmental assets" that support resiliency (Benson, Leffert, Scales & Blyth, 1998; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1998), so working with parents is vital.

Moral characters are developed through practicing social and democratic skills (Narvaez, 2006). They require a teacher who coaches students on skill development and helps students monitor their own learning (Narvaez, 2007).

Research with the *Checklist for an Ethical Classroom*

Lane-Garon and colleagues (Lane-Garon, Macy, Abramson, Shelton, 2007) have used the CEC in teacher education programs. They use it to measure Component four of the Four Component Model (Rest, 1983 Narvaez Rest 1995). The four components describe the necessary psychological processes that occur when ethical behavior ensues. Ethical sensitivity describes the perception and interpretation of events, including emotional reaction, and developing options for action. Ethical judgment has to do with reasoning and deciding on the most moral action. Ethical focus or motivation prioritizes the moral goal over competing interests. Ethical action or character is required to carry out and complete the action.

¹ The *Community Voices and Character Education Project* was supported by grant # R215V980001 from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Educational Research and Improvement to the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning.

Factors Being Measured

The factors being measured by the questions include the following.

- Caring relationship with each student
- Safe and trustworthy climate supportive of ethical relationships, meaningful tasks
- Moral identity development—focusing on the positive effects a person can have on others
- Supporting self-respect and self-direction
- Responsiveness to individual needs and differences
- Providing stimulating course content that promotes critical thinking
- Developing student strengths
- Fair decision making and democratic skill building

Scoring

There is no particular scoring used for the CEC.

Ideally, a teacher uses it annually and compares responses across years, and sees scores increasing (more yes-es and increased self-ratings).

Terms of Use

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How to cite this guidebook

Narvaez, D. (2010). *Guide for the Checklist for an Ethical Classroom, Version 2 (CEC-2)*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame.

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Let your work be cited

Send copies of your work to Dr. Narvaez, so that they can be cited in this guidebook and other published materials.

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CHECKLIST FOR AN ETHICAL CLASSROOM (CEC)

PURPOSE

The Checklist is intended for teacher self-development.

It may also be used for group discussion at teacher workshops, where participants can offer concrete suggestions for goals.

DIRECTIONS FOR CEC

1. The teacher should complete each section's questions.
2. Then the teacher can select a goal to work on.
3. Use the checklist again in a few months or a year to gauge progress
4. The checklist may be used annually to assess self development.

PROMOTING ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

- Yes No 1. Is there an emphasis on common purposes and ideals?
- Yes No 2. Do I emphasize the positive impact (or negative) an individual can have on others?
- Yes No 3. Do I emphasize the positive impact (or negative) the group can have on others?
- Yes No 4. Are there frequent opportunities for autonomy and positive influence?
- Yes No 5. Do I emphasize respectful, supportive relationships among students, teachers, and parents?
- Yes No 6. Do the classroom rules provide opportunities for children to help one another?
- Yes No 7. Are there frequent opportunities to collaborate with others?
- Yes No 8. Do I help students discern and work on positive personal goals?

How would you rate yourself overall on “Promoting Ethical Behavior?”

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

How would you like to rate yourself?

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

Based on your responses, what goal will you set for yourself for improvement?

TEACHER RESPONSIVENESS

- Yes No 1. Do I communicate with each student personally each day?
- Yes No 2. Do I adjust my behavior for each student to make each feel welcome and supported?
- Yes No 3. Do I coach a student when he or she is having difficulty with schoolwork?
- Yes No 3. Do I coach a student when he or she is having difficulty with their behavior?
- Yes No 4. Do I try to find out what will help the student succeed in the class?
- Yes No a. By asking parents?
- Yes No b. By asking the students themselves?
- Yes No c. By consulting relevant experts, if appropriate?

How would you rate yourself overall on “Teacher Responsiveness?”

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

How would you like to rate yourself?

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

Based on your responses, what goal will you set for yourself for improvement?

WARMTH and IMMEDIACY

Yes No 1. Do I convey support of students as human beings?

Yes No 2. Do I convey appreciation of students' cultures?

Yes No 3. Do I include all students (and their backgrounds) when using the terms "we" and "us"?

Yes No 4. Do I avoid getting angry with the students?

How would you rate yourself overall on "Warmth and Immediacy?"

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

How would you like to rate yourself?

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

Based on your responses, what goal will you set for yourself for improvement?

PROVIDING SAFETY and SECURITY

- Yes No 1. Do I encourage the students to avoid negative attitudes?
- Yes No 2. Do I expect students to treat each other with respect?
- Yes No 3. Are high expectations for behavior maintained and supervised?
- Yes No 4. Do I encourage a sense of healthy self-respect?
- Yes No 5. Do students feel like they can relax and be themselves in the classroom?
- Yes No 6. Do I provide opportunities for appropriate and safe expressions of feelings?
- Yes No 7. Do I encourage the students to not develop an “us against them” mentality?

How would you rate yourself overall on “Providing Safety and Security?”

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

How would you like to rate yourself?

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

Based on your responses, what goal will you set for yourself for improvement?

PROVIDING PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

- Yes No 1. Am I aware of students' personal lives?
- Yes No 2. Do I provide opportunities for developing self-awareness?
- Yes No 3. Do I provide opportunities for developing self-direction?
- Yes No 4. Do I provide opportunities for developing self-control?
- Yes No 5. Do I help the children learn how to get along with each other?
- Yes No 6. Do I provide opportunities for respectful discussion of different viewpoints?
- Yes No 7. Do I display and encourage a positive regard for others, including
giving others the benefit of the doubt?

How would you rate yourself overall on "Providing Psychological Support?"

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

How would you like to rate yourself?

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

Based on your responses, what goal will you set for yourself for improvement?

STIMULATING CURRICULUM CONTENT

- Yes No 1. Do I provide opportunities for student input into curriculum?
- Yes No 2. Does the curriculum present multiple viewpoints when relevant?
- Yes No 3. Is information about diverse opinions and options imparted in an exciting, positive, interesting manner?
- Yes No 4. Are value conflicts and ethical dilemmas discussed in lessons?
- Yes No 5. Do we discuss meaningful life questions when possible?

How would you rate yourself overall on “Stimulating Curriculum Content?”

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

How would you like to rate yourself?

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

Based on your responses, what goal will you set for yourself for improvement?

TRUST BUILDING

Yes No 1. Are opportunities provided for the building of trust among members of the class?

Yes No 2. Is trust of rules and systems encouraged?

Yes No 3. Is justice/fairness an explicit concern of the mine?

How would you rate yourself overall on "Trust Building?"

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

How would you like to rate yourself?

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

Based on your responses, what goal will you set for yourself for improvement?

MEETING NEEDS OF STUDENTS

Yes No Are there opportunities for students to meet needs normally taken care of outside the classroom? Physical? Emotional? Psychological? Intellectual?

How would you rate yourself overall on "Meeting Needs of Students?"

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

How would you like to rate yourself?

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

Based on your responses, what goal will you set for yourself for improvement?

NURTURING CREATIVITY

Yes No 1. Do I give students choices to follow what interests them for assignments?

Yes No 2. Do I provide opportunities for individual variability in how assignments are completed?

Yes No 3. Do I allow opportunities for individual self-expression?

How would you rate yourself overall on “Nurturing Creativity?”

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

How would you like to rate yourself?

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

Based on your responses, what goal will you set for yourself for improvement?

CRITICAL THINKING DEVELOPMENT

- Yes No 1. Do I provide opportunities for students to think logically?
- Yes No 2. Do I help students develop the critical thinking skills?
- Yes No 3. Do I provide criteria for judging the adequacy of ideas or content?
- Yes No 4. Do I provide opportunities for students to ask content questions?
- Yes No 5. Do I provide opportunities for students to ask idea questions?
- Yes No 6. Do I provide opportunities for students to think about various solutions to problems?

How would you rate yourself overall on “Critical Thinking Development?”

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

How would you like to rate yourself?

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

Based on your responses, what goal will you set for yourself for improvement?

EMPHASIZING UNITY

- Yes No 1. Do I emphasize the group identity in a positive way?
- Yes No 2. Do I provide opportunities for cooperative behavior as a large group?
- Yes No 3. Do I illustrate the negative effects of not working together as a large group?
- Yes No 4. Do I emphasize positive impact the group can have on others?

How would you rate yourself overall on “Emphasizing Unity?”

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

How would you like to rate yourself?

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

Based on your responses, what goal will you set for yourself for improvement?

DIVERSITY RECOGNITION AND ACCOMMODATION

Yes No 1. Am I aware of the diversity in the classroom (culture/ethnicity, economic well-being, family configuration, family values, ability/disability, and so on)?

Yes No 2. Do I use the diversity in the classroom to help everyone learn?

Yes No 3. Do I use the diversity in the classroom to help everyone get along with each other?

Yes No 4. Do I respond effectively to the diversity in the classroom?

Yes No 5. Do I and the structure of instruction support diverse students?

How would you rate yourself overall on “Diversity Recognition and Accommodation?”

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

How would you like to rate yourself?

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

Based on your responses, what goal will you set for yourself for improvement?

OPEN GOVERNANCE

- Yes No 1. Is hierarchy used only when necessary?
- Yes No 2. Is hierarchy used only when it benefits students?
- Yes No 3. Do I make clear what my responsibilities are and what student responsibilities are?
- Yes No 4. Do I convey clear expectations for student behavior?
- Yes No 5. Is it clear what to do when there is an academic problem?
- Yes No 6. Is it clear what to do when there is a social problem?
- Yes No 7. Is it clear what to do when there is an individual psychological problem?
- Yes No 8. Do I allow for joint decision making on meaningful decisions, within limits?

How would you rate yourself overall on "Open Governance?"

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

How would you like to rate yourself?

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

Based on your responses, what goal will you set for yourself for improvement?

OPEN COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Yes No 1. Can students raise issues that concern them with me?

Yes No 2. Can students raise issues that concern them with each other?

How would you rate yourself overall on “Open Communication Channels?”

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

How would you like to rate yourself?

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

Based on your responses, what goal will you set for yourself for improvement?

HELPFUL INFRASTRUCTURE

Yes No 1. Are bureaucratic regulations kept to a minimum?

Yes No 2. Are infrastructures altered when they no longer benefit the students?

How would you rate yourself overall on “Helpful Infrastructure?”

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

How would you like to rate yourself?

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

Based on your responses, what goal will you set for yourself for improvement?

FOSTERING AN INTELLECTUAL CLIMATE

- Yes No 1. Is excitement about learning fostered?
- Yes No 2. Is deep thinking encouraged (e.g., pursuing a line of questioning to the end, sorting out the elements in a problem)?
- Yes No 3. Is curiosity fostered?
- Yes No 4. Are there materials in the classroom to foster curiosity and serendipitous learning?
- Yes No 5. Are there materials in the classroom in many domains and at different levels?

How would you rate yourself overall on “Fostering an Intellectual Climate?”

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

How would you like to rate yourself?

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

Based on your responses, what goal will you set for yourself for improvement?

SUPPORTIVE PHYSICAL STRUCTURE

(to the degree made possible by finances and opportunity)

- Yes No 1. Is the furniture set up to be comfortable for students?
- Yes No 2. Is the room decorated in an aesthetically-pleasing manner?
- Yes No 3. Does the room décor reflect the diversity in the school?
- Yes No 4. Is the room temperature comfortable?
- Yes No 5. Can the design and furniture of the room accommodate different teaching styles?

How would you rate yourself overall on “Supportive Physical Structure?”

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

How would you like to rate yourself?

1 Low 2 3 4 5 6 High 7

Based on your responses, what goal will you set for yourself for improvement?

TOOLS FOR Researchers, Educators and Parents

Most of these you can download from:

<http://www.nd.edu/~dnarvaez/> Or from <http://cee.nd.edu>

TOOLS FOR TEACHERS: ETHICAL SKILL INSTRUCTION

Free from cee.nd.edu/curriculum

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Updated versions for purchase (each \$10 or all four for \$30):

Nurturing character in the classroom, EthEx Series, Book 4: Ethical Action. (Narvaez) Notre Dame, IN: ACE Press.

Nurturing character in the classroom, EthEx Series, Book 2: Ethical Judgment. (Narvaez & Bock) Notre Dame, IN: ACE Press.

Nurturing character in the classroom, EthEx Series, Book 1: Ethical Sensitivity. (Narvaez & Endicott) Notre Dame, IN: ACE Press.

Nurturing character in the classroom, EthEx Series, Book 3: Ethical Motivation. (Narvaez & Lies) Notre Dame, IN: ACE Press.

Integrative Ethical Education: Guide (Narvaez)

TOOLS FOR RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT

Citizenship Scale *For Elementary and Secondary School Students: Guide*. Laboratory for Ethical Development and Education, University of Notre Dame

Ethical Goodness Scale *For Elementary and Secondary School Students: Guide*. (Narvaez, Bock & Vaydich) Laboratory for Ethical Development and Education, University of Notre Dame

Community Bonding Scale: Guide. (Narvaez) University of Notre Dame: Center for Ethical Education.

Attitudes Towards Human Rights Inventory: Guide. (Narvaez, Thoma, Getz) University of Notre Dame: Center for Ethical Education.

Positivity Scale: Guide. (Narvaez) University of Notre Dame: Center for Ethical Education.

Moral Theme Inventory (MTI): Guide. (Narvaez & Bock) South Bend, IN: Notre Dame University.

Assessing Ethical Skills: Guide (Narvaez)

Checklist for an Ethical Classroom: Guide (Narvaez)

Checklist for an Achieving and Ethical Classroom: Guide (Narvaez)

Tuning into Ethical Behavior: Guide (Narvaez)

Multicultural Experiences Questionnaire (MEQ) (Narvaez, Endicott, & Hill)

Rating Ethical Content System (RECS) for children's media (Narvaez)

TOOLS FOR PARENTS

Tuning into Ethical Behavior: Guide (Narvaez)

Nurturing a Peaceable Child (Warren, Vaydich & Narvaez)