



The Tripod 7Cs
of Effective Teaching
An Overview

The Tripod Project uses surveys to understand student perspectives on teaching practices, classroom learning conditions, and student engagement. Students complete Tripod™ surveys at the classroom level to report on key dimensions of their experiences. Survey results support strategic planning and goal-setting by teachers, schools, and school systems. Survey items, analysis, and reporting are organized around the Tripod framework.

The Tripod framework draws upon theoretical and empirical work in education, psychology, and the study of organizations. At its core are the 7Cs™ of effective teaching, a set of best practices that recent research links to student engagement (effort and behavior) and achievement (gains on standardized tests). The Tripod Project has analyzed data from millions of students across the United States to validate the logic of its conceptual model.

TRIPOD'S 7CS OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING

The 7Cs framework organizes the central constructs in Tripod's measures of effective teaching. Each construct is derived from peer-reviewed research published in education books and journals over the past several decades.

1. **Care:** Show concern and commitment
2. **Confer:** Invite ideas and promote discussion
3. **Captivate:** Inspire curiosity and interest
4. **Clarify:** Cultivate understanding and overcome confusion
5. **Consolidate:** Integrate ideas and check for understanding
6. **Challenge:** Press for rigor and persistence
7. **Control:** Sustain order, respect, and focus

CARE

Teachers who *care*, develop supportive, personalized relationships with students and strive to cultivate an emotionally safe environment where all students feel respected and learning is the central focus. Components related to *care* have been linked to pro-social behavior, engagement, and achievement.

Sample Survey Items

- 🚩 My teacher seems to know if something is bothering me.
- 🚩 My teacher in this class makes me feel that he/she really cares about me.

In an Exemplary Classroom

The teacher actively develops positive relationships with all students.

- The teacher is courteous, respectful, and fair with all students, even while being firm.
- The teacher shows sincere interest in students' lives outside the classroom.
- The teacher is consistently concerned with meeting the students' academic and socio-emotional needs.
- The teacher ensures that students are supportive of one another.
- The teacher maintains an intellectually and emotionally safe environment that helps students ask and respond to questions.
- The teacher is consistently prepared to provide additional support both in and outside of class time.

CONFER

Teachers who *confer* effectively, seek and value students' points of view. They provide frequent opportunities for students to share their perspectives, as well elicit and enact student suggestions regarding the broader classroom culture. Components related to *confer* engagement, classroom conduct, positive classroom culture, and achievement.

Sample Survey Items

- 🚩 My teacher gives us time to explain our ideas.
- 🚩 My teacher wants us to share our thoughts.

In an Exemplary Classroom

The teacher elicits student ideas and thoughts.

- The teacher provides genuine and plentiful opportunities for students to share ideas, views and opinions.
- Practices such as cooperative learning, reciprocal teaching, creative problem solving and peer and self assessments give all students opportunities to take ownership of their learning



The teacher elicits and values student input.

- The teacher asks for and acts upon suggestions to improve learning experiences.
- The teacher and students work together in creating a learning environment that values diverse views and opinions so that all contributions are respected.

CAPTIVATE

Teachers who *captivate* effectively make instruction engaging. The lessons they create are frequently intriguing and relevant to students and therefore they hold students' attention. Components related to *captivate* have been linked to cognitive and behavioral engagement, inspiration to think about career plans, and achievement.

Sample Survey Items

-  My teacher makes lessons interesting.
-  This class does not keep my attention—I get bored.

In an Exemplary Classroom

The teacher delivers content in ways that capture and keep student attention.

- The teacher uses multiple student-centered teaching strategies.
- The teacher strives to make lessons intriguing.
- Interesting homework activities extend engagement beyond the classroom.
- Appropriate technology is used to engage students and help them make meaning of concepts.



The teacher sparks an interest in learning.

- The teacher purposefully cultivates curiosity and encourages students to raise additional questions.
- The teacher highlights ways that lessons can enhance students' lives.

CLARIFY

Teachers who *clarify* effectively, check frequently for understanding, address misconceptions, explain ideas and concepts in a variety of ways, and provide useful feedback so students understand how to improve their work. Components related to *clarify* have been linked to motivation, interest, a sense of efficacy, and achievement.

Sample Survey Items

-  My teacher explains difficult things clearly.
-  My teacher knows when the class understands and when we do not.

In an Exemplary Classroom

The teacher uses a variety of strategies to check for understanding.

- The teacher checks regularly for understanding through techniques such as quizzes and monitoring student work.
- The teacher surfaces misconceptions and clarifies content for students in a variety of ways.

The teacher explains difficult concepts clearly.

- The teacher has expertise in explaining concepts that students find difficult to understand.
- If students are confused, the teacher uses a variety of strategies to foster clarity.



The teacher provides useful, timely, specific feedback.

- The teacher models success by providing examples, criteria for success, and rubrics.
- The teacher provides specific, descriptive, concise feedback on student work.

CONSOLIDATE

Teachers who *consolidate* effectively, help students organize content in ways that make it easier for students to remember and reason efficiently. These teachers review and summarize what has been learned at the end of each lesson, highlighting relationships between ideas. They connect content to material covered in previous lessons or other topics. Components related to *consolidate* have been linked student achievement.

Sample Survey Items

-  My teacher takes time to summarize what we learn each day.
-  To help us remember, my teacher talks about things we already learned.

In an Exemplary Classroom

The teacher consistently reviews and summarizes content.

- The teacher plans and implements a summarizing strategy at the end of the lesson and assesses what has or has not been learned by students
- The teacher uses student-centered activities in which students summarize their learning of the content.
- The teacher reflects on and uses information generated from student summaries to identify misconceptions and confusion, and plan future lessons.



The teacher organizes information to make it easier for students to remember and reason efficiently.

- The teacher makes connections to what was previously learned.
- The teacher links content to previously acquired knowledge and skills.
- The teacher uses concepts from other areas to help explain content that is being learned.

CHALLENGE

Teachers who *challenge* effectively are concerned with persistence and rigor. They consistently hold students to high academic and behavioral standards and monitor student effort. They expect and require students to persevere even when work is demanding, offering support as needed. *Challenge* was found to be one of the strongest predictors of value-added achievement gains of all the 7Cs.

Sample Survey Items

-  My teacher doesn't let people give up when the work gets hard.
-  My teacher asks students to explain more about answers they give.

In an Exemplary Classroom

The teacher expects students to meet rigorous academic standards.

- The teacher ensures that lesson content is consistently challenging and differentiated.
- The teacher asks high-level questions.
- Teacher expects students to think deeply and justify their responses.
- Students check their own work against pre-established criteria for success, exemplars, and rubrics.

The teacher expects students to be persistent in their learning.

- The teacher communicates that that success is attainable.
- The teacher consistently encourages all students to give and achieve their best.

CONTROL

Teachers who effectively *control* their classrooms vigilantly monitor student behavior, manage and redirect off-task behavior, and foster classroom conditions that allow for optimum learning. They establish effective routines and anticipate events that may interrupt instructional time.

Components related to *control* have been linked to behavioral and emotional engagement, efficacy, and achievement.

Sample Survey Items

- 🚩 My classmates behave the way my teacher wants them to.
- 🚩 Our class stays busy and doesn't waste time.

In an Exemplary Classroom

The classroom environment is highly organized and time is used efficiently.

- The teacher explains, models, and implements strategies to effectively manage classroom work.
- Events in the classroom run smoothly due to materials being readily accessible, time being used appropriately, and disruptions being managed effectively.

The teacher consistently manages student behavior.

- The teacher explains, models, and implements strategies to effectively manage student behavior.
- Students know what is expected of them both academically and behaviorally.
- The teacher regularly reviews and encourages high expectations for good behavior and follows through to hold students accountable.