

Negative attention from teachers can lead to more negative student behaviors

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Previous research has found that student-teacher interactions during the school day are important factors in behavioral and academic outcomes for the students. Now, researchers at the University of Missouri College of Education have developed a new method for observing and measuring teacher interaction with every child in a classroom. As a result of testing this method within K-3 classrooms, Wendy Reinke, an associate professor of educational, school and counseling psychology, found that students who receive more negative attention from teachers experience increases in problems with emotional regulation, concentration and disruptive behaviors. The researchers also found teachers gave African-American students, boys, and students who received free or reduced lunch more negative attention than other students.

"Finding an efficient, accurate and consistent way to observe teachers' [interactions](#) with students is important, not only for educational research, but also for evaluating and coaching teachers," said Reinke, who also is the co-director of the Missouri Prevention Center. "Student-teacher interaction is important because students will repeat actions if those actions garner attention. If a teacher gives attention to a student for prosocial behavior, such as praising them for good work, then the student is more likely to do similar good work in the future. If a teacher gives attention to a student for problem behavior, such as reprimanding them for disrupting the class, the student also may be more likely to repeat this behavior—especially if this is the only way to get a teachers' attention."

The observational model developed by Reinke and her fellow researchers is called the Brief Student-Teacher Classroom Interaction Observation (ST-CIO) model and features a five-minute observation developed to quickly assess teacher interactions. Classroom observers can use the ST-CIO to monitor short student-teacher interactions to determine the nature of those interactions (positive or negative) and is efficient enough to allow observers to make note of teacher interactions with every student in the classroom in a relatively short period of time.

In their study, Reinke and her team used the ST-CIO to observe 53 teachers and 896 students in K-3 classrooms. They found that their observational method allowed them to capture nuanced interactions that were consistent with previous research. Reinke says this model can help researchers more efficiently study student-teacher interaction, as well as serve as a tool for principals.

"We have shown that this method is an effective and efficient tool for researchers," Reinke said. "However, the method is very simple to practice and could provide principals doing [classroom](#) observations or coaches and consultants working with teachers with a tool to observe teachers and give them consistent, valuable feedback. This feedback can be helpful to provide teachers with awareness of how they interact with students. This will help [teachers](#) learn to direct positive attention toward [students](#) with whom they may be having regular negative interactions."

The study, "The Brief Student-Teacher Classroom Interaction Observation: using Dynamic Indicators of Behaviors in the Classroom to Predict Outcomes and Inform Practice," was published in *Assessment for Effective Intervention*.

Provided by University of Missouri-Columbia

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