

When you are gathering ratio-of-interaction data, you are observing how often teachers reinforce students for appropriate behavior and how often teachers correct students for inappropriate behavior. As a general rule, we suggest that teachers pay five times as much attention to appropriate behavior as they do to inappropriate behavior.

Ratio of interaction is not a measure of a teacher's niceness. Rather, it is a measure of how a teacher directs her attention. Indeed, even if a teacher speaks very positively while attending to a student who is acting inappropriately, that teacher's action must still be recorded as a correction because the student is getting attention because the student is acting in ways counter-productive to learning.

What It Looks Like

Attention to appropriate behavior can be expressed verbally or nonverbally and can be directed to an entire class or an individual student. Teachers' verbal attention to students is usually perceived with a teacher calling attention to what is going well.

Some examples of **verbal** positive attention include the following:

- "Your effort on this assignment really paid off."
- "The way you're paying attention is going to help you learn."
- "This is what I'm talking about, class; this is the way a great team learns together."
- "Thank you for getting ready so quickly."
- "Keep it up. This is the way winners behave."

Some examples of **nonverbal** positive attention include the following:

- Thumbs up
- Nodding yes
- Smiling in the direction of someone receiving your attention
- High-fiving a student

Some examples of **verbal** negative attention include the following:

- "You need to get working."
- "What are you supposed to be doing now?"
- "John, that's not acceptable."
- "In this class, we raise our hands before talking."
- "Eyes up here."

Some examples of **nonverbal** negative attention include the following:

- Moving over to be close to a student who is off task (proximity control)
- Staring at a student until they stop the inappropriate behavior (the evil eye)
- Frowning at a student
- Taking a student's book out and pointing to the task the student should be doing