

# Quick SAT Interpretation Guide: Suggestions for Next Steps

Please feel free to reach out to [teachingandlearning@conestogac.on.ca](mailto:teachingandlearning@conestogac.on.ca) for further coaching.

## #1: “Conducts the course in an organized and well-planned manner”



Key to creating a meaningful learning experience for students is ensuring our courses are well planned and that learners can see a thoughtful progression of how concepts are organized. The way we organize and plan our courses has significant impact on student learning, including “an instructor’s ability to clearly communicate course expectations, create course assignments that aid student learning, prepare lessons that demonstrate knowledge of course content, and emphasize relevant course concepts.” (Paolini, 2015, p. 24).

### Ways to enrich your planning and organization today:

- ✓ Consider what the **overall goals of the course are**. How does each lesson specifically connect with the learning outcomes in the curriculum? Create a concept or mind map that connects the different course themes and ideas together.
- ✓ What activities will help students achieve these learning outcomes? Explain to students **why engaging in these activities** will be helpful to their growth and skills acquisition in your industry.
- ✓ **Create a roadmap that you communicate to students** for each lesson of what is going to be covered, how it will connect with previous learning, and what it will do for them as emerging professionals in their industry
- ✓ Create two or three “**essential questions**” that will frame your inquiry and class conversation for that day, and share them at the beginning of class. Essential questions are open-ended and often start with “Why” “How”, “What would happen if...” and other question stems that inspire conversation. Essential Questions encourage ongoing thinking & inquiry, have multiple possible answers and raise further questions, and point to the ‘big ideas’ or important issues in a field (McTighe & Wiggins, 2013).
- ✓ What misunderstandings can you anticipate students might have in response to these questions? Revisit them at the end of class so students can see how you have answered your grounded inquiry together.
- ✓ Summarize the key themes, or better yet, **get students to summarize and explain back to you the key themes of the day either individually or in groups**. From time to time, bring up the course map you developed and show students how their learning connects with the overall direction and plan for the course.

#2: “Manages class behaviour in a manner that makes it comfortable for me to learn”



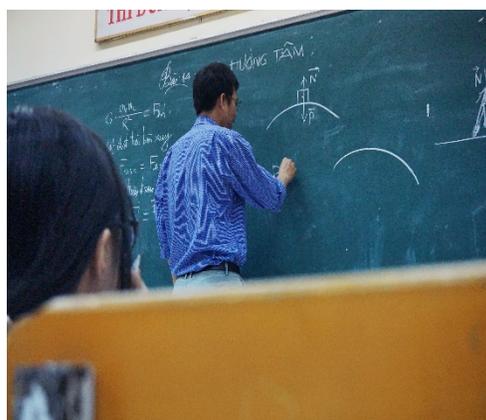
Research shows that students who are cognitively and emotionally invested in a class are less likely to participate in behaviours that are disruptive to the learning of others students, and more likely to participate in discussion, reflection and active learning processes (Myers et al., 2016). Students will expect a fair and consistent application of the class boundaries and rules. These expectations limited to three to five specific rules and should be communicated both verbally and in the course outline.

Creating a learning community that inspires positive behaviour from students is largely based on the relationship dynamics in the class.

## Ways to improve class behaviour from day one of the course:

- ✓ **Get to know students’ names**, some of their stories and greet them when they come in the door. Create activities that will enable them to get to know and work with each other.
- ✓ Set up your class in a way to ensure **every student has an unobstructed view of you**. In active-learning classrooms, make use of all the whiteboard spaces, effectively changing the ‘front’ of the room as you move around to the different teaching spaces.
- ✓ **Limit the amount of time your back is turned to the students**. The more present you are and able to give eye contact, the less time students will be inclined to act out in unproductive ways.
- ✓ **Try non-verbal cues to get students to stop talking**. Don’t talk over student chatter. Move closer in proximity to the talking students. Try to get their eye contact. If this does not work, pause and look at the students, then say you need everyone’s full attention and you will continue when you have it. Don’t publically embarrass a student, but be firm and consistent.
- ✓ **Model the behaviours** you expect your class to engage in.

### #3: Explains content in a way I understand



Choosing multiple ways of representing content, and repeating key concepts are important strategies for supporting learning and to reach students with differing learning styles. Good teaching practice is inclusive and will frame important ideas in multiple ways, including visual representation (images, infographics, tables), verbal description, writing on the board and student engagement through active learning. This is an important aspect of **Universal Design for Learning**, a way of trying to make learning accessible for all students (Fogarty, 2017; Gargiulo & Metcalf, 2017; Greene, 2016)

### Tips for increasing the way your students understand course content:

- ✓ Highlight important information on your PowerPoints with colour or bolding so students recognize it as key content. Post your materials three days before class and tell students what it is you are expecting them to learn.
- ✓ Do not lecture for more than ten or fifteen minutes. At this point, stop and engage students in active learning activities that help them to understand, explain or apply the ideas you have just taught.
- ✓ Check frequently for understanding and adjust your teaching when there are knowledge gaps. Don't assume they already have an understanding of essential background knowledge, but test the knowing they already have in informal ways.
- ✓ Avoid jargon, slang and popular culture references to ensure you are reaching second language learners. Consciously slow your speech down a bit.
- ✓ Use well-chosen examples, case studies and metaphors to help students make connections to what your lesson means in real-world applications.
- ✓ Create ongoing in-class updates of a glossary that defines key words and concepts. Where appropriate, involve the students in creating working definitions of these ideas (with your expertise guiding them). Summarize your lesson at the end of it. In the next class, do a quick review at the beginning of next class (or have students summarize their knowing for you).

## #4: Checks to ensure the class understands the material



Formative assessments are ways instructors “check for learning during the learning process” (Dodge, 2016). It offers an opportunity for educators to check that the class has comprehension of course content, and to adjust, repeat or revise their teaching strategies if need be to allow for optimal student learning (Ducker, 2016; Fisher & Frey, 2015; Lemov, 2015). Checking for understanding can be a simple, quick and easy process that can help you adapt your teaching to help ensure students are where you would like them to be in their knowing. It’s good practice to check in for understanding at least three times per lesson.

### Suggestions for rapid, effective ways to check for understanding:

- ✓ **Misconception check:** Present students with a common misunderstanding about what it is you are teaching. Ask them to agree or disagree, and why.
- ✓ Ask students to do a **‘one minute paper’** on what they are struggling with about the material, what they found helpful, what works for them.
- ✓ **Exit ticket:** Students answer one specific question and hand it to you as they go out the door.
- ✓ **321:** Have students identify three things they learned from the lesson, two things they want to know more about and one question they have.
- ✓ **Corners:** Instructor makes a statement. Students who agree move to one corner of the room, students who aren’t sure to another area, and students who disagree to a third area.
- ✓ **Hand signals:** Students can express their understanding on a scale of 1-5 by the number of fingers they hold up. You can also use signal cards that say “OK” or “more please” in easy to read markers so you can get a sense of who is comfortable with it and who would like more explanation.
- ✓ **Analogy prompting:** Ask students to complete some variation of “this concept is like \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_”
- ✓ **Avoid yes or no questions.** Ask pointed questions that require an explanation to ensure your students really get the material. Don’t just ask if they understand, explore their learning with questions that get to the heart of the matter.

## #5: Treats me with respect



The type of climate we promote in our classes has a great deal to do with the learning outcomes we can help facilitate. **Students learn best from instructors they believe have their best interests as learners in mind.**

The learning climate reflects the values, norms and goals of a class, and shapes every aspect of teaching and learning. Climate has four dimensions: *the academic climate* (expectation of rigour, quality of teaching and course material), the *learning community climate* (interpersonal relationships between learners and teachers) the climate of *school safety* (physical and emotional security, including fairness and consistency) and the *institutional climate* (the ways the structures and organizational frameworks of a school support the members of the school community) (Wang & Degol, 2015). Student resilience and motivation are deeply connected to a feeling of belonging and the perception that student success and well-being is something their instructors care about (Furrer, Skinner & Pitzer, 2014).

### Showing your students you respect them and will contribute to their success:

- ✓ Learn their names and how to pronounce them, inform yourself about their cultural and social contexts.
- ✓ Respect student preferred gender pronouns.
- ✓ Get to know students, ask about their experiences and backgrounds.
- ✓ Give students the benefit of the doubt as much as possible.
- ✓ Acknowledge their struggles and challenges, admit your own mistakes and where you found things difficult when you were learning the same materials.
- ✓ Smile, use humour where appropriate.
- ✓ Ask for feedback, expressly tell them their success and well-being matters to you.
- ✓ Listen.
- ✓ Tell them how much you enjoy teaching them as a class.
- ✓ Praise collective good work. Tell them what made you excited and proud about the most recent assignments they did.
- ✓ Be humble and compassionate.
- ✓ Tell them you know they are capable of sophisticated, high level and academically rigorous work (and then require that of them).
- ✓ Don't make assumptions that the best way for your students to learn or connect are the ways that were best for you as a learner. Ask them what they need, and try to adapt your teaching to their needs.



At Conestoga, we are deeply invested in your teaching success. Any of the Teaching and Learning Consultants listed below would be happy to work with you one-on-one to develop your teaching praxis and skills.

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