

## **The Impact of C.L.A.S.S. on Teaching and Learning in Indiana**

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### ***Design***

A research study was conducted to examine the effectiveness of the C.L.A.S.S. program. The data was collected through three different sources. A Principal Survey was sent to the principal of every school involved. A Teacher Survey was sent to the teachers who were involved at each school. The third source of data was the average performance of each school on the ISTEP standardized test, the average attendance rate, as well as the schools socioeconomic status. The data was gathered during the Spring of 1997. In total, there were 113 completed Principal surveys and 1619 completed Teacher surveys.

### ***Results***

According to the results of this study, C.L.A.S.S. has broad positive impacts on teaching and learning including:

- C.L.A.S.S. teachers are more interested in professional growth and innovation
- C.L.A.S.S. teachers and the principles support each other
- C.L.A.S.S. teachers are more knowledgeable of brain compatible research, and they implement the ideas in the Lifelong Guidelines and LIFESKILLS
- Learning is connected to the real world
- Attendance rates are not harmed and ISTEP scores show a modest improvement

This data suggests that C.L.A.S.S. is effective in accomplishing some of its primary objectives. They reported an increase in knowledge about the topics presented in C.L.A.S.S., and that they use this in their classrooms. Further, involvement in these professional development experiences causes the students to be interested in continuous improvement and development.

### ***ISTEP & Attendance***

C.L.A.S.S. schools have an ISTEP average that is almost two points higher. Thus, the average ISTEP test scores for C.L.A.S.S. schools place them above 58 percent of public K-6 schools in Indiana.

...it is clear that there is a generally positive trend regarding changes in the ISTEP scores for C.L.A.S.S. schools. In real terms, the size of the impact would be equivalent to a school moving from being in the 58<sup>th</sup> percentile for all schools in Indiana to the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile.

Attendance rates are about one third of a point higher in C.L.A.S.S. schools. Thus, the attendance rates for C.L.A.S.S. schools are, on average, higher than 60 percent of other public K-6 Indiana schools.

C.L.A.S.S. Schools perform better than other schools in their standardized test scores and attendance rates.

### *Perceived impact of C.L.A.S.S.*

Both the principals and teachers report that there are many positive things that result from C.L.A.S.S. The items upon which C.L.A.S.S. was seen to have the largest impact were:

- Teachers exchange of professional knowledge
- Principal's support of innovation
- Teachers motivated to grow professionally
- Teachers implementing brain research in their teaching
- Teachers knowledge of brain compatible teaching
- Teachers emphasizing the importance of responsible citizenship
- Teaching connected to real life

These positive results are large and statistically significant.

...Both the teachers and principals report that C.L.A.S.S. is effective in providing the teachers with information on brain compatible teaching. As one principal remarked, "the project (C.L.A.S.S.) has been significant as it established a common knowledge base and language among the staff which is spreading to the larger community. This knowledge base has been used as a springboard to make significant changes in the delivery of instruction on a daily basis."

...one teacher felt that "the biggest advantage of C.L.A.S.S. has been the awareness of learning styles and tying curriculum to the real world."

...a teacher commented, "after twenty years in the classroom I feel refreshed, renewed, and reawakened on many new aspects of teaching. It is exciting to be on the cutting edge of brain research and I am able to better view my students' needs in a new light of understanding."

...one teacher commented, "C.L.A.S.S. has had the most impact on education in my professional career of twenty-eight years. It is pulling everything together that makes sense about instructing children."

...three separate factors emerged as being important predictors of success:

1. Support for C.L.A.S.S.
  - School Board supports and understands C.L.A.S.S.
  - Central office supports and understands C.L.A.S.S.
  - Principal supports and understands C.L.A.S.S.
2. Professional Development
  - Teachers attending Brain-Compatible Summer Institute
  - Principal attends C.L.A.S.S. training sessions
3. School Environment
  - School's and teacher's expectations are clear
  - Principal and teacher support each other
  - Teachers create a positive environment using Lifelong Guidelines and LIFESKILLS