

A Collaborative Model for Developing Classroom Management Skills in Urban Professional Development School Settings

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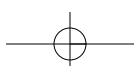
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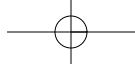
ABSTRACT: This article describes a school–university partnership that focuses on the development of classroom management skills for preservice teachers in an urban setting, through collaboration between mentors, principals, and a university supervisor. To prepare preservice teachers for the unique challenges of urban schools, three key elements were implemented. First, interns were placed in diverse settings. During those placements, interns were provided opportunities for dialogue and discussion with experienced educators, as well as the chance to critically reflect on their teaching within a supportive environment. Collaboration between the school and university facilitated these key elements and so encouraged the interns' growth and learning in their development of classroom management skills, for use with children from various ethnic, social, and academic backgrounds.

Few teacher educators would disagree that classroom management is one of the biggest challenges faced by preservice teachers. Novice teachers struggle with the inner conflict of wanting to be a friend to their students versus wanting to be respected in the same way as a mentor teacher. They marvel at the ways that experienced teachers motivate and manage children, making it look so easy. Their early experiences with directing the entire class may be a little disheartening when they cannot easily get the students to do what they want them to do. For those interns in an urban school, added challenges occur when students

are expected to behave amid cultural, economic, and family difficulties that distract them from the task of learning. Children who are not sure where they will be sleeping that night, who witness the arrest of a family member, or who physically lash out toward teachers and children pose challenges to preservice teachers beyond the basic classroom management issues.

What can we as teacher educators do to better prepare our interns to be successful during their internship and beyond—that is, into their own classroom? This article sets out to describe a collaborative model for helping pre-





service teachers develop classroom management skills, with a focus on the unique challenges faced by teachers in urban classrooms. Becoming skilled in the area of classroom management is a personal and professional journey that takes many teachers years to master, if ever. Novice teachers are just beginning the journey and so can benefit from various sources of support, including peers, mentors, principals, and university supervisors.

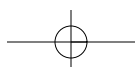
Teachers typically teach in the way that they were taught, and they often carry into their teaching experiences the beliefs that they grew up with (Ladson-Billings, 2001). These beliefs and attitudes may serve them well if they are teaching in a situation similar to the one in which they learned. In reality, many of today's teachers and children face different learning challenges, such as increased testing and learning expectations, more students who are learning English as a second language, and an increased emphasis on ethnic, social, and academic diversity in classrooms. If new educators are not familiar and comfortable with these issues and their impact on urban education, then we as teacher educators may be sending beginners into classrooms without the skills and strategies needed to be good teachers for all students. Research points out that college course work, although an important foundation for understanding diversity, may not be enough to help form the beliefs and attitudes that make for successful teaching in urban schools (Reiff & Cannella, 1992). However, immersion within urban classrooms does provide interns the day-to-day practice of dealing with a variety of situations involving children from diverse backgrounds. The hands-on nature of student teaching provides an ideal setting for exploring, testing, and understanding these beliefs and attitudes.

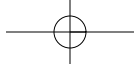
Why Focus on Urban Education?

All schools certainly face their own unique set of challenges, depending on the children, families, community, and staff. Some of these challenges may seem a bit more daunting

than others when combined with pressure to continually improve test scores and meet standards and expectations. Teaching children in urban settings has proven to be one of the biggest challenges, based on the high turnover rate of teachers (Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002). About half of new teachers who choose a career in urban education will leave within the first 5 years (Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996). Novice teachers are especially vulnerable because of their limited experience with and knowledge of the sociocultural aspects of urban education (Chizhik, 2003). According to the mission statement of the Center for Urban Education at the University of California at Berkeley (n.d., as quoted from its website), urban education stems from "a recognition that the problems and issues confronting schools in urban areas cannot be addressed effectively without attention to the social and economic forces which exert influence upon the lives of children and families." What exactly are these forces that exert influence over children and families and so eventually affect schools? What do we mean by the term *urban education*? Weiner's (2005) definition places an emphasis on the cultural, linguistic, and economic diversity among students, while noting the lack of such diversity among teachers.

Defining urban education through the elements of culture, language, and economics promotes the view of urban education as a challenge, attributed to the characteristics of the context or setting rather than those of the students. Such a view helps educators move away from a deficit model, where children in urban classrooms are viewed as being unable to learn because of a lack of preparedness, a lack of valuing education, or a lack of ability. Unfortunately, not all educators, including ones new to the field, have made this shift in thinking. Groulx (2001) conducted a study that compared student teachers' attitudes toward working in urban schools, before and after student teaching; as such, the researcher found that preservice teachers do not often approach their profession ready or willing to face the challenges of urban schools. They usually appear overconfident about their abilities to work





with children of diverse backgrounds (Reiff & Cannella, 1992) and so rely on naïve or idealistic beliefs to make instructional and management decisions. Up to this point, their education and experiences may not have prepared them to understand the different pedagogical issues that they must consider when teaching children of diversity. They often try to fit children of cultural diversity into the mold of their own cultural experiences, which are usually White and middle class. This problem is not limited to preservice teachers. Burstein and Cabello (1989) found that 38% of certified teachers described children of culturally diverse families as coming from a “deficient” culture, as opposed to a “different” culture. As teacher educators, we have a responsibility to work toward breaking this pattern by helping preservice teachers develop the skills they need to successfully teach all children.

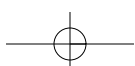
According to existing research, teacher preparation programs appear to have limited effects on preservice teachers’ knowledge and beliefs about cultural diversity (Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004). Some evidence suggests that current approaches to course work in multicultural education have little impact on preservice teachers (Cochran-Smith, 2003). The teacher education programs that appear to be making a difference in changing beliefs and attitudes among preservice teachers provide candidates with diversity experiences (Lenski, Crawford, Crumpler, & Stallworth, 2005) through classroom observations and internships. Kidd, Sanchez, and Thorp (2006) have identified the types of experiences, as cited by preservice teachers, as being most beneficial to influencing their beliefs and practices with diverse learners. All of their study participants listed an internship in a diverse setting as having an influence on their culturally responsive dispositions and practices. Other positive experiences included critical reflection, dialogue and discussion, reading professional materials, and interactions with families. These researchers describe the personal journey toward the culturally responsive teaching taken by interns and how these elements influenced their journeys in different ways at different times.

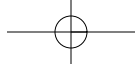
The Classroom Management in Urban Settings Project described in this article strives to put into practice certain elements identified in the work of Kidd and colleagues (2006), including an internship in a diverse setting, critical reflection, and dialogue and discussion. The goal of the project was to provide interns with experiences that will influence their beliefs and practices about teaching students of diversity. This article describes the ways that collaboration between interns, mentors, principals, and university supervisors helped to facilitate placements in diverse settings, dialogue and discussion, and critical reflection in an effort to provide interns with a learning situation that promotes their deeper understanding of diversity.

How Did This Project Get Started?

Our current professional development school (PDS) program had been in place for several years, without our giving much thought to the unique situation of an urban PDS placement. Up until now, we considered interns to be as prepared as they could be, having taken required courses in classroom management and curriculum adaption for diverse learners, along with content-specific methods courses. We also valued the wealth of experiences that they would encounter with a yearlong placement in a classroom. The need for more attention to issues surrounding teaching in urban settings was clarified when several seemingly unrelated events occurred within a short time.

- During her first few weeks as an intern in a fourth-grade classroom, Libby¹ broke up a playground fight. After the incident, we discussed concerns for her physical safety in this situation and wondered what would be the best tactic when encountering two students fighting. Should the intern break it up? Should he or she go for help? What responsibility does he or she have for the bystanders? What is the school policy





for teachers who break up fights? Even the best course in classroom management may not adequately prepare interns for the issues surrounding school violence.

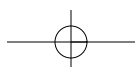
- Justine, an intern in a first-grade classroom, expressed concern for a child from a homeless family whose mother has recently been found guilty of and imprisoned for murder. The child was living with relatives but was having tremendous trouble concentrating in school. We discussed the needs that this child might have when he arrives in the classroom. Are our interns prepared to provide children with what they need in order to learn, especially as they face such challenging home lives and experiences?
- The PDS university supervisor witnessed a first-grade student throw a chair at the mentor teacher during a classroom observation and wondered whether this same event could happen when an intern is the lead teacher. Have we prepared our interns for the types of classroom management issues that occur when children are not able to keep their behavior under control?
- Janelle, an intern in a fifth-grade classroom, described a student with Asperger's syndrome who is in the regular classroom full-time because of the inclusion policy of the school district. He often acts out during class or self-mutilates using a pencil or paper clip. Janelle has never seen anything like this and wonders what she should do when he becomes unmanageable or hurts himself. Should she seek help? What happens when a child with a similar condition is in her own classroom in the future?
- The principal of the PDS site expressed concern about the 1st-year teachers at her building (one a former intern from our program) and the struggles they face with classroom management. She wondered if there is anything that we can do for the current interns to better

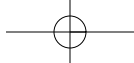
prepare them for the day when they will be the leaders of their own classrooms.

Through conversations with the principal, mentor teachers, university colleagues, and the interns themselves, we realized that our interns clearly needed additional support to not only complete their internship successfully but also to feel prepared to take a teaching position in an urban school, if so desired. Our approach became twofold. First, we identified the elements previously mentioned as being key to influencing beliefs and practices for teaching children of diversity. Interns would continue to be provided with placements in diverse settings, which is critical for expanding their thinking. We also chose to focus on the elements of critical reflection and dialogue/discussion because these elements can easily encourage a strong partnership between interns, the school administration, and teachers, and university supervisor. Next, we made plans to implement two activities that promote dialogue/discussion and critical reflection while continuing the supportive and collaborative environment among all those involved—first, participation in a series of seminars with experienced educators and, second, involvement with the district evaluation and reflection system used by all teachers. Both of these activities relied on the expertise of former interns, mentors, and PDS school principals to help interns to develop their deeper understanding and repertoire of skills.

Internship Placements in Diverse Settings

PDS sites in our university program are typically chosen because of the diverse experience available to university students based on the location of the school and the economic and ethnic diversity of the children. Sites include urban settings and smaller communities, both of which may have significant numbers of children from a range of cultural and economic backgrounds, including those learning English as a second language. Several of the selected schools follow an inclusion model for





children with special needs, again providing our interns with a variety of teaching and learning experiences. Two schools were selected for the Classroom Management in Urban Settings Project. Both schools are located within a major midwestern city and are considered to be neighborhood schools, with most of the student population coming from the community surrounding the school. One of the sites is an English-as-a-second-language attendance center for the district, which means an increase in the number of English-language learners attending the school, along with an increase in the services available for these children. This same school also serves as the site for the district's hearing-impaired program. Both schools are located in more established sections of the city, with a mixture of economic and cultural backgrounds among the school families (see Table 1). Both schools also use an inclusion model; as such, students who have a variety of different social, emotional, and learning needs receive assistance from special education staff within the regular classroom whenever possible.

Intern placement is done through interviews conducted after interns have met the program requirements—namely, having a minimum grade point average; passing language arts, reading, and general knowledge assessments; and successfully completing required prerequisite courses. Interns are placed with mentor teachers who have at least 3 years of teaching experience and have completed a university training program. The university is located in a small midwestern town, approxi-

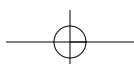
mately 60 miles from these PDS sites. Because of the size and location of the university, many of the students come from rural communities throughout the state and are most often, but not always, female traditional students between the ages of 21 and 25 during the internship. These students typically have limited experiences with diversity, both in their own lives and especially in educational settings. Some students request internship placements in schools that appear to be easier to teach in, because the population is less diverse. They express concern about teaching in a setting that is so different from their own experiences—that is, an urban setting—and they share doubts about their ability to handle “those kids.” A small number of interns actually request an urban setting because they want to experience more diversity, as a way to better prepare themselves for their future teaching positions. Most of the interns at the two sites described in this article chose an urban setting for the convenience of being able to live with family or friends. A few expressed a sense of pride at being able to return to their home communities as interns and give back to the education system that educated them.

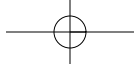
Nine interns were involved in this project (7 women, 2 men, all Caucasian), which lasted for the fall and spring semesters. The female interns were between the ages of 21 and 25, and the two male interns, 25 to 35. Some of the interns grew up in the city where the PDS schools are located, whereas others came from rural areas surrounding the city. All the interns were from middle socioeconomic levels. For

Table 1. Data for Professional Development Schools

	<i>Meadows</i>	<i>Whitson</i>
Students (n)	533	381
Building ethnicity (%)		
White	46	61
African American	24	7
Hispanic	10	20
Other	26	12
Students identified as being economically disadvantaged (%)	71	52
Students with an identified disability (%)	9	13
Students identified as English-language learners (%)	1	13

Note. Data from Kansas State Department of Education's building-level report card for each school (see http://online.ksde.org/rcard/county.aspx?cnty_no=089).





many, if not all, of these interns, the situations that they encountered in an urban school were not what they had expected. These situations were more demanding and emotionally challenging and required more patience than what they had expected or imagined. The next component of the project—dialogue and discussion activities—provided evidence of their feelings and concerns, along with their understanding and support, especially in the area of classroom management.

Dialogue and Discussion Activities

To facilitate dialogue and discussion, four seminars were scheduled over the course of 6 weeks during the beginning of the second semester of the 1-year internship. At this point, the nine interns had watched their mentor teachers implement classroom management strategies and had since begun some initial attempts of their own, still under the the mentors' direction. The seminars provided an opportunity for the mentors and the principal to share experiences, as well as a chance for the interns to ask questions and gather ideas, thereby further promoting the collaborative nature of the PDS setting.

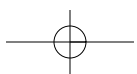
The first seminar served as an introduction to the term *urban education* and the unique challenges presented by teaching in diverse settings. Most interns already had initial experiences in this area, and the university supervisor and interns spent the time brainstorming a list of the challenges that they have faced so far (e.g., school violence, homelessness, tardiness/absences). While creating this list, the group discussed the daunting task of teaching in an urban school. During the discussion, two themes emerged. Interns individually expressed initial gratitude for the invaluable experiences they were receiving by being placed in a diverse setting. Everyone recognized the value of being exposed to challenging situations, during a time when lots of scaffolding is available for developing the skills needed to be an effective teacher with all students. Interns were also quick to express a

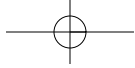
deep sense of responsibility for helping the children in their classes. Some of the children's situations were heart wrenching, and we referred back to the list that we had generated, with examples of the difficulties that some children faced in their day-to-day living and how these situations wear on the heart of a caring teacher.

One intern, Janelle, described the student with Asperger's syndrome and the ways that he was sometimes violent to fellow classmates, to teachers, and to himself. We asked how she managed to keep a positive attitude every day, even after he had physically lashed out at her. Janelle replied that she wanted to be in the classroom because she helped to provide the stability that this boy needed to have a good day. She believed that she could make a difference for him. Other interns responded similarly about providing stability and being a positive influence to individual children. These beginning teachers realized that urban classrooms hold challenges, but these teachers also felt needed and so believed that they could really affect the children in a positive way.

The three remaining sessions involved panel discussions with new teachers, current mentor teachers, and a principal from a PDS site. These discussions consisted of an open question-and-answer session between the panelists and the participants—of whom the former shared some of their most difficult, and most successful, moments as teacher or principal.

The first panel consisted of recent graduates of the PDS program. These new teachers made a conscious choice to seek teaching positions in the same urban school district in which they were interns. Their advice focused on a common idea—namely, that teachers should not assume that children understand classroom directions and routines, even once these directions have been explained. The teachers reiterated the need for keeping directions simple and repeating them frequently. School rules and routines may be different from the experiences that children have had at home, so teachers must be patient and consistent. Teachers must also keep good documentation about the types of classroom





management techniques used with the whole class and with individual children. The second panel, mentor teachers, described ways to develop trust with children and so gave suggestions for making the classroom a place where everyone is treated with respect. One mentor teacher believed that the children cannot all be treated in the same way, because they bring so many different experiences and these experiences sometimes need to be taken into account. Still another mentor thought that her job was to love the children as much as she can for 9 months and then hope that she has given them enough to survive. Marilyn, an experienced mentor, explained her belief that creating a positive environment influences classroom management. She greets children each morning by name and with a personal comment. After modeling this for a week, she asks the intern to take charge of this process, so that when he or she begins teaching that class, he or she will have already developed a personal relationship with the children.

The third panel consisted of a principal from one of the schools, who in speaking to the interns emphasized the importance of developing relationships with parents. She cautioned against playing the “blame game,” where we as educators blame parents for not doing certain things for their children. Teachers must keep in mind that they see only a small portion of a child’s life; thus, they should be careful not to make any hasty judgments. Interns were also cautioned against assuming that children will come to class with the skills and behaviors appropriate for school and that all children will be ready to learn. As with the mentors, the principal emphasized a team approach in which the student, teacher, principal, and parents are all working together.

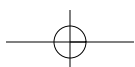
These four seminars provided opportunities for interns to question, discuss, and reflect on their teaching and learning. Stories and advice from experienced educators gave interns support for their developing classroom management skills, in conjunction with what they learned in course work and through placement in classrooms with children of ethnic, social, and academic diversity. A follow-up question-

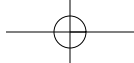
naire, completed by the interns after the seminars ended, revealed the classroom management techniques that they collected. One intern wrote, “It’s better to use a calm voice when talking to a child rather than yelling.” All the interns’ responses indicated an appreciation for the opportunity to hear the others’ experiences. One intern wrote that the seminars gave her a chance to “focus on things or aspects about teaching for the future.” The future, she mentioned, may be realized in the classroom tomorrow, next week, next month, or next school year. Having the opportunity to discuss their experiences and critically reflect on what they had seen and done proved to be invaluable for the interns as they prepared to begin teaching full-time in their PDS classrooms.

Critical Reflection

Discussion and critical reflection often go hand in hand, as these interns would soon learn. By participating in a PDS model, the interns had the opportunity to assimilate into the school system as much as possible. Both principals in the project schools believed in creating a realistic experience—that is, what it feels like to be a new teacher—by making the interns “junior” faculty members. Interns participated in all school-related activities, including professional development sessions, parent–teacher conferences, back-to-school night, and faculty meetings. This intense participation even included involvement with the process that the school district used to evaluate teachers; that is, the interns were evaluated as if they were full-time faculty, and this was in addition to receiving evaluations completed by the university supervisor. Once each semester, the principal or vice principal formally evaluated interns, following the same process of critical reflection used with certified faculty at the school.

The school district used an evaluation process adapted from the framework for teaching and evaluation (Danielson, 2007; Danielson & McGreal, 2000), which includes the four domains of planning and preparation,





classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibility. The framework is designed to encourage professional conversations among teachers and administrators as they seek to enhance their skill in the complex task of teaching. Dialogue and critical reflection are key components, given that teachers are asked to reflect on various aspects of their preparation and teaching, before and after the lesson observed by the administrator. Additional components of the evaluation model are used for beginning teachers to provide them with support and opportunities to reflect on their newly developed skills. For the purpose of this article, we focus on the domain of classroom environment and on the components of the evaluation process that promote critical reflection about classroom management skills, although this is but one small part of the instructional framework.

Before the observation, the intern submits a lesson plan and a class profile describing the children, based on gender, age, language categories, identified exceptionalities, racial/ethnic and religious/cultural groups, instructional levels, developmental characteristics, and learning styles (see Figure 1).

These documents are meant to enhance the intern's awareness of individual differences and needs in the classroom while providing the intern and the principal with a tool for promoting conversations. During the observation, the principal uses the observer notes form (see Figure 2) to record observed teacher behaviors in nine areas, including managing student behavior, respect and rapport, establishing a culture for learning, and providing feedback to students. The principal jots down direct quotes or descriptions that can be used to re-create the classroom events during the postobservation dialogue.

After the observation, a conference occurs in which (1) the intern reviews reflective questions about the lesson and (2) the principal offers comments related to the evidence collected during the observation. The evaluator uses a rubric to analyze the intern's skills (see Table 2), and the intern completes a reflection sheet (see Figure 3), both of which serve as tools to encourage reflection and dis-

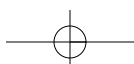
cussion. The entire process provides a common vocabulary and invites an open communication that can assist an intern or beginning teacher in the improvement process.

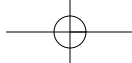
Interns at the two PDS sites participated in this evaluation model as if they were full-fledged members of the faculty. In addition, as stated previously, interns also participated in the university evaluation process, which involved an observation and evaluation completed by the university supervisor (three to five times during the semester), which is required for university accreditation. Naturally, the interns initially felt as though they were on the hot seat, with so much evaluation occurring. As time went on, they came to realize that evaluation and reflection are an integral part of teaching. During conferences with the university supervisor, interns would describe the feedback received from the principal and the ways that they had implemented suggestions into their teaching. Receiving feedback from both the principal and the university supervisor became an invaluable learning experience as the interns developed their classroom management skills and critically reflected on their growth.

Conclusion

As the interns neared the end of their year-long experience in the classroom, they (individually and as a group) reflected on their own areas of growth and personal goals set for their 1st year of teaching in their own classrooms. In response to an anonymous questionnaire, interns expressed positive comments about the sharing sessions and opportunities for critical reflection available during the school year. One intern wrote, "I think that talking to new teachers is very helpful because they are doing the job for the first time and almost every experience is a learning experience they can share." The interns' comments indicated that knowledge in the area of classroom management was needed, useful, and appreciated.

A bigger issue remained in the minds of the university supervisor and principals. Would the support given to these interns help





Class Profile

Teacher _____
 School _____
 Grade level _____

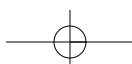
Observer _____
 Subject/Period _____
 Date _____

1. **Number of students: Male _____ Female _____**
2. **Age (grade) range _____**
3. **Approximately how many students are in each of the following language categories?**
 _____ English language proficient
 _____ Limited English language proficient
 _____ Non English proficient
4. **How many students have identified exceptionalities and/or an I.E.P.?**
 _____ Blind or visually impaired _____ Physically disabled
 _____ Deaf or hearing impaired _____ Mentally retarded
 _____ Emotionally or behaviorally disabled _____ O.H.I.
 _____ Gifted _____ 504 Plan
 _____ Learning disabled _____ Other (specify) _____
 _____ Developmentally disabled or Early Childhood Special Ed
5. **How many students are represented in the following racial/ethnic groups? Use TERMS groups?**
 _____ American Indian or Alaskan native _____ Other (please specify)
 _____ Asian _____ Multiracial
 _____ Black or African American
 _____ Hispanic or Latino
 _____ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 _____ White
6. **How does your class reflect the makeup of the overall school population?**
7. **Describe the general instructional levels represented in the class (number of students).**

Above grade level	Math _____	Reading _____
At grade level	Math _____	Reading _____
Below grade level	Math _____	Reading _____
	Math SIP _____	Reading SIP _____
8. **List some of the developmental characteristics you would expect from the age group you teach.**
9. **Do any of your students have religious or cultural affiliations that require special considerations? If so, explain.**
10. **What percent of your class do you think falls into the following categories of learning styles?**
 _____ Visual _____ Auditory _____ Kinesthetic
11. **Describe other circumstances or factors, regarding your students or classroom, of which an observer should be aware.**

Figure 1. Class profile for school district evaluation.

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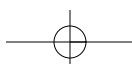




Framework for Teaching Observation Observer Notes	
Teacher _____ Subject _____ Date _____ Observer _____ Class Period/Grade _____ Time In _____ Time Out _____	
2a: Respect and Rapport *Teacher Interaction with students *Student Interaction	3a: Communicating Clearly and Accurately *Directions and procedures *Oral and written language
2b: Establishing a Culture for Learning *Importance of content *Student pride in work *Expectations for learning and achievement	3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques *Quality of questions *Discussion techniques *Student participation
2c: Managing Classroom Procedures *Instructional groups *Transitions *Materials & supplies *Non-instructional duties *Volunteers and paraprofessionals	3c: Engaging Students in Learning *Representation of content *Activities and assignments *Groups of students *Instructional materials and resources *Structure and pacing
2d: Managing Student Behavior *Expectations *Monitoring of student behavior *Response to student behavior	3d: Providing Feedback to Students *Quality: accurate, substantive, constructive and specific *Timeliness
2e: Organizing Physical Space *Safety and arrangement of furniture *Accessibility to learning and use of physical resources	3e: Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness *Lesson adjustment *Response to students *Persistence

Figure 2. Observer notes form.

Note. Published with permission of Topeka Public Schools.



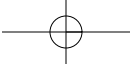
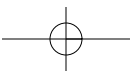


Table 2. Rubric for Domain 2: The Classroom Environment

Component	Level of Performance			
	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
2a: Creating an environment of respect and rapport	Classroom interactions, both between the teacher and students and among students, are negative or inappropriate and characterized by sarcasm, putdowns, or conflict.	Classroom interactions are generally appropriate and free from conflict but may be characterized by occasional displays of insensitivity.	Classroom interactions reflect general warmth and caring, and are respectful of the cultural and developmental differences among groups of students.	Classroom interactions are highly respectful, reflecting genuine warmth and caring toward individuals. Students themselves ensure maintenance of high levels of civility among members of the class.
2b: Establishing a culture for learning	The classroom does not represent a culture for learning and is characterized by low teacher commitment to the subject, low expectations for student achievement, and little student pride in work.	The classroom environment reflects only a minimal culture for learning, with only modest or inconsistent expectations for student achievement, little teacher commitment to the subject, and little student pride in work. Both teacher and students are performing at the minimal level to "get by."	The classroom environment represents a genuine culture for learning, with commitment to the subject on the part of teacher and students, high expectations for student achievement, and student pride in work.	Students assume much of the responsibility for establishing a culture for learning in the classroom by taking pride in their work, initiating improvements to their products, and holding the work to the highest standard. Teacher demonstrates a passionate commitment to the subject.
2c: Managing classroom procedures	Classroom routines and procedures are either nonexistent or inefficient, resulting in the loss of much instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established but function unevenly or inconsistently, with some loss of instructional time.	Classroom routines and procedures have been established and function smoothly for the most part, with little loss of instruction time.	Classroom routines and procedures are seamless in their operation, and students assume considerable responsibility for their smooth functioning.



2d: Managing student behavior Student behavior is poor, with no clear expectations, no monitoring of student behavior, and inappropriate response to student misbehavior.

Teacher makes an effort to establish standards of conduct for students, monitor student behavior, and respond to student misbehavior, but these efforts are not always successful.

Teacher is aware of student behavior, has established clear standards of conduct, and responds to student misbehavior in ways that are appropriate and respectful of the students.

Student behavior is entirely appropriate, with evidence of student participation in setting expectations, and monitoring behavior is subtle and preventive, and teacher's response to student misbehavior is sensitive to individual student needs.

2e: Organizing physical space Teacher makes poor use of the physical environment, resulting in unsafe or inaccessible conditions for some students or a serious mismatch between the furniture arrangement and the lesson activities.

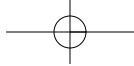
Teacher's classroom is safe, and essential learning is accessible to all students, but the furniture arrangement only partially supports the learning activities.

Teacher's classroom is safe, and learning is accessible to all students; teacher uses physical resources well and ensures that the arrangement of furniture supports the learning activities.

Teacher's classroom is safe, and students contribute to ensuring that the physical environment supports the learning of all students.

Summary and Suggestions for Future Practice:

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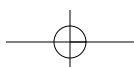
Reflection Sheet	
Teacher_____	Grade_____
Subject_____	Date_____ Time_____
Objective_____	
1. To what extent were students productively engaged?	
2. Did the students learn what I intended them to learn? Were my instructional goals met? How do I know and when will I know?	
3. Did I alter my goals or my instructional plan as I taught the lesson? Why?	
4. If I had the opportunity to teach the lesson again to the same group of students, what would I do differently? Why?	
5. How, and in what context, did I communicate with students, parents, and other professionals about my decisions regarding students' learning and assessment?	

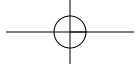
Figure 3. Teacher reflection sheet.

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them build the desire, confidence, and skills needed to choose to teach in an urban school? When asked if they would consider taking a teaching position in an urban school district, one intern responded, "Yes! I have absolutely loved working with the diversity that occurs in urban school districts. Challenges make each day new and exciting and each child needs as much love and good education as the rest." Another intern wrote, "Yes, this is where I feel I can make the most difference." Although these comments are encouraging, the question becomes, do they transfer into action?

During the 2007–2008 school year, four of the nine interns chose to teach in an urban school district. This number remained the same for the 2008–2009 school year, although one teacher got married and moved to a small town, and another returned from a suburban district back to the urban district. Admittedly this sample size is small, but the dedication that these teachers made to urban education is heartening. One result of this project is that the university will strive to place interns in diverse settings, because these experiences are invaluable to them and they also help the uni-





versity meet national accreditation standards. Given the positive feedback from the interns, the university supervisor and principals also plan to continue to have interns participate in the district teaching evaluation and to offer seminars focusing on classroom management. Those of us who work with preservice teachers share the same goal—namely, to help prepare these newcomers for the profession so that they can successfully teach all children. This can be a daunting task as new teachers attempt to support and guide children with varying academic, social, and ethnic backgrounds. Our preservice teachers must bridge the chasm between their beliefs and experiences and the reality of the children whose lives they will touch each day. This bridge is built through learning experiences. As teacher educators, we provide the learning experiences, but we may not see the fruits of our work, because they often occur after our students have moved on to their own classrooms. One former intern and project participant, Libby, reflected on this growth process as she began her teaching position as a first-grade teacher in an urban school:

When I arrived at my PDS site, I am ashamed to admit, I felt the effects of culture shock. Never before, even during my 3 years at university, had I ever been in such a diversity-rich environment. While nervous, I was up to the challenge.

While my challenges in the classroom were great, the challenges and adversities many of my students faced daily were much greater. Oftentimes, their struggles were obvious and their behaviors reflected their rough home environments. Therefore, I made it my personal goal to make each child feel safe and loved in my classroom. As my first semester as a student teacher continued, I became more and more concerned. Not only was I concerned about the academic success of my students, but also for their lifelong well-being. I began to realize how important my role as a caring adult was in their lives. I felt as though they needed me. My students needed someone in their lives to put them first. They needed someone that they felt they could turn to no matter how tough their situation became.

It was during that time when I realized there was nowhere I would rather be than in an urban classroom. I'm sure it would be easier to teach in an affluent neighborhood where most students have the support of their families. However, I'm not looking for a job that's easy. If I was looking for an easy job, I would not have chosen to be a teacher. What I am looking for, and have found, is a lifetime commitment where I can be passionate about what I am doing. While I am sure that I cannot save or make a difference in every child's life, I will never stop trying to do so.

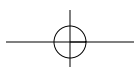
Libby speaks of the importance of a teacher's heart and the role that it plays in guiding teachers to make a commitment to teach in urban classrooms. This heart is important, but it must be coupled with classroom management skills. The teachers that administrators are looking to hire are those who show a dedication to all learners and who demonstrate an ability to establish routines, create an environment of respect, implement smooth transitions, and intervene when needed. New teachers can learn these skills by watching a skilled mentor, by practicing in a diverse setting, by discussing technique with experienced colleagues, and by critically reflecting on their teaching. Experience in classroom management, especially in challenging urban settings, provides interns with a sense of confidence and the skills needed to be successful in any classroom. ^{SUP}

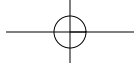
Note

1. Pseudonyms are used for all interns except the author.

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