

Annotation & Evaluation

[Go Back](#)

Agey, Anasstasja AP9 - Learning Environments

Status: Evaluated

EVALUATION				
	Emergent	Bridging	Fulfilled	Profecency Level
<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient <input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate	<input type="checkbox"/> 9.E.1 Demonstrate knowledge of components of a positive learning environment that foster active engagement in learning, self-motivation and positive social interaction <input type="checkbox"/> 9.E.2 Understands the importance of setting up an effective learning environment <input type="checkbox"/> 9.E.3 Understands the importance of structuring the environment for positive student to student interaction	<input type="checkbox"/> 9.B.1 Plans techniques and strategies that promote a positive learning environment that fosters active engagement in learning, self-motivation and positive social interaction <input type="checkbox"/> 9.B.2 Plans a variety of techniques that will ensure an effective learning environment <input type="checkbox"/> 9.B.3 Plans to structure the environment so that there is opportunity for positive student to student interaction.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 9.F.1 Model strategies that foster a positive learning environment conducive to students' (P-12) learning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 9.F.2 Implements a variety of techniques that ensure an effective learning environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 9.F.3 Structure the environment specifically to ensure that there is positive student to student interaction.	<input type="checkbox"/> Preliminary <input type="checkbox"/> Emergent <input type="checkbox"/> Bridging <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fulfilled

Comments from Evaluator: The Inclusion Success Plan, with the lesson on teaching the students how to interact with each other in a positive manner supported by the detailed feedback from your cooperating teacher, provided compelling evidence of your ability to create a learning environment to ensure positive student to student interaction that is conducive to students' learning. Well done!

ANNOTATION

1. Type and description of evidence(s) (e.g. assignments, activity)

Updated 3/15/09
 Evaluator,
 You should be able to open the PDF document now. I think the problem was with how the document was saved, but I have corrected the error. Please see my current annotations for this document below dated 3/14/09.

1st evidence-
 Classroom Management Plan: This assignment was completed as a requirement of Classroom Management, Safety, Ethics, and School Law in Spring 2008. It was readapted and implemented in My Level II Internship which took place during Fall 2008. The Management Plan was designed to propose strategies for classroom arrangement, procedures, and student behavior.

2nd evidence-
 Week 10 reflection: This reflection was completed during my Level II Internship which took place throughout Fall 2008. It specifically addresses a difficult day in my classroom and a conference I had with my University Supervisor about modifying my speech to meet my behavioral expectations for all students.

3rd evidence-
 Science Unit Exam Review: I developed this Jeopardy-style review on a PowerPoint presentation to help the students in my

Level II Internship prepare for their science unit exam. It incorporates deliberation, cooperative groups, critical thinking, and student-centered learning.

Updated 3/14/09

4th evidence-

Inclusion Success Plan- This assignment was completed as a requirement of my Final Internship in Spring 2009. The Inclusion Success Plan was an activity in which I was required to design and implement a technique that would increase positive student to student interaction and ensure a positive learning environment based on the needs of the whole classroom. The evidence includes the plan, my reflection of the plan's effectiveness, pictures of the data chart and student reflections, and my Cooperating Teacher's conclusive observation of the plan.

2. How did the evidence(s) address the Accomplished Practice? (Why are you using the evidence(s) to prove you met the practice and rubric criteria?)

1st evidence-

The Classroom Management Plan specifically addresses the Accomplished Practice of Learning Environments because designing the plan requires the pre-service teacher to consider how they should arrange their classroom in a manner that promotes an effective learning environment. Prioritizing student safety starts with organizing a clutter-free classroom in which students can move freely and safely from their desks to centers and other areas of the classroom. The desks are deliberately arranged to promote cooperative learning, so that students may have the opportunity to work in partners or small groups during lessons without too much movement or interruption. Enclosed is a safety plan for daily procedures and emergencies, to ensure that all students are following directions to keep them safe. Additionally, I have addressed team building strategies and classroom rules that make students feel like they are part of a community in which each person holds themselves accountable and is expected to maintain a respectful attitude. A positive environment that promotes respectful language, problem-solving, and appropriate behavior is imperative to active engagement in learning. Emotional safety is just as important as physical safety when a classroom works together effectively. I address these themes in my plan through how I would handle at-risk and frequently absent students. Being there is half the battle for conducive learning. In my plan, students who are missing crucial opportunities for learning are given the time and resources to catch up and treated with respect and acceptance, rather than being blamed for their absence because being absent is often out of their control.

2nd evidence-

The reflection specifically addresses the Accomplished Practice of Learning Environments in that it discusses how the meeting with my supervisor helped me gain some insight into modifying my speech in a manner that is positive, considerate, and firm. She explained that I needed to make my expectations clearer by saying fifth graders raise their hands, rather than telling them that they should raise their hands like 5th graders instead of calling out like kindergarteners. It was eye-opening to hear that I had actually communicated the expectation that way because it came across as demeaning and negative. Even on our best of days, we need to recognize that effective learning begins with positive reinforcement that is firm and clear. She also instructed that I continue to utilize non-verbal cues when students are not meeting behavioral expectations. Rather than telling a student to put something away or I will take it away, it would have been better for me give the student the teacher-look and convey with my body language that the behavior was unacceptable. My University Supervisor indicated that it is always best to use body language first so as to not call out the student on their misbehavior and possibly humiliate them (or give them the attention they want) in front of the class. My supervisor was aware of the strategies I had designed in my plan and encouraged me to use them even when the situation was tense or becoming unmanageable. She noticed that perhaps students were confused about the expectations because of the rushed transition prior to the lesson, which is why they were so argumentative that day. She encouraged me to model considerate speech to my students because it creates an environment of positive social interaction. When a student is shouting at me, I need to model techniques such as telling the student: Please do not yell at me when you are upset, because I do not yell at you when I am upset. I need you to tell me what is wrong in a calm, respectful voice so that we can come to a solution. I have tried this in my classroom and have found that it creates mutual respect between the students and I.

3rd evidence- The Accomplished Practice of Learning Environments is met in this activity because I designed the Science Exam Unit Review to engage my students in learning, provided self-motivation for them to succeed, and promoted positive social interaction by assembling them in cooperative groups to complete a task. This exam review ensures an effective learning environment because my students have proven to me that they learn best in cooperative groups. They tend to be talkative and crave interaction, so I thought the best way to do a review of their unit would be for them to work together to find an answer and get the points as teams. Their task included deliberating with their team members to settle on an answer. Deliberation is a great-problem solving technique that forces the students to effectively weigh opposing views without fear of being criticized.

Updated 3/14/09

4th evidence- The Accomplished Practice of Learning Environments is met with the Inclusion Success Plan because I was required to design and implement a technique that would increase positive student to student interaction and ensure a positive learning environment based on the needs of the whole classroom. I spent six weeks teaching students how to speak and act respectfully by utilizing role-playing examples and non-examples, team-building strategies, and modeling how to engage one another in respectful ways. After observing student to student interaction and the classroom environment as a whole for the first week, I determined that students needed a crash course in respect. During cooperative group times, most of the students were often engaging in speech and actions that were aggressive, judgmental, and hurtful. I interviewed several students during this time and asked them why they acted in a disrespectful way and they revealed that they were not friends with this person and did not want to work with them. I decided that I needed to motivate students to interact with everyone positively, not just students they liked. With the approval of my Cooperating Teacher and University Supervisor, I created this plan to help students become aware of their actions and word choices toward other students.

Another requirement of this assignment was to record data to prove the effectiveness of the plan. I decided that I would like to see the class as a whole motivated by the successes of other students. Therefore, I created a sticker chart (located on pg. 6 of the plan) so that students could visualize their success as a class. Stickers were earned when students were nominated as good role models of respect by their classmates. The nominated students were recognized individually with ribbons that had their name on them.

As a whole, students become more respectful in the course of six weeks. During our daily meetings in which we nominated students or role-played situations, I also mapped out my expectations to students in order for them to be successful. I explained that our classroom would only be successful when the environment was positive. This meant that students were forbidden to use negative insults or hurtful language to gain favor or power over another student. I structured the

environment in a way that would only allow and encourage positive student to student interaction. In my reflection of the plan, I point out that: students have begun to understand the weight of their words and actions. They look forward to our group time together each afternoon to celebrate examples of respect and use critical thinking to determine if something should be classified as respect or friendship. Often, we can classify the kind action as both since the class is learning the positive team work functions best when everyone gets along (page 2 of ISP). The reflection from my Cooperating Teacher, Ms. Aguis, also indicates that: students became more positive when interacting with one another. I (Ms. Aguis) see students more accepting of one another and reminding others to be respectful. This in turn has led to a better classroom environment. (page 3 of ISP). Therefore, the plan was effective because the whole classroom atmosphere has improved. The quality of work done by groups is much better. Students are more engaged in completing their tasks instead of bickering over who they are forced to work with. The way they interact with one another is encouraging and empathetic to each other's needs. Students have begun encouraging one another to succeed and do their best when they feel like giving up, as opposed to chastising that person for being lazy and annoying.

3. Answer the question below that best fits your evidence

a - If your evidence involved your direct work with (P-12) students, answer this question: How did the evidence/s impact students' (P-12) learning? (How would/did the evidence(s) help students learn?)

b - If your evidence did not involve your direct work with (P-12) student, answer this question: How could the evidence/s impact students' (P-12) learning? How could the evidence(s) help (P-12) students learn?)

a- The Classroom Management Plan involved direct work with fourth and fifth grade students during my Level II internship. Based on my plan, I developed a variety of techniques to keep students on-task, engaged, and motivated. For example, when I arrived in the classroom at the beginning of the semester the students were used to being punished for their misbehavior. They would receive checks in their planners and lose recess time if they were behaving in a manner that was unacceptable. I feel that punishment fosters negativity and shame. In my plan, I use a series of problem-solving techniques that deal with escalating responses to misbehavior. First, I start with non-verbal reminders such as eye-contact. This gives the student a chance to self-monitor their behavior. Then, I issue a request to correct the misbehavior by giving the students a choice, such as: We are at center time. You have the choice to continue your work quietly at your desk if you cannot keep your voice at a suitable level. If the students cannot correct the behavior, they are asked to take a break from the situation to come up with a better solution.

Also, I asked my cooperating teacher if I could try an incentive plan to motivate students to behave appropriately. On page 19 of my classroom management plan, I talk about catching students on task and rewarding them with a chance to receive a ticket, redeemable twice a week, to pick a prize such as pencils or stickers from the treasure box. Students are used to being caught misbehaving, so I thought that if I caught them doing what they were supposed to that they would see the value in staying on-task and following directions. I feel that this told my students that I valued and appreciated their attempts to behave appropriately and respectfully. Additionally, I would give specific praise to students as I gave out each ticket, such as: I really appreciate that Dylan is sitting quietly with his book open to page 256. This would motivate the other students to model his behavior and become engaged in what we were doing. I also employed a variety of positive verbal and non-verbal techniques to keep students engaged and focused. For example, if I noticed the class needed to refocus I would say: If you can hear my voice, do this (touch your nose, point to me, etc). This forces the whole class to pay attention to the teacher and wait quietly for the next set of directions.

a-This reflection assignment involved direct work with the fourth and fifth graders in my Level II internship classroom. The reflection forced me to take a hard look at which communication strategies were working and which ones were not so that that I may better plan for conveying information, ideas, and expectations in a manner that is appropriate and positive for my students. Luckily for me, my supervisor was there on a day when things just did not work. Following the meeting with my supervisor, I took her advice and regrouped. Now, I remember to begin with non-verbal strategies such as eye contact, physical proximity, and body language. When students do not correct their behavior, I then issue the verbal reminder of 5th graders wait and listen for directions, 5th graders raise their hand when they have a comment to make, etc. I found that this is a far less confrontational way of reminding my students of the expectations while not singling any one student out. It has saved me a lot of trouble because they instantly know what they are supposed to be doing, while I maintain my cool and continue with the lesson. For example, when a student is being disruptive such as throwing an eraser up in the air as I am talking, I simply stand next to her and wait for her to discontinue the misbehavior. If she does not stop, I remind her that we are working at this time and she needs to put her eraser away in her desk and use it appropriately. This communicates to the student that she has to make the choice, rather than I make the choice for her by confiscating the eraser. This also keeps interruptions to a minimum and keeps the flow of the lesson going. Furthermore, modeling to students that I am calm and accepting will let them know that they can come to me with their complaints or disagreements in a manner that is acceptable and respectful. This mutual respect between all of us in the classroom creates a positive environment that is conducive to learning because it allows us to interact with one another in a way that shows that we understand that while we have disagreements, it is never acceptable to shout or use language that is disrespectful.

a-This review involved direct work with my 4th/5th grade Level II internship class. I designed and planned this review with them in mind because they love to work together in groups. However, they needed some assistance with team-building strategies, so I emphasized that they must speak respectfully to their team members even if they do not agree. During the review, I would model for them what was acceptable behavior such as telling someone: I don't agree with your answer because (reason). I explained that in deliberation, you do not tell someone they are wrong. You try to come up with an agreement based on evidence. This activated their learning because they had to use their resources and work together for a common goal. Additionally, it created a comfortable, enjoyable, and positive environment in which to practice the skills and knowledge they had gained over the last six weeks. The beauty of this review is that students were actively engaged at least 95% of the time because they only had 30 seconds to deliberate each question. They paid close attention when I read the question and tried to come to an agreeable solution as soon as possible. Keeping students engaged and interested is the number one way to reduce misbehavior. If students are focused on a task, it is more difficult for them to stray from the learning. To downplay the competitive aspect of the game, after deliberation I did what was called 1-2-3 showdown in which each team had a chance to show their answer at the same time. Each team who found the right answer received the points, rather than the team who got it first. I feel that activity fostered an environment that emphasized the importance of learning rather than the importance of how quickly you got the answer. Each answer was valued and important. I feel that this activity strengthened their ability to work together as a community in which all views and voices are heard and appreciated.

Updated 3/14/09

a- The Inclusion Success Plan involved direct work with 3rd graders in my Final Internship. It impacted student learning because, prior to the implementation of the plan, students did not have the skills to treat each other with respect and empathy. I specifically set up this plan to ensure an effective learning environment. This inability to work cooperatively negatively influenced their learning time. Group work was often incomplete or not up to par because so much time was spent arguing and insulting one another. When students indicated that they could not work with someone who was not their friend, I knew that the tremendous barrier to the success of the class was their lack of respect to each other. We spent six weeks developing a definition for respect. Students agreed that respect was treating someone how you want to be treated, however they did not understand that someone meant EVERYONE. At first, students were averse to working with someone they did not like because it forced them out of their comfort zone. I explained that throughout their lives as students and then someday future employees of a business or institution, they would be required to work with people they did not know or did not always agree with because they were a part of a team. I emphasized the importance of these skills by having them role-play situations in which they would have to work together to accomplish a common goal, whether it was dividing responsibilities for a project or playing on a sports team. Every afternoon, students and I gathered on the carpet to reward each other for being role models of respect by awarding the respectful individuals with a ribbon. For each ribbon earned, the class earned a sticker on the respect chart. Our common goal as a team was to beat our previous week's ribbon earning and increase it. The best part of this project was that students learned to give one another specific praise. Some of my favorite examples included: During reading block when I asked to read the passage aloud, Mia didn't roll her eyes at me like she usually does. Donovan said excuse me instead of pushing Kaitlyn out of the way. Kevin encouraged Alyssa to keep trying even though the math problem was really hard. Alonzo always lets Shelya sit next to him when everyone else says they saved their seat for somebody else. These student comments really touched me. It showed me that they had begun to show empathy toward one another, toward students they normally refused to interact with. This impacted their learning because after six weeks of a crash course in respect, they had developed the tools to work successfully with one another. In our culminating activity, students reflected on what they had learned about respect. They were asked to respond to four questions: what is respect, a time I showed respect, a thank you to someone who showed me respect, and how it feels to be respected. Student responses (page 6 of ISP) indicated a great deal of learning and insight. They recognized what it meant to respect and be respected. This activity increased the quality of student work and the effectiveness of our learning times. Much less time was spent remediating conflict during lessons because students became aware of what they were saying and doing to one another. Implementing this activity made the classroom environment effective because students learned to positively interact with one another.

4. Reflect on what you learned about this Accomplished Practice? (Write a reflection about what it means to you now that you've selected evidence(s) and have written this annotation about it)

I learned that creating a positive environment that uses specific praise encourages students to behave safely and respectfully to their classmates and their teacher. Punishment creates an environment of negativity. When students lose something for their misbehavior, it shames them instead of correcting their behavior. I believe that the classroom should be a place for learning, not a place for power struggles. If students feel like they can behave and be appreciated for it, they are more likely to feel safe and comfortable in my presence and more willing to take risks in learning because they know they are safe. While every classroom has its day, it is important for me to remain calm, proactive, and positive in my daily dealings with my students.

I have learned through the meeting with my supervisor that a welcoming environment begins with a teacher who is calm, collected, and firm so that student emotions or attitudes do not escalate. I have taken her directions seriously and have found my classroom to be a more constructive place. Now when disagreements take place, I listen to the students respectfully and ask them what they think we should do to fix the situation. This shows that we are a community of learners with each of our voices valued and respected. I feel that this learning experience makes both myself and the students better problem-solvers. These skills are essential to respectful conflict resolution, which is helpful to me as a teacher and to the students as they grow as learners and people.

I have learned that modeling team-building strategies and then implementing them with your class is the most successful way to have them work together in cooperative groups. You have to know your students' needs and my students are particularly talkative. So to meet their need for interaction and my need for order I give them a task to complete as a group. This keeps the learning focused on the task at hand and still gives the students a chance to bounce ideas off of one another in an accepting, positive, risk-free way. When I become a teacher, I will take the skills I have learned from working with the students in my Level II internship and create an environment in which students feel free to be the best people they can be. This can only happen when a teacher provides learning that is meaningful. Then, the students will respond with respect, engagement, and the motivation to succeed.

Updated 3/14/09

The completion of the Inclusion Success Plan taught me that in order to have an effective learning environment, positive student to student interaction is paramount. Giving students the tools to succeed does not just include teaching them how to read, write, and solve math problems. Let's face it; no learning is done in isolation anymore. Therefore, students must learn how to engage in cooperative learning to succeed not only in school, but in society. In order to ensure that this is taking place, my students needed guidance to learn how to speak and interact with one another. I feel pointing students in the right direction has helped me grow as a teacher. I learned that I am capable of structuring an environment that promotes empathy and respect toward one another. I was merely the facilitator of respect. I did not allow myself to step in to disagreements unless students needed guidance on how to solve their problem. This helped me recognize that even children can learn to overcome petty bickering and power struggles. My hope is that each and every one of them can utilize these skills as adults and make our society a more empathetic one.

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