

## LEARNING ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT

This form is to be completed by professional staff other than the classroom teacher.

<b>Student's Name:</b> N/A	<b>Date of Examination:</b> 11/8
<b>Student's ID:</b> N/A (6 <sup>th</sup> grade)	<b>Date of Birth:</b> N/A <b>Age:</b> N/A
<b>Observer:</b> Liza Raino-Ogden	<b>Title:</b> Student Teacher
<b>Time of Day:</b> 10:00 am	<b>Length of Observation:</b> 50 min
<b>School:</b> West Park Academy	<b>District:</b> 299
<b>Type of Room:</b> <u>Special Ed Resource Room</u>	<b>Subject:</b> <u>Math</u>

**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT:** (Describe lighting, number of students, seating and room arrangement, etc.)

The classroom is lit completely with fluorescent lights. Though there are three large windows, the shades are drawn completely at all times. There are six large desks in the room with one student sitting at each desk (the class ranges from three to six students at a time during different periods). The chairs are the standard blue ones, with no alternative seating available. The desks face the center of the classroom, so that half the class faces the drawn windows and half the class faces the wall with the door. The projector lies to one side of the students, and another large whiteboard lies to the other side of the students. The majority of one whiteboard is taken up with a large multiplication chart, with another multiplication chart on the other wall as well. There is not a significant amount of space left for work on the whiteboard, so most work is done in their notebooks or sheets of paper and via the projector.

On the back wall there are cubbies that are filled with storage boxes and various supplies, though they are not clearly labeled. On the wall beneath the windows there is a collection of different books, calculators, some math manipulatives, and various supplies. Another wall houses the technology corner where about ten Chromebooks are plugged in to charge. The teacher's desk is filled with different papers and collections of spare school supplies. Overall, there is a lot of stimulating material in the classroom, but it is not overly well organized.

**ACTIVITY IN PROGRESS:**

The students have been given differing amounts of Unifix cubes and are being asked to group them evenly, so that each student in the class would have the same amount of cubes. Students are then asked to represent their work with drawings and numbers. Lastly, students share their conclusions with the class, and remainders are discussed.

**INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS USED:** (Textbooks, worksheets, computer, etc.)

- Unifix cubes
- Pencil and paper
- Computer projector (shows on the screen what is written below)

**MODE OF INSTRUCTION:** (Directions, questions, modeling, prompting, demonstration)

Students were given initial instructions on the task but were then asked to work independently to solve the problem. The teacher and student teacher rotated amongst the students, prompting them when they became stuck, but also probing to check their understanding of the math that was happening. One-on-one instruction was provided to students who were lost. Once students had come to their own conclusions, they were asked to share their problems with the class. The teacher then demonstrated the division that they had performed and encouraged students to copy down the computations he wrote on the board on their sheet of paper (very few students had math notebooks).

**SUPPORT PERSONNEL PRESENT:** (Teacher aide, parent, volunteer, etc.)

Student teacher (myself) was present to aide students in their math problems. Student teacher rotated among students, encouraging them to talk with one another about how they solved the problem and checking in with everyone to ensure they weren't becoming stuck.

#### CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES UTILIZED: (Tokens, positive verbalizations, activities and privileges)

In class, there is a board towards the front with all students' names. Initially, students had been given push pins as points for every class where they had positive behavior (anywhere from one to two pins was awarded). Pins could be turned in periodically for prizes, such as snacks or small toys. However, after a few weeks, pins were swapped out for stickers, as students school-wide had been stealing pins and poking others with them. Certain classes were also given the opportunity to combine all pins/stickers in return for a pizza party.

Additionally, Mr. Perez often gives positive praise for students who are participating, and lightly teases those who are having trouble getting started. The relationships he's worked to build over the course of the year can be clearly seen as the students are (sometimes a bit grudgingly) respectful. Additionally, some students who have shown consistent positive behavior in class are given special privileges: one girl happily is allowed to Windex and wipe the tables at the start of each class while another leads them in a "calm classroom" exercise. Finally, on one particular Friday, Mr. Perez had brought in candy and allowed his classes who had shown positive behavior to participate in a candy-earning math competition (students played against themselves). Even in middle school, candy was a huge (and effective) motivator.

#### LEVELS OF INTERACTION:

The students and teacher have a familiar relationship. He jokes with them as they walk in the door, teasing them with statements such as, "it's taking her a long time because she's writing the numbers in Spanish." The locus of control seems to lie somewhere in the middle of students and teacher. The students are encouraged to voice their thoughts when appropriate; often hands are not required to be raised, but answers could be shared as they are considered. This is likely due to the fact that there are no more than six students at any one time. Once the learning begins in earnest, however, the locus of control shifts more towards the teacher, as he ensures that the environment stays one in which all students can learn and be heard. He also gives equal power to any student teacher or aide in the room, ensuring that students know that they are there to help with instructional matters, but also to help them stay focused and safe.

While he often allows students to be more in control, one thing that I noticed was the lack of group work. Students would laugh in class together, but Mr. Perez did not allow for small group collaboration, choosing to have students either work all together or independently. He would instead roam about the room, helping students solve problems as needed. Most of his interactions with students were positive, save from the two "trouble-makers" in his last class. He uses jokes and sarcasm to lighten the mood with his students, which they respond well to, on the whole. When he does need to be strict, as in the fire drill episode, he still ensure that his students know *why* he is being hard on them.

#### DESCRIBE THE STUDENT'S STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES AS REPORTED BY THE CLASSROOM TEACHER:

The first time I arrived, the teacher informed me that there were two students in his last class of the day that had behavior problems. When one of those students arrived for the day, the teacher made him walk in the room about five times before he deemed his entrance respectful enough (the student had been flipping a water bottle or chuckling as he walked in and out of the classroom multiple times). No strengths were mentioned for either of these "problem students," but their behavior was focused on. He did mention that other classes held model students whom he'd named "The Three Musketeers," as they always worked hard to complete their work.

Liza Raino-Ogden

(signature of observer)