

# Placing teachers in urban classrooms... Are they prepared?

Linda M. Gresik, Ed. D.  
Assistant Professor  
Teacher Education  
Los Angeles Learning Center  
National University

## Three main ideas that must be in place for positive instruction.

- Quality teaching strategies in a curriculum that engages students.
- Organizational skills with continuous teacher planning and support.
- School-wide systems that support individual teachers including the climate and culture of the school.

## Research to support three premises.

- “Having an engaging curriculum is one of the first things that a teacher wants to do in order to avoid management problems. If you don’t have something the children are interested in, you’re going to have behavior difficulties.”  
Rheta DeVries
- Additional components: students state of mind, teacher state of mind, instruction.

## More to offer students...

- A strong well planned lesson that has enough work to fill a class period from bell to bell can go a long way toward keeping students involved. Landsman, Moore, and Simmons
- This includes a clear connection to the real world. Students must believe or understand that it is relevant.

# Turning on the Lights (Mark Prensky)

- Compared with student's technology-infused lives outside of school, the traditional classroom is a somber place.
- Covering the material and preparing kids for the text is not preparing them for the future.
- Considering the staggering turnover of new teachers in urban schools, it is in everyone's interest to help teacher find joy in their work.

(Steven Wolk)

# Engaging Students

- Relevance
- Respect
- Reward
- Understand the relationship to the “real” world
- What is in it for them?
- How will it help them in the future?

# From Educational Leadership Perspectives Learning: Whose Job Is It?

(ASCD November 2008)

- Statistics show that students drop out more from boredom than from failure.
- Students are less likely to drop out when they are organized into small groups. The goal is to instill ownership of learning.
- “We must balance freedom with responsibility if we are to encourage the self-directed learners that the modern world demands.” Scherer, 2008

## *Differentiate Instruction*

- Students become focused, motivated, and independent learners.
- Teacher must know students and the content goals.
- Students must believe teachers are on their side.
- The teaching and learning must match.

Tomlinson, 2008 in ASCD



# Vignettes from Students

- What Students Want from Teachers ASCD, November 2008.
- EL online For more student responses, go to this month's *Educational Leadership* at [www.ascd.org/el](http://www.ascd.org/el)

# Worth the Work

- Providing students a say in what happens to them as learners is hard work, especially if teacher face curriculums that require a prescribed course of study or rigid script.
- The more alternatives we give students for participating in their own learning, the more engaged they become. Vkoun, Bigelow, 2008 in ASCD
- When student work calumniates in a genuine product for an authentic audience, it makes a world of difference. Levy, 2008 in ASCD

## ***The Art and Science of Teaching by Marzano***

- What will I do today to engage students, including the use of games and simulations, low-stakes competition, physical movement, friendly controversy, unusual information, and opportunities for students to relate new content to their own lives?
- What will I do today to establish or maintain classroom rules and procedures?
- Eight more ways...

# More from Marzano for Principals

- Teachers need to read and discuss professional literature.
- Develop a common language and model of instruction. What does good teaching look like?
- Observe other teachers and pair up with a master teacher. (High trust level is needed.)

## What can be accomplished at the University level?

- Talk about the need for total planning and organization.
- Demonstrate or model quality teaching strategies such as cooperative learning.
- Read and discuss the research.
- Define “rigor” and high expectations.
- Provide real opportunities for open discussions about classroom management.

# What else can the University do?

- Acknowledge the complexities of urban teaching.
- Support student teachers or interns as they progress.
- Communicate with districts and individual schools as to what they need.
- Be aware of the latest research.

## More from the University level...

- Make sure the classes use the State Standards.
- Classes should address the issues of English learners.
- Classes should address the issues of Special Needs students.
- Classes should have a management component.
- Technology must be included!!!

# Reflection

- Take one of the post cards and put your name and address on it.
- Write yourself a note as to what you want to go back and implement, how you are going to accomplish it and in what time frame?
- How will it improve instruction?
- OR...just write yourself a positive note  
...Thank you!





**Thank you for attending this session.**



- [lgresik@nu.edu](mailto:lgresik@nu.edu)
- 310 662-2057
- National University  
5245 Pacific Concourse Drive  
Los Angeles, CA 90045