

## **CEC Assessment #7: Additional Assessment** **Classroom Structure Project (SPED 310)**

### **a. A brief description of the assessment and its use in the program.**

The Classroom Structure Project is completed during SPED 310, the second special education course taken by all undergraduate and graduate teacher candidates in the M. Ed in Special Education: Early Childhood Special Education. In the M. Ed. program, this course is considered a prerequisite for admission. The Classroom Structure Project provides teacher candidates a means to demonstrate an understanding of the learning environments within their 30 hour practicum placement. The Classroom Structure project is an analysis of the learning environment, inclusive of school, teacher, classroom and students. Supports for all students (with and without special needs) in the classroom are analyzed with considerable attention given to supports that assist in positive behavior and student learning. The skills and knowledge demonstrated in the Classroom Structure Project are extended in subsequent methods courses specific to infants and preschool children (SPED 515 and 516).

### **b. A description of how this assessment aligns with CEC Standards.**

The classroom structure project relates directly to the following CEC Standards:

#### **CEC Standard #3: Individual Learning Differences.**

The Classroom Structure Project requires an analysis of the individual learning differences (ILD) of the students in the teacher candidate's assigned practicum classroom. Throughout their 30 hour practicum, teacher candidates gather information, develop the Classroom Structure Project, and are assessed using rubric components that evaluate their knowledge of ILD as follows:

Teacher candidates research the characteristics of the school, observe and interact with students, have discussions with the practicum teacher, read through accessible educational information (IEPs, student work, grade books, team reports; ICC3K1, ICC3K5, ICC3K1-3). They describe students in terms of their academic functioning, linguistic difference, disability, personal and social skills, racial, ethnic and socioeconomic considerations, and unique individual characteristics. Teacher candidates develop a Positive Reinforcement System specific to four students and identify the effect on the target behaviors. These aspects of the standard are assessed under rubric sections: Knowledge of School, Settings and Students, Positive Reinforcement. Teacher candidates analyze the cultural diversity of the classroom and school. They describe any impact the cultural diversity has on the group composition of the classroom.

#### **CEC Standard #5: Learning Environments and Social Interactions.**

Teacher candidates analyze the school and classroom structure in terms of special arrangements and positive behavioral support for all students (ICC5K1-K7). Practicum classrooms are inclusive classrooms with both general education and special education supports in one classroom. Teacher candidates align the existing structure with the learning characteristics of the students (academic performance and diversity of the student population) and identify changes that may better meet student needs (ICC5K8, ICC5K7, ICC5K2-K5).

Teacher candidates identify the supports available to allow student understanding of their behavioral responsibilities and the structure of the school day. Teacher candidates identify changes in the current classroom that may better match the learning, culture, linguistic and social needs of the students in the class (ICC5S1-S7).

Teacher candidates develop a positive reinforcement system inclusive of identified behaviors, procedures, reinforcers, and timing to support student learning. Teacher candidates identify the effect on student learning achieved through this system. (ICC5S3-S5 and ICC5S11).

### **c. Brief analysis of data findings.**

Fall 2008: At the onset of the program's data collection system, data on overall performance on the Classroom Structure Project were collected. These data did not allow for analysis of teacher candidate by program but rather course data as a whole. Data from this time period indicated that over 94 percent of students either achieved or exceeded the minimum standard.

Spring 2009-Fall 2009: In Spring 2009, data were collected on the Classroom Structure Project by teacher candidate academic concentration. In the Spring 2009 and Fall 2009, data for teacher candidates in the M.Ed. Early Childhood program were separated from class data. Of the seven candidates, 30% achieved at the “Acceptable” level and 70% achieved at the higher “Target” level.

Further analysis of the data indicate that although all students over the past two semesters met standard on CEC #3 and CEC #5, the breakdown of performance within the standards can be summarized as:

**Teacher candidates met CEC Standard #3 (Individual Learning Differences)** as demonstrated by their knowledge in:

Knowledge of School	(100% met standard or higher)
Setting and Students	(100% met standard or higher)
Positive Reinforcement	(100% met standard or higher)
Group Composition	(100% met standard or higher)

**Teacher candidates met CEC Standard #5 (Learning Environments and Social Interaction)** as demonstrated by their knowledge in:

Spatial Arrangements	(100% met standard or higher)
Temporal Arrangements	(100% met standard or higher)
Rules	(100% met standard or higher)
Positive Reinforcement	(100% met standard or higher)
Group Composition	(100% met standard or higher)

**d. An interpretation of hoe data provide evidence of meeting standards.**

The structure project in this course requires students to demonstrate knowledge of factors that influence prosocial and problematic behaviors in children. Through an analysis of classroom observations, teacher interviews, and document analyses, students demonstrate an understanding of universal, positive behavior expectations, physical arrangement of a classroom and its influence on behavior, individual behavior plans, behavioral self-regulation and emotions management skills, social skills groups, and strategies for moving children from extrinsic to intrinsic levels of reinforcement. CEC Standards that map onto these skills include 3 (Learning Differences) and 5 (Learning Environments and Social Interaction).

# CEC Assessment #7

## Guidelines for the Classroom Structure Project

### Purpose

Behavior that signifies students' social and academic learning is the focus of this project. Prospective special educators learn about, describe, and come to understand factors in the social context of the special and general education settings that influence student behavior and consequently their social and academic learning. They identify situational factors that adversely affect students' learning. Prospective special educators propose an alternative design of classroom factors and develop an evaluation process for determining the effectiveness of their redesign.

### Standards

The classroom structure project relates most directly to the following Council for Exceptional Children and Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standard and Indicators:

#### **CEC Standard #3: Individual Learning Differences.**

Special educators understand the effects that an exceptional condition<sup>2/</sup> can have on an individual's learning in school and throughout life. Special educators understand that the beliefs, traditions, and values across and within cultures can affect relationships among and between students, their families, and the school community. Moreover, special educators are active and resourceful in seeking to understand how primary language, culture, and familial backgrounds interact with the individual's exceptional condition to impact the individual's academic and social abilities, attitudes, values, interests, and career options. The understanding of these learning differences and their possible interactions provides the foundation upon which special educators individualize instruction to provide meaningful and challenging learning for individuals with ELN.

#### **CEC Standard #5: Learning Environments and Social Interactions**

Special educators actively create learning environments for individuals with ELN that foster cultural understanding, safety and emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and active engagement of individuals with ELN. In addition, special educators foster environments in which diversity is valued and individuals are taught to live harmoniously and productively in a culturally diverse world. Special educators shape environments to encourage the independence, self-motivation, self-direction, personal empowerment, and self-advocacy of individuals with ELN. Special educators help their general education colleagues integrate individuals with ELN in regular environments and engage them in meaningful learning activities and interactions. Special educators use direct motivational and instructional interventions with individuals with ELN to teach them to respond effectively to current expectations. When necessary, special educators can safely intervene with individuals with ELN in crisis. Special educators coordinate all these efforts and provide guidance and direction to paraeducators and others, such as classroom volunteers and tutors.

#### **RIBTS Standard 1:**

- Teachers create learning experience using a broad base of general knowledge that reflects an understanding of the nature of the world in which we live
- Teachers use a broad knowledge base to create interdisciplinary learning experiences (1.2).

#### **RIBTS Standard 3:**

- Teachers create instructional opportunities that reflect an understanding of how children learn and develop.
- Teachers understand how students learn – how students construct knowledge, acquire skills, develop habits of mind, and acquire positive dispositions toward learning (3.1).

#### **RIBTS Standard 6:**

- Teachers create a learning environment that encourages appropriate standards of behavior, positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
- Teachers use principles of effective classroom management to establish classrooms in which clear rules and standards of behavior are maintained (6.1).
- Teachers establish a safe and secure environment (6.2).
- Teachers organize and allocate the resources of materials and physical space to support active engagement of students (6.3).
- Teachers provide and structure the time necessary to explore important concepts and ideas (6.4).
- Teachers help students establish a classroom environment characterized by mutual respect and intellectual risk taking (6.5).

## **Product**

In the classroom structure project, candidates describe the following features of the special education setting in which they are doing their assigned practicum field work:

**Knowledge of the School:** Teacher candidates must describe the make-up of the school and the influences (cultural, linguistic, learning needs, academic performance, and number of teachers) on student learning.

**Setting and Students:** Teacher candidates identify four students within their assigned practicum classroom. Each student is comprehensively described incorporating a full analysis of the seven areas of that may influence learning and social skills: 1. chronological age, 2. gender, and 3. disability condition, 4. level of academic functioning, 5. racial, ethnic, linguistic and socioeconomic status of the students, 6. personal and social skills, and 7. unique individual characteristics.

**Spatial Arrangement:** Teacher candidates describe the arrangement of the physical environment, identifying the factors that can affect student behavior and learning. Areas of strength and changes that may have a positive effect should be identified with a detailed rationale.

**Temporal Arrangement:** Teacher candidates describe the classroom schedule. Thoughtful descriptions of the student learning needs to the system of schedule communication should be addressed (i.e. is the schedule presented in a way that the students in the class use/understand?). Scheduling and time allocations which facilitate student learning should be addressed. Areas of change and Areas of strength in these areas should be noted.

**Rules:** Teacher candidates describe the positive support strategies employed within the classroom. Consistency of implementation, positive approach, use of data to identify effect of strategies, implementation of whole-school positive behavioral support strategies should also be addressed.

**Positive Reinforcement System:** Teacher candidates develop a positive reinforcement system inclusive of identified behaviors, procedures, reinforcers, and timing to support student learning. The reinforcement system must align with student learning, behavior, linguistic, and cultural needs. Teacher candidates identify the effect on student learning achieved through this system.

**Group Composition/Group Process:** The influences of classroom features on student learning and behavior are indicated. Recommendations for redesigning the special education setting so as to maximize student academic and social learning are presented.

**CEC Assessment #7**  
**Classroom Structure Project Rubric**  
**CEC Standard 3: ILD, CEC Standard 5: Learning Environments and Social Interaction**

	<b>Target (4)</b>	<b>Acceptable (3)</b>	<b>Developing (2)</b>	<b>Unacceptable (1)</b>
<b>Knowledge of School</b>  <b>(3 points)</b>  <b>(CEC 3)</b>	Describes in detail with full understanding of the school setting each of the following: 1. number of students, 2. racial, ethnic, linguistic and socioeconomic status of student population, 3. number of teachers, 4. academic performance of the school, and 5. number of students receiving special education services.	Describes in detail with adequate understanding of the school setting each of the following: 1. number of students, 2. racial, ethnic, linguistic and socioeconomic status of student population, 3. number of teachers, 4. academic performance of school, and 5. number of students receiving special education services.	Describes in limited terms the school setting inclusive of minimally three of the following: 1. number of students, 2. racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic status of student population, 3. number of teachers, 4. academic performance of school, and 5. number of students receiving special education services.	Describes in limited terms less than three of the following: 1. number of students, 2. racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic status of student population, 3. number of teachers, 4. academic performance of school, and 5. number of students receiving special education services.
<b>Setting and Students</b>  <b>(4 points)</b>  <b>(CEC 3)</b>	The specific setting and four students are comprehensively described inclusive of: 1. chronological age, 2. gender, 3. disability condition, 4. level of academic functioning, 5. racial, ethnic, linguistic and socioeconomic status of the students 6. personal and social skills, and 7. unique individual characteristics.	The specific setting and four students are adequately described inclusive of: 1. chronological age, 2. gender, 3. disability condition, 4. level of academic functioning, 5. racial, ethnic, linguistic and socioeconomic status 6. personal and social skills, and 7. unique individual characteristics.	The specific setting and four students are minimally described inclusive of: 1. chronological age, 2. gender, 3. disability condition, 4. level of academic functioning, 5. racial, ethnic, linguistic and socioeconomic status of the students, 6. personal and social skills, and 7. unique individual characteristics.	The specific setting and four or less students are described in broad general terms.

	<b>Target (4)</b>	<b>Acceptable (3)</b>	<b>Developing (2)</b>	<b>Unacceptable (1)</b>
<b>Spatial Arrangements</b>  <b>(4 points)</b>  <b>(CEC 5)</b>	<p>The physical structure of the room is comprehensively described inclusive of each of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. location of desks and student assignment to desks,</li> <li>2. learning centers,</li> <li>3. recreation centers,</li> <li>4. room dividers,</li> <li>5. study carrels,</li> <li>6. storage areas,</li> <li>7. windows,</li> <li>8. other distinctive features,</li> <li>9. mobility patterns for students, and</li> <li>10. task cards and work completed folders if used.</li> </ol> <p>A detailed floor plan is provided. The physical environment is thoughtfully reviewed in terms of influencing behavior with reference to Chapter nine as appropriate. Aspects of the environment to be maintained and aspects to be changed are noted and a thoughtful rationale provided.</p>	<p>The physical structure of the room is adequately described inclusive of each of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. location of desks and student assignment to desks,</li> <li>2. learning centers,</li> <li>3. recreation centers,</li> <li>4. room dividers,</li> <li>5. study carrels,</li> <li>6. storage areas,</li> <li>7. windows,</li> <li>8. other distinctive features,</li> <li>9. mobility patterns for students, and</li> <li>10. task cards and work completed folders if used.</li> </ol> <p>A detailed floor plan is provided. The physical environment is reviewed in terms of influencing behavior with reference to Chapter nine as appropriate. Aspects of the environment to be maintained and aspects to be changed are noted and a rationale for each provided.</p>	<p>The physical structure of the room is minimally described inclusive of eight of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. location of desks and student assignment to desks,</li> <li>2. learning centers,</li> <li>3. recreation centers,</li> <li>4. room dividers,</li> <li>5. study carrels,</li> <li>6. storage areas,</li> <li>7. windows,</li> <li>8. other distinctive features,</li> <li>9. mobility patterns for students, and</li> <li>10. task cards and work completed folders if used.</li> </ol> <p>A simple floor plan is provided. The physical environment is reviewed in terms of influencing behavior. Aspects of the environment to be maintained and aspects to be changed are noted and a limited rationale for each provided.</p>	<p>The physical structure of the room is minimally described. Eight or less of the following is included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. location of desks and student assignment to desks,</li> <li>2. learning centers,</li> <li>3. recreation centers,</li> <li>4. room dividers,</li> <li>5. study carrels,</li> <li>6. storage areas,</li> <li>7. windows,</li> <li>8. other distinctive features,</li> <li>9. mobility patterns for students, and</li> <li>10. task cards and work completed folders if used.</li> </ol> <p>The floor plan and reflection specific to the influence of the environment on behavior and suggested changes are superficial.</p>
<b>Temporal Arrangements</b>  <b>(5 points)</b>  <b>(CEC 5)</b>	<p>Detailed copies of the daily and weekly schedules are provided. A thoughtful reflection is included inclusive of aspects of the schedule, which are appropriate, and aspects, which require change, with reference to Chapter nine as appropriate.</p>	<p>Copies of the daily and weekly schedules are provided. An adequate reflection is included inclusive of aspects of the schedule, which are appropriate, and aspects, which require change, with reference to Chapter nine as appropriate.</p>	<p>Copies of the daily and weekly schedule are provided. A limited reflection section is included inclusive of aspects of the schedule, which are appropriate, and aspects, which require change.</p>	<p>Daily and weekly schedules lack detail. Reflection section is minimal or not included.</p>
<b>Rules</b>  <b>(6 points)</b>  <b>(CEC 5)</b>	<p>A list of classroom rules is provided and thoughtfully critiqued inclusive of consideration of each of the following</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are the rules developmentally appropriate?</li> <li>2. Were the rules collaboratively developed?</li> <li>3. Are the rules few in number?</li> <li>4. Are the rules positively stated?</li> <li>5. Are the rules appropriately posted?</li> <li>6. Are the rules periodically reviewed?</li> <li>7. Is rule following behavior positively reinforced?</li> <li>8. What are the procedures when a rule is violated?</li> </ol> <p>Thoughtful suggestions, demonstrating full understanding of the rule setting process and or the rules is included. Reference to Chapter nine in the text is included.</p>	<p>A list of classroom rules is provided and adequately critiqued inclusive of consideration of each of the following</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are the rules developmentally appropriate?</li> <li>2. Were the rules collaboratively developed?</li> <li>3. Are the rules few in number?</li> <li>4. Are the rules stated positively stated?</li> <li>5. Are the rules appropriately posted?</li> <li>6. Are the rules periodically reviewed?</li> <li>7. Is rule following behavior positively reinforced?</li> <li>8. What are the procedures when a rule is violated?</li> </ol> <p>Appropriate suggestions, demonstrating full understanding of the rule setting process and or the rules is included. Reference to Chapter nine in the text is included.</p>	<p>A list of classroom rules is provided with adequate consideration of at least six of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are the rules developmentally appropriate?</li> <li>2. Were the rules collaboratively developed?</li> <li>3. Are the rules few in number?</li> <li>4. Are the rules positively stated?</li> <li>5. Are the rules appropriately posted?</li> <li>6. Are the rules periodically reviewed?</li> <li>7. Is rule following behavior positively reinforced?</li> <li>8. What are the procedures when a rule is violated?</li> </ol> <p>Suggestions for change are superficial or not provided.</p>	<p>A list of classroom rules is provided with adequate consideration of less than six of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are the rules developmentally appropriate?</li> <li>2. Were the rules collaboratively developed?</li> <li>3. Are the rules few in number?</li> <li>4. Are the rules positively stated?</li> <li>5. Are the rules appropriately posted?</li> <li>6. Are the rules periodically reviewed?</li> <li>7. Is rule following behavior positively reinforced?</li> <li>8. What are the procedures when a rule is violated?</li> </ol> <p>Suggestions for change are superficial or not provided.</p>

	<b>Target (4)</b>	<b>Acceptable (3)</b>	<b>Developing (2)</b>	<b>Unacceptable (1)</b>
<b>Positive Reinforcement System</b>  <b>(5 points)</b>  (CEC 3, 5)	The positive reinforcement system is clearly and comprehensively described including all of the following: 1. behaviors which are reinforced; 2. procedures used to elicit the behavior; 3. reinforcers provided; 4. timing and amount of reinforcer provided.	The positive reinforcement system is clearly described including the following: 1. behaviors which are reinforced; 2. procedures used to elicit the behavior; 3. reinforcers provided; 4. timing and amount of reinforcer provided.	The positive reinforcement system is partially described including some of the following: 1. behaviors which are reinforced; 2. procedures used to elicit the behavior; 3. reinforcers provided; 4. timing and amount of reinforcer provided.	The positive reinforcement system is incompletely described.
<b>Group Composition Group Process</b>  <b>(3 points)</b>  (CEC 3, 5)	The composition of the group is comprehensively described with reference to the guidelines for group composition as included in Chapter nine. The stage of group development for the group and individual students is specified. Examples demonstrating full understanding of group composition are provided. Group processes as described in chapter nine are comprehensively described inclusive of classroom examples when available. Uses of group processes within the context of the current setting are thoughtfully discussed indicating usefulness in influencing behavior within the setting.	The composition of the group is adequately described with reference to the guidelines for group composition as included in Chapter nine. The stage of group development for the group and individual students is specified. Examples demonstrating understanding of group composition are provided. Group processes as described in chapter nine are adequately described inclusive of classroom examples when available. Uses of group processes within the context of the current setting are adequately discussed indicating usefulness in influencing behavior within the setting.	The composition of the group is minimally described. Examples demonstrating understanding of group composition are provided. Group processes are minimally described inclusive of classroom examples when available. Uses of group processes within the context of the current setting are minimally discussed indicating usefulness in influencing behavior within this setting.	Group composition and group process are superficially described. Examples are inappropriate or not provided.
<b>Summary</b>  <b>(3 points)</b>  (CEC 5)	Summary section provides a comprehensive review of the physical environment, temporal arrangements, rules and group composition/process demonstrating critical thinking skills within the context of the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standard #6 and the related indicators.	Summary section provides an adequate review of the physical environment, temporal arrangements, rules and group composition/process demonstrating critical thinking skills within the context of the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standard #6 and the related indicators.	Summary section provides a limited review of the physical environment, temporal arrangements, rules and group composition/process within the context of Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standard #6 and the related indicators.	Summary section provides a superficial review of the physical environment, temporal arrangements, rules and group composition/process within the context of Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standard #6 and the related indicators.
<b>Writing Style</b>  <b>(4 points)</b>	The student's written communication effectively presents ideas in an organized fashion and free of mechanical errors (spelling, syntax, grammar, and usage).	The student's written communication effectively presents ideas in an organized fashion with a few minor mechanical errors (spelling, syntax, grammar, and usage).	The student's written communication effectively presents ideas in an organized fashion but with many mechanical errors (spelling, syntax, grammar, and usage).	The student's written communication does not present ideas in an organized fashion and demonstrates minimal competence in the proper mechanics of writing (spelling, syntax, grammar, and usage).

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_ Score \_\_\_\_\_ Percentage \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Unacceptable    \_\_\_ Developing    \_\_\_ Acceptable    \_\_\_ Target

**Data Table**  
**M.Ed. in Early Childhood Special Education**  
**Assessment #7: Classroom Structure Project**

CEC Standard	Fall 2008 n=69			Spring 2009 n=3			Fall 2009 n=4		
	U/D	A	T	U/D	A	T	U/D	A	T
Knowledge of School (CEC 3)					1 (33%)	2 (67%)		2 (50%)	2 (50%)
Setting and Students (CEC 3)						3 100%		1 (25%)	3 (75%)
Spatial Arrangements (CEC 5)					1 (33%)	2 (67%)		1 (25%)	3 (75%)
Temporal Arrangement (CEC 5)					1 (33%)	2 (67%)		2 (50%)	2 (50%)
Rules (CEC 5)						3 100%		2 (50%)	2 (50%)
Positive Reinforcement (CEC 3,5)						3 100%		1 (25%)	3 (75%)
Group Composition (CEC 3,5)					2 (67%)	1 (33%)		1 (25%)	3 (75%)
Summary (CEC 5)					1 (33%)	2 (67%)		1 (25%)	3 (75%)
Writing Style					1 (33%)	2 (67%)		1 (25%)	3 (75%)
Overall Evaluation	3 4%	20 29%	46 66%		1 (33%)	2 (67%)		1 (25%)	3 (75%)

**U=Unacceptable D=Developing A=Acceptable T=Target**