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## EDUC 345 Assignment 2: Physical Classroom Arrangement

### I) General Entry

- a) Thursday, January 29, 2008 from 8:00 - 12:45 (half-day for York County)
- b) My involvement in Mrs. Florence's first grade classroom on Thursday involved observation and small group instruction. I arrived before school and began to sketch the classroom, before any of the students arrived. As students arrived they unpacked and began their morning activities. At 8:45 the students watched the morning announcements. Next the class did their morning calendar and weather forecast routines. They grouped together on the rug to read the weekly poem and identify ch- and th- words. Finally the students broke into their guided reading groups for Language Art centers. I worked directly with the writing station, and helped the students complete an activity on penguins. After centers the students did shared reading from the basal. Then the students had lunch. When they returned, they had a short time for indoor recess. Afterwards, I worked individually with students to record stories they wrote the week before onto a Photostory presentation to upload to the class homepage. Then, I returned to the classroom and assisted students with their science worksheets on animals in the winter.

### II) Physical Arrangement

- a) See attached layout of Mrs. Florence's Classroom.
- b) One thing that is good for this classroom is that it has a lot of storage space for supplies. Each cabinet has supplies for a particular subject. Additionally, the arrangement ensures that students can easily see the board and easel during whole class instruction on the front rug. Centers can also be spread out around the room during reading time, so that the students have a particular space to work in. Finally, the drinking fountain and restroom allows the teacher to monitor students' off task behavior. One problem with the layout is that the students are not all facing the front of the classroom during instruction on the board. The classroom is also crowded by the six large tables that can ultimately seat 6 people each. Additionally, the sink and paper towels are located right next to the pencil sharpener which can lead to congestion in the back of the classroom.
- c) See alternative layout labeled Room Rearranged.

My alternative will allow students to face the front of the room without having to turn their chairs completely around. The alternative layout also places the individual desk right next to the teacher's desk, so that it is no longer close to the bathroom, sink, and pencil sharpener. This would allow the teacher to have more monitoring ability on the problem child and to ensure that he is facing forward. Additionally the teacher's desk is now at an angle that faces the classroom rather than the door. The new arrangement maximizes visual pathways for the teacher and the students. One downside to the layout is that the tables may be closer together in the alternative layout and cause traffic congestion during centers.

d) See attached layout of the Art Classroom

i) The arrangements are different in that the students do not have access to a restroom in the classroom. It is also more difficult to move around the classroom due to the enclosed U lay out of the tables. Students are expected to remain at their seats for the duration of the art class, unless they are called on to pick up supplies for the table. Supplies are doled out by table, and students must reach across the table to access cups of glue for their projects.

ii) Both classrooms have tables rather than desks for the students to sit at. They also have a lot of cabinet storage space that hinders the ability to layout the room in a different way. Both classes have teacher's desks that are placed at the back of the classroom and rarely used. Additionally, the computer cart is located at the front of the room and is used with presentations on the projection screen.

iii) The differences in the classrooms are due to the type of classroom and teaching style:

- a. The art classroom is used by students ranging from kindergarten to fifth grade whereas my practicum classroom is only used by first graders.
- b. The art classroom focuses on individual projects and activities, and the layout is aimed at allowing students to see examples and models before they begin the individual work. My practicum classroom involves a variety of activities from independent seatwork to whole group discussions on the rug.
- c. The art classroom does not seem to address individual needs of the students and although the students have assigned seats, they did not seem to get preferential seating based on needs. Within my practicum classroom, students have

preferential seating when needed, and are also assigned seats that allow them to interact with students outside of their ability levels from reading groups.

- d. The art classroom seemed very restrictive in the layout, and it was hard for students sitting on the inside of the U to get out of their seats and bring projects to the drying rack in the back of the room. Although the art teacher may want to restrict the amount of walking around that is done in the resource classroom, the layout seemed cramped and did not seem to encourage creativity.

e) (optional) Cooperating teacher information

1. Mrs. Florence has 22 students in her classroom, so the number of students impacts how many tables she has in the classroom. Typically she seats three to four students at each table. The location of the whiteboard and projector impact where whole class instruction occurs and how the students' seats are arranged.
2. The pros in the current arrangement are that the students are able to work in groups and centers that can be located at particular tables and the teacher can see students from virtually any location in the classroom. The cons are that the room has doors, cabinets, and windows that limit where the tables can be placed. Additionally, not all the students can see the front of the board from their seats, so they have to turn around during some instructions.
3. I would agree with my cooperating teacher's observations, but neither of us could decide on a better way to lay out the classroom. Although my rearrangement changes the table orientation, I am not positive that the furniture would actually fit in the classroom that way.