Creating an effective learning environment in the classroom

Profession, Teacher

As a professional teacher in the state of California, there are many expectations that are to be followed and kept up to par. These expectations are called Teacher Performance Expectations (TPE's). One very important TPE is creating an effective and efficient learning environment. This is very important for everyone in the teaching profession to create and maintain this TPE in their classroom. I am observing Mrs. S in a 4th-5th combo class at an elementary school in Denair. I observe science in the afternoon when the students come back from lunch and P. E., and I sometimes observe math in the morning's. The class consists of thirteen boys and seventeen girls. Four of Mrs. S's students are English Language Learners (ELL), who's predominate language is not English. The school's percentage of ELL learners is over twenty-five percent. One of her students, a fourth grader, —not an ELL student—is below reading level; one of her students, fifth grader, —also not an ELL learner—is at a ninth grade reading level. Mrs. S has been teaching for over fifteen years and has a lot of experience in managing a classroom. While observing her I noticed many techniques she has learned to use over the years of teaching. When the students are doing group work, Mrs. S always circulates around the room to help with spelling big science words and to make sure the class is on task. Mrs. S expects a lot out of her students and they know to respect her at all times, or they will be sent to another classroom. When teaching new things to the students, she always brings back things they have already mastered and tries to tie in more than one subject. One neat technique she uses—in order to keep the class quite, since she has to teach two grades—is in word problems for math. What Mrs. S does is has the students read the problem then show with their hand what

type of arithmetic they will use to solve the problem. If the student gets it right she nods, and if they get it wrong she has them read the problem again but closer. When timing the students for times table tests and/or quick writes she watches the clock. These techniques used by Mrs. S in her classroom usually do help in creating an effective learning environment. However, not all of her techniques work for me. Circulating around the room during group work I think is an effective tool because she is being active in the students' learning and not sitting back watching the students while they work. Demanding respect and expecting a lot out of her students I think is a necessity to having an effective learning environment, but I don't care for the way she goes about this. She is a little too harsh towards the students, even though they should know the rules by now. I don't think that sending a misbehaving student will respond well to being sent to another classroom. I think that her tool for keeping one group of students quite while the other is doing something else in math is very effective. It allows her to keep the class in order and makes the student think on their own. Timing the students just by watching the clock also is not effective, because she is timing two different tests, with a minute between the two; unfortunately a lot of the time she loses track and the class usually gets longer than they should. I don't think that this will prepare them very well for future teachers or tests that are sticklers on timing. When I go into my own classroom as a teacher, and even a student teacher, I plan to use some of these strategies. I defiantly plan to still keep active in the students learning while they are doing group work. I will expect respect from my students, but not in the way Mrs. S goes about it. During math, I will defiantly try to incorporate her silent

sign method. Over all I think Mrs. S is a very effective teacher and her students do respect and like her.