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Creating Environments of Success and Resilience

Culturally Responsive Classroom Management and More

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Creating safe and productive environments with a diverse student population requires more than the strategies recommended in the original classroom-management literature. Drawing from the literature on culturally responsive classroom management, psychologically supportive classroom environments, and building resilience, the authors describe the practices used by three effective novice teachers in urban elementary classrooms during the first 2 hours of the first day of school. The study was based on videotape and interview data that were qualitatively analyzed using an inductive approach. The novice teachers focused on developing relationships and establishing expectations through the use of "insistence" and a culturally responsive communication style. The study provides clear pictures of the ways in which teachers teach and insist on respectful behavior and establish a caring, task-focused community. As such, it demonstrates how teachers create environments of success and resilience for students who have historically floundered in school.

Keywords: *culturally responsive pedagogy; classroom community; student resilience; classroom management*

How can a student be a disengaged troublemaker in one classroom and a respectful participant in another? The connections between student engagement and classroom management have been explored for 25 years. Grounded in the seminal work of Emmer and Evertson (Emmer, Evertson, & Anderson, 1980; Evertson & Anderson, 1979; Evertson, Emmer, Sanford, & Clements, 1983), studies consistently indicate the significance

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of the practices used during the first days of school in establishing the teacher's leadership and fairness (Emmer et al., 1980) and scaffolding students' success and self-regulated behavior (Bohn, Roehrig, & Pressley, 2004). Yet novice teachers continue to identify classroom management as a major concern (e.g., Hertzog, 2002; Meister & Melnick, 2003), and in urban classrooms, up to 50% of those teachers leave the classroom within the first 3 years (Berry, Hopkins-Thompson, & Hoke, 2002).

This disturbing trend has motivated researchers to more closely look at interactions between students and teachers in diverse classrooms. Their investigation of culturally responsive classroom management (CRCM) strategies suggests that creating safe and productive environments with a diverse student population requires more than the strategies recommended in the original management literature (Brown, 2003, 2004; Thompson, 2004; Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004). This article describes the practices used by three effective novice teachers in urban elementary classrooms during the first day of school. Their practices reveal how teachers create environments of success and resilience for students who have historically floundered in school. We begin with highlights from the literatures on CRCM and building student resilience, which together provide the conceptual backdrop for the study.

CRCM

Although the construct of CRCM is new, the teaching strategies suggested by Weinstein et al. (2003, 2004) are well grounded in the literature on culturally responsive pedagogy (e.g., Corbett & Wilson, 1998; Gay, 2000; Irvine, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Weinstein and her colleagues noted that to practice CRCM teachers must (a) recognize their ethnocentrism and understand the broader sociopolitical context to understand that definitions of appropriate classroom behavior are culturally defined, (b) develop knowledge of their students' cultural backgrounds, (c) use culturally appropriate classroom-management strategies, and (d) build caring classroom communities. Hastie, Martin, and Buchannan (2006) concurred that successful use of any culturally relevant pedagogy depends on teachers' concern for the sociopolitical context and their own position within a group. In addition, teachers must recognize that students may question teachers' credibility and authority. Ladson-Billings (1995) proposed that authentic, positive social relations in a classroom are a defining characteristic of culturally relevant pedagogy in practice. Clearly, CRCM

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requires different knowledge, dispositions, and skills than are indicated in the general classroom-management literature.

CRCM makes it explicit that classroom management is grounded in teachers' judgments about appropriate behavior and that these judgments are informed by cultural assumptions. Consequently, teachers may inappropriately judge culturally defined actions as resistant. For example, Thompson (2004) noted that loudly talking, a common African American cultural characteristic, is often misinterpreted as defiance. Viewing a behavior as a manifestation of difference in culture suggests one should teach alternative behaviors. Viewing a behavior as a manifestation of defiance will most likely lead to conflict, the alienation of the student, and disruption of the learning environment. Of course, it also happens that students do resist teachers who behave in ways that students find insulting, demeaning, or unreasonable. Repairing this problem requires that teachers look at their own and their students' behavior in new ways.

To date, there has been only one direct study of CRCM (Brown, 2003, 2004). Brown conducted interviews with 13 teachers from seven U.S. cities to identify the key CRCM strategies used by effective teachers. Brown (2004) noted the significance of teachers developing a respectful, caring, personal relationship with each student. In addition, the teacher built a caring learning community where connections with and among students created a safe place to learn and an emotional climate where students could take risks, laugh, and trust one another and their teacher.

Second, Brown (2004) noted that teachers established and communicated clear, high expectations with an attitude of "no excuses." The teachers created structured, business-like learning environments and clearly established the classroom as a place for learning. Teachers who taught with assertiveness and made their expectations clear to students immediately dealt with inappropriate behavior. By assertiveness, the teachers meant that they set limits, demanded obedience, and showed they meant business. However, the teachers avoided power struggles and did not humiliate students.

Delpit (1995) validated these characteristics as hallmarks of an authoritative teacher. She described such teachers as exhibiting personal power, earning respect rather than demanding it, setting standards and pushing students to meet them, and believing all students can learn. In contrast, an authoritarian teacher is indirect in expressing expectations and expects obedience from students without justification. Students of color respond to authoritative classroom management because they expect a teacher to act with authority. If a teacher does not, the students, failing to recognize authority as being solely associated with the teacher's position, become confused and do not conform to rules or expectations.

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Delpit particularly focused on the unique characteristics that a culturally responsive authoritative teacher possesses. A teacher who is authoritative and sensitive to the cultural norms of the students holds students' attention by using the communicative style of their culture, appeals to affiliation rather than authority to maintain order, and believes it unnecessary to use coercive means to control behavior. Allowing students to vent frustrations and disagree with school- or teacher-imposed constraints builds a community that works together to find a solution acceptable to all rather than an authoritarian atmosphere of "because I said so." Delpit's descriptions add to Brown's findings by further clarifying the behaviors and attitudes of the teachers he interviewed.

The last characteristic noted by Brown (2003, 2004) is critical to the effectiveness of the others. Teachers used verbal and nonverbal communication processes that were familiar to students. The teachers used a straightforward style of speaking and incorporated cultural humor and culturally familiar patterns. Finally, the teacher's tone was kind but firm, communicating clear expectations without demeaning students.

In a related study, Ware (2006) linked actual classroom practices to the characteristics of successful African American teachers identified in the literature and found that those teachers typified the characteristics of a warm demander (Kleinfeld, 1975). Teachers approached the traditional roles of a teacher—authority figures, disciplinarians, caregivers, pedagogues—from the perspective of a warm demander. Specifically, teachers structured their classrooms with strong systems of management, built relationships that focused on each student's individual needs, held high standards and expectations, and formulated instruction based on students' culture and learning styles. Ware concluded that each of these teacher characteristics and actions was essential to student success but that the combination of culturally responsive pedagogy and the perspective of a warm demander were especially powerful for student achievement.

Brown's (2003, 2004) studies are an important first step in defining the characteristics of CRCM. However, they included no observation and do not help teachers, particularly novice teachers, "see" how teachers establish the classroom environment at the beginning of the school year. Ware's (2006) study utilized descriptive data from observations in classrooms and offered some examples of classroom-management strategies but ultimately centered on a broader picture of teacher strategies that led to student achievement. The purpose of the current study, grounded in observation and interviews and concerned specifically with the development of classroom community, is to describe the strategies used by effective novice teachers to establish CRCM during the first day of school.

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Nurturing Student Resilience: Key Protective Factors

The present study was also informed by the resilience literature. Masten, Best, and Garmezy (1990) defined resilience as the "capacity for or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (p. 425). In early resilience studies, researchers sought to define the attributes of resilient children. They found, however, that resilience is not the result of innate abilities but is instead a capacity available to all children that is bolstered by supportive factors (Bempechat, 1998; Benard, 2004).

In a comprehensive review of the literature on resilience, Benard (2004) identified four categories of overlapping strengths in children who overcome adversity: social competence, problem solving, autonomy, and sense of purpose. Social competence involves children's strengths in communication, empathy and caring, and the capacity to positively connect to others. Problem solving includes many skills connected to academic success (e.g., planning, resourcefulness, and flexibility in thinking, critical thinking skills, learning how to learn skills). Strength in the category of autonomy involves development of a positive identity (including ethnic identity), internal locus of control, and a belief in one's capacity to succeed. In fact, Bempechat (1998) reported that students' beliefs in their capacity to succeed were stronger predictors of success in school than IQ or test scores. Finally, a sense of a bright future encompasses the development of achievement motivation, educational aspirations, and optimism and hope about one's life.

Teachers and the school environment are critical protective factors for fostering resilience. Critical school factors identified by Benard (2004) and Henderson and Milstein (1996) include,

- Developing caring relationships with adults and peers (e.g., teaching social skills, establishing unconditional positive regard, creating a culture of care and respect, consistently providing care and support).
- Setting high and clear expectations for academic performance and classroom behavior (e.g., teaching cooperation and conflict resolution, consistent implementation of rules and procedures, communicating an expectation that students are capable of high level academic performance).
- Providing opportunities for meaningful participation in learning (e.g., structuring the curriculum so every child succeeds, linking the curriculum to students, validating home language, providing experiential learning, using group processes throughout the curriculum).

Once again, Delpit's work depicts the critical school factor of developing caring relationships from a culturally responsive point of view. Delpit (1995)

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claimed that effective teaching begins with the establishment of relationships between the teacher and students. Children from some cultural backgrounds, including many African American children, put more emphasis on the social and emotional environment than do mainstream children and therefore expect teachers to have and show emotion. The caveat is that the expressed emotions and demonstrations of care must be genuine, or the students will disregard the teacher's attempt to build a relationship.

The school factors identified in the resilience literature define a psychologically supportive environment (Patrick, Turner, Meyer, & Midgley, 2003). Patrick and colleagues (2003) studied 8 sixth grade teachers to distinguish among teachers who create supportive, ambiguous, or nonsupportive environments. Supportive classroom environments encompass all the critical school factors that foster resilience. In contrast, teachers who create nonsupportive environments are authoritarian, stress both teacher power and teacher control, convey low expectations, and rely on extrinsic motivation to get students to work. In ambiguous environments, teachers are sometimes supportive but fail to connect to students in a personal way. They may set high expectations but are inconsistent in demanding effort and respect and thus undercut their own efforts. The problems of many beginning teachers may be grounded in good intentions but the creation of ambiguous psychological environments.

The resilience literature helps to place CRCM strategies in a broader context. That is, the literature frames CRCM strategies as means to an end, namely bolstering the capacities that scaffold student resilience so that they will persevere in the face of challenging tasks.

Method

The study reported here is part of a larger study of the practices of effective novice teachers in urban classrooms during the first weeks of the school year. A preliminary, informal analysis independently conducted by the four researchers of 10 hours of videotape recorded in three teachers' classrooms during the first month of school indicated the significance and similarity of the practices they used during the beginning minutes of the first day. Hence, this study focuses on the teachers' practices during the critical first 2 hours of the first day of school. It was designed to be exploratory and descriptive and was based on the collection of qualitative data in the three classrooms.

Participants

Three female, novice teachers, each with fewer than 5 years of teaching experience, were selected for the study based on the first two authors'

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knowledge of their teaching practice. These authors serve as professors in residence at two K-5 elementary schools in a small city. At both schools, more than 90% of students receive free or reduced-price lunch, and more than 90% of students are African American. Two participants taught at one of these schools, and one taught at another. Based on the authors' observations in the teachers' classrooms during the previous year, they identified and invited the participation of three teachers whose classrooms were characterized by respectful interactions, a calm tone, and a clear focus on academic work. This kind of classroom climate was deemed important given our interest in describing how teachers, particularly novices, create learning environments in which African American students succeed.

All three fully credentialed teachers agreed to participate. They included one European American third grade teacher beginning her second year of teaching ("Ms. Third"), one Asian American fifth grade teacher ("Ms. Fifth") beginning her second year of teaching, and one African American second grade teacher (Ms. Second) beginning her fourth year of teaching. We deliberately selected teachers of different racial backgrounds to explore potential cultural differences in their use of strategies.

Data Collection

The study was based on videotape and interview data. Digital video recorders were used to record the first 2 hours of the first day of school. Teachers wore remote microphones, and the researchers focused the cameras on the teachers' activities. Interviews, completed later that day, were open ended, with the goal of eliciting the teachers' thoughts about the day. Researchers began the audiotaped interview with the general question, "How did things go today?" and used probing questions as needed, such as, How did you get ready? What went well? What are you concerned about? What will you do about it? Why this? Although videotaped and audiotaped data were transcribed to facilitate data analysis, videotapes were repeatedly viewed to ensure researchers' attention to nonverbal information not captured in transcriptions.

Data Analysis

Four researchers collaboratively analyzed the data. To begin the process, the two more experienced researchers each analyzed data from one teacher and generated a list of possible codes. Using an inductive approach (Hatch, 2002), we reviewed the videotape data with a general question in mind: "What is the teacher doing?" In response, we developed codes to identify what the teacher did and how she did it. For instance, "kinds of procedures"

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captured the list of classroom procedures the teachers introduced during the first 2 hours of school and "ways to teach procedures" entailed the means by which the teachers attempted to teach the procedures. The coding followed the process of domain analysis, as described by Spradley (1979, 1980). The purpose of domain analysis is to "develop a set of categories of meaning . . . that reflects relationships represented in the data" (Hatch, 2002, p. 104).

As a second step, the four researchers met to view the tape of one teacher and to discuss the codes generated and their meaning. Then each researcher analyzed data from the teacher with whom she conducted observations and interviews. (Two researchers collaborated in collecting and analyzing Ms. Third's data.)

Analysis of the interview data related to the first day of school proceeded in a similar manner. The researchers collaboratively identified codes to label topics the teachers talked about in response to general questioning. The data fell into several categories that included the importance of a respectful and caring environment, believing in students and their capacity to succeed, how to establish expectations, and concerns about the first day.

The third step in data analysis followed the independent coding of videotape and interview data. The four researchers met to discuss the data within each category or domain and to determine next steps. We recognized patterns in the data across the three classrooms and identified salient categories of data for closer analysis. The salient categories included establishing a caring and inclusive environment, establishing expectations, and using a culturally responsive style of communication. We returned to the data to seek confirming and disconfirming evidence of the salient categories. The collaborative process of data analysis, discussion, and further analysis continued and included trading data so that each of us studied at least one additional teacher.

Although the trustworthiness of a study is ultimately judged by the reader, we used several strategies to enhance trustworthiness. These include prolonged engagement, peer debriefing, data source triangulation, and member checking. Because all of the researchers had worked in the schools in one capacity or another (i.e., professor in residence, classroom teacher, student teacher), their presence was not viewed by participants as intrusive. Participants and researchers had close, friendly relationships, which facilitated the collection of credible videotape and interview data. Peer debriefing was a strength of the study because of the collaborative data-analysis process. We moved through a cycle of analysis, discussion, and further analysis until we reached agreement on the key research findings. By working back and forth between videotape and interview data, we were able to identify the consistencies and occasional inconsistencies between what teachers said and

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did. Their commentary on their practices helped us to understand what they were doing and why. Finally, the researchers' friendly relationships with the participants facilitated the process of verifying the results of analysis with them. The teachers were eager to talk about the research and in fact have participated in presentations of the findings to various audiences.

Findings

We selected teachers who varied by race to explore potential cultural differences in the strategies they used, and we clearly found cultural and stylistic differences. However, we found ourselves more intrigued by the similar underlying structures in the key tasks tackled by all three teachers. We found ample evidence to exemplify the strategies Brown (2003, 2004) identified in his interview study. However, the commonalities among the teachers demonstrated that these teachers were accomplishing more than building a respectful and task-oriented classroom community. The teachers were using CRCM strategies to establish a positive psychological environment that supported student resilience and achievement. In our findings, we focus on what the novice teachers did—develop relationships and establish expectations—and how they did these things—the use of "insistence" and a culturally responsive communication style.

Developing Relationships

The teachers communicated the importance of relationship building through their words and their deeds on the first day of school. They focused on their relationships with the students and on the students' relationships with one another. As Ms. Third, explained,

> It's important for the kids to know who I am. . . . One of the most important things in building a relationship with your students is that they have to know something about you. And if they don't . . . then they're not going to open up to let you know something about them.

The teachers also talked about why relationships are important. They explained that the students would face significant academic challenges and that, to succeed, they had to feel supported. Ms. Third explained, "If you want them to be able to work together . . . then they have to feel comfortable with each other," and they must feel confident that "we're all going to go through this together." For Ms. Fifth, relationships were important because

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they make academic work feel better for the teacher and the students. She remarked, "[You] have fun teaching . . . and your kids will come in wanting to learn more, wanting to participate and collaborate more." Developing relationships was a priority for these novice teachers because they perceived relationships to be at the core of a productive learning community.

Knowing the teacher: The significance of a "personal" approach to teaching. Each teacher introduced herself to the students in a way that communicated genuine interest in them. Although some teachers make perfunctory remarks about themselves in a formal introduction to their students, these teachers got "personal." As Ms. Second said, "I don't put on a façade. I'm just myself, and maybe they can feel the genuineness." She provided information about herself several times during the first 2 hours, often connecting that information to classroom activities. For instance, before teaching a song, she said, "One thing you're going to learn about me is that I love to sing!" Next, she drew four simple pictures of her summer activities, modeled how to report on them to the class, and in the process shared information about members of her family and things they like to do together.

In a more formal introduction activity, she showed the students a photo display she had posted in the room. She elicited smiles and giggles from students with juicy bits of information such as the fact that her husband fixes her hair and that her grandmother is almost 100 years old. After the student teacher shared her photos, Ms. Second asked the students what the two adults had in common. The students noted that both had a sister, a husband, a dad, and a mother and that both had graduated from college.

Similarly, Ms. Third and Ms. Fifth shared personal information throughout the first morning and included presentations based on visual displays that included pictures of themselves, important people in their lives, and their interests, many of which coincided with those of the students. Both included pictures of popular artists familiar to the students (e.g., Usher, Chris Rock). Ms. Third read students a book by Jamie Leigh Curtis called *I'm Going to Like Me*. As she read, she connected her personal life with the story and connected to students' feelings. For example, she shared, "I was always chosen last in PE because I'm slow, I don't run very fast. And that can feel bad. Did any of you ever feel that way?"

Just 17 minutes into the first day of school, Ms. Fifth began to tell the students about herself. As she began, a student appeared at the door. Ms. Fifth turned to her and said, with a twinkle in her eye, "Hurry up, Francis! You don't want to miss all of me!" She told the students about the schools she had attended and how she came to be a teacher. She included details and

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humor that kept the students fully engaged (e.g., "I'm a big daddy's girl. My dad is 82 years old, and the man is still kicking it like you wouldn't believe."). She also invited the students to comment on her ethnic background by saying, "What do you think my background is? Oh come on, take a guess. Hmm? Ya'll can't tell just by looking at my face? Hmm?" Finally, she wrestled out of them that she is part Vietnamese as her mother came to the United States from Vietnam. Ms. Fifth concluded her commentary by pointing out pictures of her friends at the school, as if to suggest that it is expected for people at school to be friends.

Knowing and caring about each other: Creating a safe place for learning. In addition to initiating a personal teacher–student relationship, the three teachers helped students to get to know one another. Ms. Third and Ms. Fifth both used a "favorites" worksheet to help students notice similarities and differences with others and with the teacher. Ms. Fifth had her students independently complete the worksheet, although she encouraged them to talk with one another if they needed help thinking about a particular favorite: "Sometimes if you talk to someone, [you realize], 'Yeah, I like that person, too!'" When students finished, Ms. Fifth used a transparency on the overhead projector to record their various favorites and to comment on them. Ms. Third had her students begin the favorites worksheet as they entered the classroom, but she quickly turned to an interactive scavenger hunt. Each student had a list of questions about students in the class, and the task was to talk to one another to find the answers to the questions (e.g., Who has more than four children in their family?).

Ms. Second played games to help students learn about one another. For example, she used a ball-toss game to familiarize students with one another's favorites. She selected a category, such as foods, and students were to announce their favorites when the ball was tossed to them. They also sang a name game in which students repeated one another's names as they sang a greeting. By having students draw and share four pictures of things they had done during the summer, Ms. Second encouraged students to interact with and get to know one another.

As the teachers helped students get to know one another, they also taught a core relationship lesson about the importance of respecting and being kind to one another. Ms. Second asserted, "We don't laugh at anyone in here. You can feel very secure in this classroom." Similarly, she said, "Will I allow you to tease someone or make fun of them? Someone might be having a bad hair day. Will we tease and make fun of them?" She used herself as an example when she drew her summer pictures on the board: "Do you promise not to laugh at my drawings? Are you sure? They're pretty rough."

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Ms. Fifth also took advantage of opportunities to send messages about being kind to one another. When students laughed at a peer's response to a question, Ms. Fifth said, "We never laugh at someone's response. . . . Do you want someone to laugh at you? No. I don't want you laughing at me—unless I tell a joke, of course." She also corrected herself after she voiced an opinion that she feared might hurt someone's feelings:

> I said I hope none of you like Pokemon. It's an opinion of mine, but I should be very careful when I voice my opinion because I could hurt someone's feelings. So we learn from that. See, I'm just as much human as you are. I make mistakes, too.

Building relationships and being kind to one another was a major theme during the opening of the first day. As Ms. Third explained, mutual respect was essential to "get things done." The teachers agreed that the classroom was a happier and more productive place when teacher and students knew each other and respectfully treated each other.

Establishing Expectations

A second key task was establishing expectations for student behavior and success. In establishing relationships, they helped begin to set expectations about students' relationships with and behavior toward the teacher and one another. However, here we want to focus on their efforts regarding the rules and management structures of the classroom and student orientation to academic work.

Teaching rules and procedures sets the stage for success. Some teachers begin the year with an implicit assumption that students know what appropriate behavior looks like and sounds like. Grounded in that assumption, they state their expectations and then implement consequences for violations. These teachers made no such assumption. The teachers, even Ms. Fifth, teaching children who are in their sixth year of schooling, used a variety of strategies to explicitly communicate and practice classroom rules and procedures.

Rules refer to general norms for behavior, such as be respectful, follow directions the first time they are given, be responsible for yourself, show respect for school and personal property, and work and play in a safe manner. Ms. Second and Ms. Third introduced predetermined rules, whereas Ms. Fifth developed rules with her students. Procedures were the specific

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routines for how to accomplish school tasks, such as where to put backpacks, how to line up, what to do when one wants to use the bathroom, and how to use the "take home" folder.

All three teachers introduced rules and procedures within the first 2 hours of school, but they did not complete this work. Ms. Fifth asserted that even with fifth graders it would take more than a week to establish rules and procedures: "That'll take more than just a week. It will probably take about 2 weeks, so I'm going to keep going over rules and consequences." Ms. Third and Ms. Second emphasized, "We do it over and over and over again." And all noted that reteaching occurred throughout the year when students "slip" into behavior patterns that violate their expectations.

More interesting than the fact that they all worked on establishing rules and procedures were the varied strategies they used. The teachers adhered to the often-recommended approach of making expectations explicit and concrete through using clear language, modeling desired behavior, and asking students for examples. They also provided a rationale for the rules and procedures, another frequently recommended practice. Beyond these tactics, the teachers used a variety of strategies to engage students in thinking about rules and procedures, thereby avoiding what can become for students a tedious, didactic litany of "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not." Table 1 exemplifies their strategies and provides examples of each.

It is important to recall that these strategies occurred during the first 2 hours of the first day. The teachers used additional strategies, particularly repetition or practice, during the next days. In interviews, the teachers stressed the importance of establishing clear expectations and attributed inappropriate behavior to their failure to be explicit. For instance, Ms. Second reflected, "I don't think I was specific in some of my instructions like I needed to be, especially my procedures . . . so I'll review them [tomorrow]." Of the three, Ms. Second devoted more time to establishing expectations than did the other two teachers, perhaps because she had the youngest students. Nevertheless, all three teachers emphasized expectations and repeatedly returned to them in the early days of school.

Another aspect of establishing rules and procedures was establishing consequences. Ms. Fifth's students collaborated with her to develop positive consequences for adhering to rules and negative consequences for violating them. All three teachers redirected students who failed to appropriately participate, and Ms. Second and Ms. Third delivered formal consequences for rule violations within the first 2 hours of school. The teachers' use of consequences will be discussed in a later section because they appeared to play an important role in developing an environment of success and resilience.

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Table 1
Varied Strategies for Establishing Rules and Procedures

Providing nonexamples	[Said with energy and humor] If I'm walking by and someone starts tapping, tapping on me. Oooooooo, it drives me crazy for someone to do that! You don't need to tap me; just raise your hand, and I will get to you. (Ms. Second)
Requiring demonstration	Okay, [let's pretend] we're getting ready for lunch. . . . Row two? Row one? Row four? Row three?. . . . Excellent. (Ms. Fifth)
Asking for choral response	Repeat after me! I will treat my friends like I want to be treated! (Ms. Second)
Using humor	To use the restroom, you have to raise your hand and hold your fingers like this [middle finger over the index finger]; kind of looks like you're crossing your legs [she demonstrates] 'cause you have to go! (Ms. Third)
Using "what ifs"	What about those kids who say, "You can take away my free time, I don't care." What should I do? (Ms. Fifth)

Expectations of success: Communicating that "I believe in you." An expectation for student academic success was also communicated. The teachers used formal and informal means to communicate "I believe in you," "I know you can do it," and "Keep trying even when the going gets tough."

The book Ms. Third read to her students communicated messages about perseverance in the face of challenges. In *I'm Going to Like Me*, the narrator portrays the experience of having disappointments and making mistakes, experiences that resonate with children. The narrator also portrays a resilient disposition that enables her to bounce back and try again. In introducing the book, Ms. Third said, "I'm going to read you one of my favorite books. It's something I like to read on the first day because it has an important message for all of us." Her comments reinforced the message of resilience. For instance, "Everybody makes mistakes. I make mistakes all the time. Even when you do make a mistake, you can stand tall. That's the way things will be in this class."

Ms. Second sent similar messages. After asking for reasons that they liked being themselves and telling them two reasons she liked being herself, she had them repeat after her,

> I am special because I am me.
> And there is no one just like me.
> And I'm going to be happy just being me.

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Then she said, "Whenever you feel down during the school day. . . . I want you to look up here on the wall. . . . Let's read them" [using a call-and-response format]:

> I can . . . be all I want to be.
> I can. . . reach all my goals.
> I can. . . reach for the stars.
> I can. . . do it!

In addition to formal activities that addressed the teachers' expectations of success, they communicated their expectations through their interactions with students. Note how Ms. Fifth encourages her students:

> How easy was that?! Pretty easy!
> Do you think you can? I think you can.
> When you're in my classroom, you can succeed. There's no such thing as "I can't." . . . That's what's important in my classroom—you try your best.
> I believe in you guys.

The teachers talked in the interviews about their belief in their students' capacity to succeed. Ms. Second explained,

> They learn helplessness. They learn to just give up and not to try. . . . So I try to reinforce the positive and let them know they can do it. That's exactly why I had this [poster] put up.

Ms. Fifth said,

> I believe in them. I'm going to put up signs that say, "I believe in you." . . . I'm talking on a daily basis, like every single day they hear something that makes them feel positive about themselves, to believe in themselves. . . . I'm serious when I say, "You are capable; believe in yourself."

The messages about relationships and expectations conveyed by these teachers clearly are important, yet almost all teachers say they care about students, want students to care about one another, and want their students to succeed. However, some teachers fail to communicate their messages consistently. We found that *how* the teachers accomplished these tasks was critically important. We turn next to two key ways in which the teachers developed relationships and established expectations.

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Insistence: Holding Students Accountable for Meeting Expectations

Delpit (1995), Irvine (2003), Brown (2004), and Ware (2006) characterized effective teachers of African American students as "warm demanders" who are strong yet compassionate disciplinarians. Clearly, these novice teachers exemplified that attribute. The teachers did not let students continue behavior that failed to meet the teachers' expectations for them. Teachers used two main strategies to "insist" that students meet expectations. Yet in their "insistence," they always preserved the respectful and caring connection to each student.

Respectfully but insistently repeating requests. In the opening minutes of the first day, the teachers repeated requests when the initial request did not elicit the correct response. This instantly happened when Ms. Fifth's students' response to her "good morning" was lackluster. "No, no, no, no," she admonished them, "GOOD MORNING!" A few moments later, she repeated this strategy when she received a sluggish response to a question:

> Okay, listen. If I have to be here early in the morning, you guys have to be perky for me. Can we do that? Oh, that's not a collaborative yes! In unison! All right!

Repeated requests were noted in all three classrooms. For instance, Ms. Third asked the students, "Are you ready to start?" After a few students muttered, "Yup," she exclaimed, "You can all say, 'Yes!'" Ms. Second insisted that all of her students respond to her by saying, "I don't hear everyone!" Also, after asking all students to raise their hands, she noted, "Oooooo, I see two people who don't have hands!" (spoken with humor, not sarcasm), thereby prompting the desired behavior.

Requests were repeated to the whole class and to individuals. Sometimes this was done privately, as when Ms. Fifth whispered in a child's ear, "Take off your backpack." More often, the requests were matter-of-factly delivered in public: "Hey, Edward, put your pencil down," "You'd better raise your hand higher than that," and "Tanya, raise your hand." Through repetition, teachers communicated that they meant what they said. Delivering consequences was a more dramatic way of sending this message.

Calmly delivering consequences to ensure appropriate behavior. Two of the three teachers delivered warnings and imposed formal consequences within the first hour of school. Observing that one of her students was

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talking while she was talking, Ms. Third wondered aloud as she looked directly into his eyes, "Who's talking? Hmmm, am I going to move somebody on the first day?" Shortly after, she said, "Get up, Sweetheart, you're moving already." She led him to another desk. Similarly, Ms. Second commented, when she noticed a student who was not looking at her, "Everyone should stand up nice and tall and your eyes should be on me. Eyes on me. I would hate to have to move a clothespin." Ms. Second was referring to her "stoplight" system in which a student's clothespin could be moved from green light, to yellow light, to red light. Within minutes, she had moved one student's clothespin to yellow.

The teachers seemed to be enacting the maxim to "nip the problem in the bud." All used proactive strategies to remind students of and reinforce appropriate behavior; however, they also intervened at the first sign of behavior that did not meet their expectations and asked students to "do it better." The tone of these interactions was critical to their effectiveness. The teachers maintained a kind and caring stance as they implemented consequences. They were upbeat, calm, and direct in their interactions, never sounding sarcastic, punitive, demeaning, or threatening. In the next section, we further examine the teachers' communication style.

Communicating in Culturally Responsive Ways

The student population in these classrooms was nearly 100% African American. Although the teachers certainly had their own personal styles of communicating, they shared some communication tactics.

Using Terms of Endearment and Humor

All three regularly used sincere terms of endearment and humor. More significant than the use of terms such as "honey," "dear," "my kids," "sweetheart," and "baby" was the tone of sincerity and affection behind them. Many teachers use these terms; not all convey genuine care. The use of these terms may simply be connected to establishing relationships, and perhaps they are not culturally responsive. However, in these historically low-achieving, high-poverty, and nearly exclusively African American schools, terms of genuine care take on a special significance. In these settings, it is critical for teachers to capture students' attention and stimulate their will to participate and succeed.

The teachers' use of humor may also play a central role in bonding students to the teachers and their academic mission. Ms. Fifth used humor throughout the morning: "By the end of the year, you'll be telling your

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brothers and sisters, 'Ms. Fifth is an awesome teacher; I bet you can't wait till you get her in fifth grade!'"

Ms. Second's silly nonexamples of rules and procedures made students giggle and helped her maintain their attention. Ms. Third's comment to the student for whom she located a chair, "You should feel really special because I don't get to sit down at all today!" eased the student's entry into a class that was already well underway. It is important to note that a tone of care pervaded the use of humor. Sarcastic humor or a joke made at a student's expense can undermine rather than enhance relationships. For these teachers, humor served to build bonds with students.

Discourse Style

Four elements of discourse style characterized the teachers' communications. These included the use of familiar words and expressions, the use of references to popular culture, the use of call-and-response interaction patterns, and the use of straightforward directives.

Familiar words and expressions. Ms. Second, an African American woman, frequently used words and expressions that were familiar to the students. For example, she enthusiastically implored a student, "Ooooooo, tell them again, sister girl!" When she remembered a student's name she cried out, "Ooooo, I am *so* good!" and slapped the student's hand in a "high five" motion. The other two teachers, though not African American, also used words and phrases familiar to their students. Ms. Fifth provided many examples:

- You know what I'm all about, right?
- Like, are you kidding?
- Dude, yeah!

Use of popular culture. Ms. Third and Ms. Fifth frequently referred to popular culture as they talked about their "favorites" and introduced themselves to the students. Both teachers mentioned African American musicians, actors, and television programs and movies that featured African Americans (e.g., Usher, Chris Rock, Martin Lawrence).

Call-and-response interaction pattern. We have already referred to several examples of the teachers expecting choral response from the students. Ms. Second frequently used this pattern as she explained things and gave directions to students (e.g., "We're going to learn our rules. What are we

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going to learn?"; "You have four squares on one piece of paper. What do you have?"). The call-and-response pattern, in which students responded in unison to the teacher, was a familiar communication style to students and one that prompted them to participate actively.

Straightforward directives. The teachers were explicit and assertive when presenting expectations to students. Although Ms. Fifth, for instance, used an informal style sprinkled with familiar expressions and humor, she was very direct in expressing her expectations (e.g., "My hand goes up, your hand goes up."; "I don't tolerate fighting. I don't tolerate fighting in my classroom. Not one bit.")

Ms. Third used a similar style: "This is how it's going to work this morning. People will come in, and I'll have to go to the door and welcome them to the class. You will wait quietly. You can work on your favorites worksheet." Ms. Second also was assertive with students: "Once I start talking and giving directions, you are not allowed to get up and go get water and go to the rest room. So do that first thing in the morning."

The teachers' assertive communication style, combined with their strategies for insisting that students follow through, created a climate in which teachers were taken seriously. Although teachers were warm and often funny, there was no question that they meant what they said. The classrooms were welcoming places where students were expected to perform. Within the first 2 hours of the first day, the novice teachers had taken key steps toward convincing students that they could succeed.

Implications

Early classroom-management research demonstrated the link between orderly environments and student learning. Skilled managers create efficient classrooms where students are on task and productive. The emerging literature on CRCM suggests that effective teachers must also be culturally knowledgeable, able to analyze the role of culture in their perceptions of student behavior, and able to use culture to create classroom contexts that support, nurture, and respect students. By developing these skills, Brown (2004) stressed that teachers develop an environment in which "students agree to cooperate . . . in pursuit of academic growth" (p. 268). The current study documents the strategies used by effective novice teachers of low-income African American students as they lay the foundations of their classroom environment. Indeed, they establish a respectful, orderly,

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culturally sensitive, caring environment. In the process, it seems they may do something more.

In setting the tone during these first hours of school, the teachers' actions and interactions are consistent with those described by Patrick et al. (2003) in their study of the kind of psychological environment that supports task engagement, encourages effort, and minimizes task avoidance. In addition, their strategies and interactions are consistent with strategies that scaffold children's resilience. The protective factors that bolster resilience are social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy, and a sense of a bright future or purpose (Benard, 2004). These are skills that a supportive classroom environment helps to establish. The elements of a positive psychological environment stressed by Patrick et al. are strongly grounded in respectful relationships, meaningful tasks, and the teacher insistence necessary to guarantee each child an environment of care, calm, support, and respect where he or she will succeed.

What is most interesting about Patrick et al.'s (2003) research is that students' avoidance behavior is as high in ambiguous environments as it is in nonsupportive environments. This suggests that a teacher is effective or not; there is no "almost." Inconsistent teachers fail to support achievement motivation. This is a particularly salient point for young, White, female teachers who have been socialized to speak softly, to be nondirect, and to be nonassertive and may therefore be perceived to lack authority by African American youth (Thompson, 2004). Our data describe how three beginning teachers (Black, White, and Asian) build the foundations for a supportive classroom environment within the first 2 hours of the academic year. The data support the conclusions drawn by others that teacher insistence plays a critical role in creating a consistent, caring, and respectful environment (Brown, 2003, 2004; Delpit, 1995; Ware, 2006).

The connections among CRCM, supportive psychological environments, and student resilience seem significant. CRCM seems to do more than create an orderly environment and create a context for academic success, as important as those goals are. The importance of CRCM may be that it establishes the psychological environment necessary for children to develop the factors that enhance their resilience. Thinking about CRCM as a structure to support resilience changes the purposes of classroom management. The goal is not simply to establish an orderly environment, to ensure student cooperation, and to create an academically focused environment where achievement will increase. As important as those objectives are, CRCM seems to go further and to create a psychologically supportive environment where students develop and strengthen their entering resilience-related strengths.

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Shifting the focus to the development of resilience decreases the emphasis on order and increases the emphasis on the development of a caring community. It shifts the focus of discipline from retribution to helping students feel connected (Benard, 2004). It also enables teacher educators to teach to the strengths of entering teacher education students. Many prospective teacher education students lack multicultural knowledge, but most enter teaching because they hold a strong ethos of care. Helping them to understand the significance of that ethos in scaffolding student resilience is an entry point to helping them develop the multicultural competence they need to succeed with children whose culture and experience differ from their own.

The challenge for teachers and teacher educators is that a naïve conception of care may create an ambiguous rather than a supportive psychological environment. That is, teachers with a naïve conception of care may believe they care about students and value a culture of respect but may lack the knowledge necessary to explicitly teach the skills of respectful behavior or to insist on respectful behavior in culturally appropriate ways. Benard (2004) notes that this involves more than teacher modeling of respectful behavior. It also involves "meeting the emotional needs of . . . children, thereby helping to create the psychological conditions for children to treat others respectfully" (p. 40).

Teacher educators have long stressed the importance of establishing supportive environments, of teachers interacting respectfully with children, and of making classrooms safe havens for children. In fact, most teachers verbalize these values, but teacher educators have provided insufficient practical tools for implementation of these values, particularly for teachers who are confronted with children whose behavior looks disrespectful when viewed through the teacher's cultural lens. This leaves novice teachers with few clear ideas about how to achieve their lofty goals. This study provides clear pictures of the ways in which three teachers teach and "insist" on respectful behavior and establish a caring, task-focused community. The study demonstrates how these three teachers put respect, not order, at the center of their classrooms. Making respect the central value gives them a way to structure the classroom as a haven for every child, a place where it is safe to take risks, where no one can poke fun at you, and where trying to achieve is a valued activity.

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