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Preservice Study

Interview Protocols

Initial Interview

1. In your own schooling, did you ever have any experience of your own or with a friend or family member who received instructional provisions made as a result of individual needs or interest? (*If yes, Tell me about that.*)
2. What is most important for me to know about the class I observed today?
3. How did you decide what to do today in class?

Possible probes:

- Who or what influenced your decisions?
 - What things did you consider?
 - Did you think about specific students?
4. Who in the class I've just seen do you think may be struggling in school (if you feel anyone is)? How can you tell or in what ways? (If they identify areas other than those dealing with learning, such as behavior, personality, or emotional difficulties ask: Are there any students who seem to be *struggling with learning*?)

Possible probes:

- What makes you think that student is struggling? What kinds of things does that student seem to do when he/she is having a hard time?
5. Who in the class I've just seen do you think may be ahead of the other students in the class (if you feel anyone is)?

Possible probes:

- How can you tell (or what makes you think that person is ahead)?
6. I noticed today in your lesson you did _____ (describe an activity or interaction of interest to you with a *struggling learner*, preferably a learning disabled student, a student with behavioral difficulties, or another student who may be perceived to be having problems in class). Talk with me about why you chose that particular strategy.
- How do you think it worked?

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7. Talk with me a little bit about (struggling learner's name or description) response to that part of the class.
 - How do you think things went for him/her?
 - Explain why you say that.
8. I also noticed that today in your lesson you did _____ (describe an activity or interaction of interest to you with a *target* child: a gifted or highly able student). Tell me about why you chose that particular strategy.
 - How do you think it worked?
9. Now talk with me a bit about (target child's name or description) response to that part of the class.
 - How do you think things went for him/her?
 - Explain why you say that.
10. Was there a point in the class today when you were conscious of wanting to alter your strategy with any of the students? Tell me what you were thinking then or might be thinking now about that point in the lesson.
11. If you taught it again, are there any other strategies that you might want to use in this lesson?

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Second Interview

1. What is most important for me to know about the class I observed today?
2. How did you decide what to do today in class?

Possible probes:

- Who or what influenced your decisions?
 - What things did you consider?
 - Did you think about specific students?
3. I noticed today in your lesson you did _____ (describe an activity or interaction of interest to you with a *struggling learner*, preferably a learning disabled student, a student with behavioral difficulties or another student who may be perceived to be having problems in class). Talk with me about why you chose that particular strategy.
 - How do you think it worked?
 4. Talk with me a little bit about (struggling learner's name or description) response to that part of the class.
 - How do you think things went for him/her?
 - Explain why you say that.
 5. I also noticed that today in your lesson you did _____ (describe an activity or interaction of interest to you with a *target* child, a gifted or highly able student.) Tell me about why you chose that particular strategy.
 - How do you think it worked?
 6. Now talk with me a bit about (target child's name or description) response to that part of the class.
 - How do you think things went for him/her?
 - Explain why you say that.
 7. Was there a point in the class today when you were conscious of wanting to alter your strategy with any of the students? Tell me what you were thinking then or might be thinking now about that point in the lesson.
 8. If you taught it again, are there any other strategies that you might want to use in this lesson?

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Final Interview

1. What is most important for me to know about the class I observed today?
2. How did you decide what to do today in class?

Possible probes:

- Who or what influenced your decisions?
 - What things did you consider?
 - Did you think about specific students?
3. To what kinds of students do you find yourself trying to pay special attention and trying to adjust your teaching?
 4. When you first started student teaching how would you have rated your confidence in adjusting instruction for students with learning problems?
 - Has that changed since you began?
 - How would you rate your confidence now?
 - What do you think has accounted for the change?
 5. When you first started student teaching how would you have rated your confidence in adjusting instruction for gifted or highly able students?
 - Has that changed since you began teaching?
 - How would you rate your confidence now?
 - What do you think has accounted for the change?
 6. Has your supervising teacher (clinical instructor) or university supervisor talked with you about adjusting your lessons to deal with differing needs of students?
 - What advice or instructions did he/she give you?
 - Specifically, what did he/she tell you?
 - Did he/she suggest any particular strategies or techniques to meet the differing needs of students?

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7. How do you yourself feel about trying to figure out what the differing needs of students might be and about teaching to meet those needs?
8. What have you tried to do in the classroom to make your instruction appropriate for a range of students?
 - What strategies might you use later in your teaching to address differing student needs that you've not used so far this year or that I have not seen you use?
9. Is there anything you'd like to know more about so that you'd feel more comfortable addressing a range of student needs?
10. I asked you in the first interview who you thought was struggling in class and who you thought was really ahead of other students. I also asked you how you make those decisions. How have you monitored student readiness and needs? Has any of that changed since you began?

Be sure to thank both the novice teacher and the cooperating teacher for their assistance with the research project and let them know that they have played an important role in helping us understand an essential facet of learning to be an effective teacher. If you have the opportunity, be certain to share our appreciation with the principal as well.