

Educ 3200E
Contextual Factors Paper

One of the most important tasks a teacher has when planning instruction is to find out about the learning needs and background information of all the students. These contextual factors will change for each class of students, so teachers need to modify and change learning activities so that all students can have the opportunity to learn to their utmost capabilities.

Generally, there are two categories of contextual factors (refer to Cortes' Contextual Model):

Part I:

The community

This is area where the students live. Remember that environment impacts the lives of the students. Be aware of and familiar with the opportunities and challenges your students may have in the world outside of the school.

Describe how the characteristics of the community may impact teaching and learning. You should focus on:

- the location of the school and the district
- the resources of the district and its support of education
- the socio-economic and linguistic profile of the community
- the performance of the school on state assessments
- the percentage of students classified as Special Education/504
- the percentage of ESL students and their level of English proficiency

Much of this information can be found in the report cards issued yearly for each school. These are available on the internet at <http://www.usoe.org>. [Please do NOT call the school. Talk to your collaborating teacher and check various sources on the internet: the district and school's websites.]

Part II:

The school/classroom/individual students

This feature of the Model will be broken down into three sub-areas: (a) the school in general, (b) the classroom and (c) the individual students. Each of these can greatly impact the lives of the students. Are these environments accommodating and accepting? Are they conducive to positive and constructive growth and development? An examination of these environments can identify the learning needs of all students.

School

- Describe the school (e.g., size, organization plan, ability grouping, scheduling patterns, disciplinary policies, etc.)

Classroom

- Describe the physical layout of the classroom(s) in which you are teaching, whether you are required to share this classroom with other teachers, the technology and other resources available

- Describe the classroom climate and any issues relating to student behavior.
- Identify the specific class you will be using for the field experience and discuss the composition of that class

☐ **Individual Students**

- After you have identified the class, be sure to take into account students with specific modifications, students with limited English proficiency, and any other relevant student characteristics.
- Identify the Core Reading Series Scope and Sequence and Textual Factors; and the Social Studies Text/Basal.

Finally, you will analyze the data above and write implications for **your** teaching in the coming weeks, not the teaching of some unknown person, who may be hired at this school some day.

☐ **Implications**

- Draw on the findings from the above two sections.
- Make connections between those factors and **your** teaching
 - Describe with some detail how these contextual factors of the community, school, etc. will affect how **you** will design your instruction for the students in your classroom in the coming weeks.