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Studio Based Learning: Proposing, Critiquing, Iterating Our Way to Person-Centeredness for Better Classroom Management

This article relates how the proposing, critiquing, iterating process of studio-based learning (SBL) provides for person-centered classroom management. SBL is defined in connection to how the pedagogy works within a school of architecture. Then, a description of how the approach is applied to one course in a teacher education program is offered. The model is important to person-centered classroom management because it positions teacher candidates as the person being centered on in the course and as a professional who will be called on to manage a classroom in more person-centered ways. Survey

data and discourse analyses provide evidence of how SBL practices can bring about more person-centered thinking about classroom management. Evidence reveals that the propose–critique–iterate process of SBL allows teacher candidates to better understand the connection between person-centeredness and SBL and, ultimately, classroom management.

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IN OFFERING AN OVERVIEW on classroom management issues, Brophy (2007) gave the following summary. He said effective classroom managers:

focus on developing self-regulation of learning, not just short run behavioral compliance; develop and work through personal teacher–student relationships rather than impersonal bureaucracies; be[come] a caring socializer rather

than a remote authority figure; emphasize ethics and ideals rather than rules and sanctions; emphasize cueing before the fact rather than nagging after the fact. (p. 1)

Brophy's ideas are consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) contention that learners come to understand their world from a complex series of inter- and intra-psychological functions, meaning that learning occurs from a person's interactions with important others in their social world and from the person's internalization of those interactions (Palinscar & Herrenkohl, 1999). In fact, much of the foundational research and thinking about classroom management takes this stance, viewing teachers as participants in the learning environment who act as discursive partners with students as they construct meaning for themselves (Emmer & Evertson, 2008; Good & Brophy, 2008; Weinstein, 2007). However, teaching about classroom management has only recently begun to shift philosophically away from traditional, whole group, behavior-correcting stances to more person-centered approaches (Freiberg, 1999). In this article, I propose an alternative model of teaching about classroom management: studio-based learning. I address three questions about this innovative approach:

1. What is studio-based learning?
2. How can studio-based learning be applied to a teacher education class about classroom management?
3. How do students react to this pedagogical approach and does it allow for person-centeredness and foster better thinking about classroom management?

What Is Studio-Based Learning?

Studio-based learning (SBL) is an inquiry, apprenticeship model that follows problem-based learning but allows a more pervasive person-centered approach. Monson and Poros (2003) first described SBL in the context of an architect's learning studio as a shared learning environment in which ambiguous problems are

addressed iteratively through multimodal analysis, proposition, and critique. Boyer and Mitgang (1996) explained that SBL is "reflective ... design project centered ... master craft-person supervised ... group size varied (ranging from groups of 20 all the way down to pairs which move freely and change sizes frequently at the learners' will to learn) ... discussion intense ... individual project driven ... highly integrated across multiple knowledge elements of the profession being practiced" (pp. xv-xvi).

SBL in visual arts instruction requires a discovery that allows learners to access deeper levels of cognitive and social skills (Hetland, Winner, Veenama, & Sheridan, 2007). This more person-centered learning model is important since learning *en masse* may give us similarly skilled, moderately challenged, uniformly molded graduates (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). My focused study of SBL since 2003 in the School of Architecture where Monson and Poros practice has identified important features of the model to study in other educational settings. These features, some shared among many well-established and well-researched pedagogies, are:

1. Field trips/field experiences;
2. Shared, well resourced, physical space;
3. Expert lectures and panel discussions;
4. Pin up sessions;
5. Desk critique sessions;
6. Formal juries;
7. Consultation during class work time; and
8. A propose-critique-iterate stance.

A student's individual designing during the studio is the central activity. The first three features constitute the *propose* phase of the propose-critique-iterate process and are types of inquiry that inform a student's initial proposals. Features that foster critique of those ideas come next and include pin-ups, desk critiques, juries, and in-class consultations. Finally, all of these individual features are connected by SBL's larger cycle of propose-critique-iterate where learners begin again, using feedback from others to refine their work. My work has revealed that using a propose-critique-iterate process makes

for better, more person-centered teaching about classroom management and in turn, fosters better thinking about classroom management. It is this process that separates the model from other current approaches.

Propose Elements

Person-centeredness begins in SBL with a variety of inquiry strategies including field trips, individual and collaborative study inside the student's own work space, and expert lectures and panel discussions.

Field trips. Field trips are common progressive teaching practices yielding both enhanced and diminished learning effects. Orion and Hofstein (1994) found that "the educational quality of a field trip is determined by its structure, learning materials, teaching method, and the ability to direct learning to a concrete interaction with the environment" (p. 1098). SBL field trips use the most current research to enhance learning. In studios, field trip learning is directed to the concrete, physical characteristics of the specific examples with which mentors want their apprentices to interact. Field trips begin the learning and serve as the basis for individual inquiry that influences individual design projects. Studio students have specific notions about what they intend to design and about what they are to look for and at during field experiences. Studio teachers attend and closely and intermittently narrate field experiences. Compared to typical school field trips, studio trips are longer and offer a repetitious observation of content/trade issues within the phenomena being observed. As Orion and Hofstein (1994) suggest, studio field trips take place early in the year and have a reduced *novelty space* effect on learners, because learners' familiarity is increased by the teacher's introduction of the design case prior to the field trip, which is then connected throughout the field experience to the field case being studied. During this work, students are urged to consider their own designs and how the aspects they intend to create do and do not work or exist in the field examples exposed during field trips.

Physical space. The initial proposal making of SBL takes place in a student's own individual work space. In some ways, the shared physical space of a studio environment looks much like a well-used, well-resourced school building. In both settings, learners have access to a work space, learning resources (books, computers, media, manipulatives), and experts in the field of study. In studios, the work space is one relatively large work desk or drafting table adorned with personalizing décor and privacy boundaries (cardboard walls, clotheslines used to clip artwork, sketches, maps, photographs, etc.). Learners store materials and decorate their work space as if it were their office. Work spaces are constructed by each learner, who remains in the same physical space throughout an academic year. Although the use of work space in studio learning differs from the use of work space in typical schools, a point of similarity exists between a school desk and locker/cubby combined as work space in more typical schools. There are, however, more contrasts than similarities. The student's work space is central to all learning in studio, and to learn, students spend more time in their own individual work space than in any other studio space. By contrast, in schools a locker/cubby is person-centered but is used as a storage place separate from the desk space where students learn. In schools, students move to and from different desks throughout the day and year, and desks belong to students only for specific blocks of learning time. The learning space of studio learning is clearly more person-centered.

The shared portion of the studio is not a particular desk but rather the shared resources used for inquiry within the learning space. Like a rich, well-resourced classroom, a studio allows students access to many tools of inquiry, like books, computers, special technologies, and experts. Because designs are unique to the individual doing the making, necessary resources vary across individual learners. Therefore, in SBL textbooks are rarely adopted by a teacher and required for a particular group to purchase. Learners in studio are encouraged to find unique, technically special resources and to consult with the teacher

as a master who can comment on the credibility of found resources. Like schools, studios have libraries of resources (books, periodicals, audio-visual media, etc.) and special technologies (LCD projectors, TVs, VCRs in schools; plotters, poster printers, wood cutters, etc., in studios). The act of finding information and resources specific to one's own design is person-centered and is a key component to the inquiry and proposal making of studio learning.

Access to experts. Lectures and discussions with teachers are unique in learning studios. In studios, expert lecturers are teachers with specialized knowledge in a particular area of the trade—color, structures, materials, etc. In school, expert lecturers are teachers with specialized knowledge in science, math, language arts, etc. Teachers in both settings lead the learning; however, a student's access to the teacher in studio is more person-centered. In schools, students mostly access the expertise of teachers from a position as a group member. In studio, students access teachers' realm of expertise as it relates directly to a student's individual design proposals. Rogoff (1990) explained this complexity as apprenticeships in thinking where learners engage with those around them to help build social, yet person-centered, understandings of the world around them. She said apprenticeship is: "observing, participating, . . . developing skills, defining problems, building from givens and constructing new solutions along with peers and more skilled members of their society" (p. 7). Scrimsher and Tudge (2003) suggested that "learning goes in advance of development and awakens a whole series of developmental processes . . . in a sort of dialectical synthesis" (p. 296). Given this framework, learning is dyad, small group, and person-centered and is maximized by the creation of communities of participants who develop into increasingly unique, diverse, yet complementary individuals. Studio teachers mostly interact with their students during individual critique and consultation sessions, which is in sharp, person-centered contrast to the interactions of typical school teachers.

Critique-Iterate Elements

Perhaps Monson's (2007) diagram in Figure 1 best depicts how SBL is uniquely person-centered and how the various features of critique inform new and improved iterations. Studio learning time is spent in constant journey toward more and more technically accurate, artistically superior design proposals. In the figure, each smaller and larger triangular shape—labeled with a *resources, analysis* circular shape at the origin, followed by regions of iteration followed by *propositions*—makes up one cycle of the propose–critique–iterate process. It is within these spaces between the dotted and solid divergent lines that time in studio is spent and deeper, more advanced study of content occurs. The diagram shows how the ongoing propose–critique–iterate cycle—across time on the x-axis, which allows for more and more, higher and higher levels of content coverage on the y-axis—is the defining picture of SBL pedagogy. Each succession of the process (labeled with dark arrows positioned along the upper boundaries of each set of divergent lines) gives way to the multiple gray rectangles, each of which represents one given proposal among the infinite number of possible proposals a learner might offer at a given time and space within the study of particular content.

Monson and Poros (2003) explained the following about the propose–critique–iterate process of design thinking:

Iteration is the repeated proposition and critique of aspects of the larger problem. It is a serial process diagrammed as "a, b, a, b, a, b, a, b . . .", where "a" represents a proposition and "b" represents reflection and judgment. Through the process of iteration, the work of proposition is better defined as a learned action, since each new proposition is informed critically by the previous one. (p. 16)

They connect the iterative process of SBL to Schön's (1983) reflection-in-action. In this act of iterative learning or reflection-in-action, the teacher in studio plays a central role in the learning since he or she primarily works side-by-

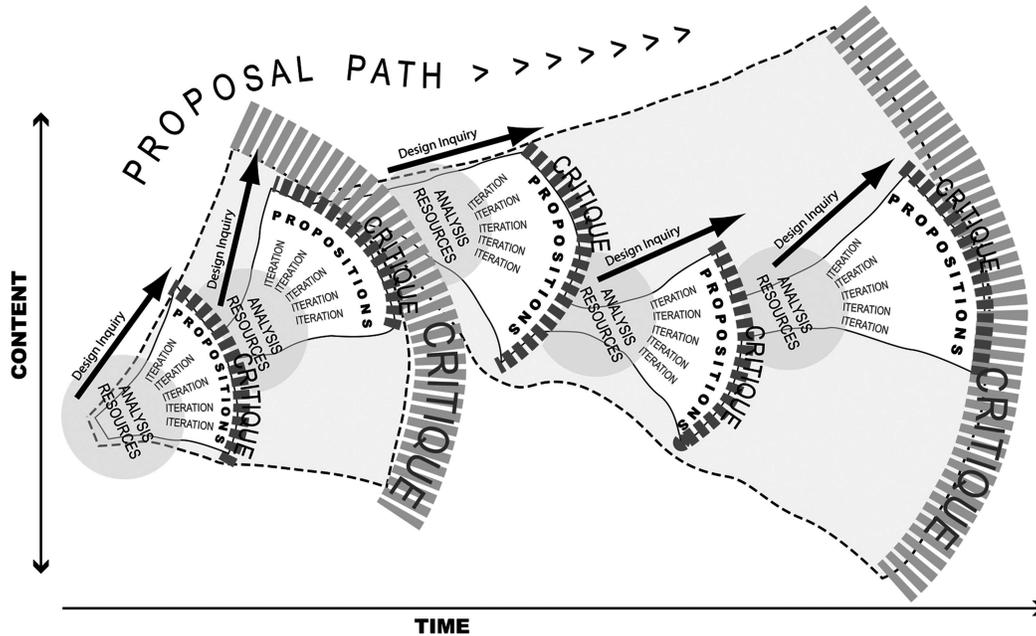


Figure 1. Proposal Path During a Studio-Based Learning Case (Monson, 2007).

side with the learner in studio, gently nudging the designs with judgment and discourse that encourage self and peer critique. When each student's own personal designs of classroom space and activities within that space are the center of class time and instruction, person-centeredness is inevitable.

The space between the point where resources and inquiry begin and proposals are offered up for formal, juried critique (denoted by the small gray rectangles) is the space where acts of informal self, peer, and master critiques occur for each learner uniquely, as needed by each learner. Pin-ups, desk critiques, consultation during class work time with peers, experts, and the studio teacher are constantly open and available to learners, who are learning through their own particular designs, the aspects of a given content. A learner might pin up multiple iterations of his or her design on the studio walls for the purpose of self-critique, for a small group of peers to critique, for critique with the studio teacher, or for critique that may be offered by a visiting expert

or an expert through a virtual online interchange. Designers pin up multiple iterations of work so the process of propose–critique–iterate becomes a central part of that which is critiqued. Desk critiques, or *crits*, and consultations from peers, experts, and studio teachers work much the same as pin ups but without the benefit of viewing multiple iterations.

Formal juries are similar to other types of critiques, but, as the name suggests, they are more formal critiques of students' designs. Jury is a time when students stand in front of an audience with more final iterations of designs for the purpose of explaining and defending their design choices. Critique in these settings often comes in the form of why questions from an audience of peers, studio teachers, experts, and professionals who are seeking a rationale from the student for his or her design choices. Central to SBL is the positioning of work in a critique space that renders the work never complete, always on a pathway toward better iterations.

Using Studio Based Learning in Teacher Education

I applied SBL within a course called Planning for the Diversity of Learners—part of a teacher preparation program in a southern, rural, land grant university's college of education. This introductory foundation of education course comes in the first semester of teacher education as an introduction to and pre-requisite for two content-specific methods of teaching courses. Each section of the course enrolls no more than 20 teacher candidates who are seeking certification for grades seven through twelve in a specific content area. Candidates are diverse in ethnicity, gender, and content areas. Over the past four years, over 300 students have learned about classroom management via the SBL approach.

In the course, teacher candidates prepare three design projects using an SBL propose–critique–iterate process. The design projects are called Unity in Diversity Talk, Planning Project, and Positive Learning Places Plan. Each project is positioned as a design task for teacher candidates to create. The Unity in Diversity Talk is an oral presentation centered on a diversity text that is video recorded. The Planning Project is a curriculum design project wherein candidates design a thematic, cross-curricular unit with embedded technology. The Positive Learning Places plan is a multimedia design of a classroom management plan. Students make a movie using iMovie or MovieMaker, explaining the key components of their ideas on managing a classroom. By the end of the course, the students must know and be able to answer the following three guiding questions with technically accurate, artistically advanced teacher discourse:

- How do I bring unity and a celebration of diversity to my class and still enable exemplary learning and maximum growth for all?
- How do I design highly engaging instruction for all the diverse learners in my classroom?
- How do I design a classroom management plan that will maximize unity and a celebration of diversity?

The semester is spent in a continual inquiry cycle wherein teacher candidates propose, critique, and iterate elements of the three projects. Class meetings are spent with students engaging in the parts of the design work they are preparing. Each student works toward self-proclaimed ends, and each is required to offer work for critique during pin ups, desk critiques, consultation while working in class, and formal juries.

Challenges to SBL implementation exist. The shared, well-resourced physical space, formal juries, and a propose–critique–iterate stance are among the most difficult of the eight defining aspects of SBL to duplicate for the teacher candidates. Although the accessible learning space for teacher candidates (which includes university libraries, computer labs, teacher resource rooms, etc.) on campus is well resourced, classroom space is typically not. Nor is there space for teacher candidates to have personal learning, office type space. Adopting a propose–critique–iterate stance required a paradigm shift for me as the teacher educator in this research. Formal juries require coordination with practicing teachers' work schedule which is a serious challenge to implementation. However, field trips, expert lectures, and panel discussions; pin-up sessions, desk critique sessions, and consultation during class work time all seem to readily adapt into the teacher education setting. More study on the nature of this challenge to implementation is currently in progress.

Teacher Candidates' Responses to SBL

While implementing SBL with my students, I also examined their reactions to the pedagogy with surveys and discourse analysis. Results of this survey and discourse examination are presented here.

Surveys. Teacher candidates were surveyed at the end of their SBL semester course. Surveys asked students to rank the elements of SBL, marking with a number one the element they most credited with helping them offer better

iterations of self as classroom manager, down to an eight marked for the element they least credited with helping them offer better iterations of self as a classroom manager. On the surveys, the propose–critique–iterate stance of SBL was ranked highest, meaning that students credited the propose–critique–iterate process with bringing about an improved understanding of classroom management. Nearly 83% of the 321 students named propose–critique–iterate as the reason for their being able to offer better iterations of self as a classroom manager.

Student discourse. To understand how teacher candidates enrolled in the course accessed person-centeredness and better classroom management ideas across the semester, I examined their discourse. Each teacher candidate’s responses to the three guiding questions were videotape recorded and transcribed at the beginning, middle, and end of each 16-week semester over a 5-year period. Discourse from classroom conversations, multiple iterations of the three design projects, and e-mail correspondence were also collected for triangulation purposes. First, discourse samples were coded as *discourse needs improvement to show evidence of a healthy classroom manager*, *discourse shows evidence of a healthy classroom manager*, and *discourse shows evidence of an exceptionally healthy classroom manager*. Then teacher candidates were grouped into these same categories. Complete discourse data samples from 321 teacher candidates were collected and analyzed. A prolonged engagement in the study of SBL, member checks with teacher candidate participants, and triangulation of data from the multiple sources served to enhance the trustworthiness of evidence and analysis.

Discourse examples in Figure 2 provide evidence of how four teacher candidates used more person-centered discourse by the end of their studio course. Examples from these four students, given the pseudonyms of Cameron, Jenica, Russell, and Sarah, were purposefully chosen for two reasons. First, they offer evidence of a classroom management stance that shifts away from stereotypical, whole-group classroom

management toward a more person-centered classroom management stance. Second, these four candidates stated that the propose–critique–iterate process during the design work gently nudged them toward their more person-centered ideas.

When these candidates were shown their beginning, middle, and ending discourse samples, each credited the studio nature of the course with bringing about the change in the way they spoke about managing students. Russell offered, “This course is not like any I’ve ever had. First we had to do our work again and again. Then we had to keep looking at it and talking about it.” Jenica noted that she rarely spoke with any of her college professors about her coursework. She said to her studio professor, “You asked us many specific personal questions about our own work.” Cameron confessed that he “was not sure he liked his work being microscopically examined.” But he went on to say that he had never worked so hard to make a class assignment “the best it could be. I think my planning project is the best project I’ve done in college and prob’ly all my school years.” Of the four, Sarah used the most studio specific language as she explained her rationale for the change in her discourse. She said, “All this proposin’-critiquin’-iteratin’ sure ought to bring about some real change in the way I talk and think.”

SBL, Person-Centeredness, and Classroom Management

As this research continues, my students and I find the central components of SBL—propose–critique–iterate—help readily move instruction about classroom management into person-centered realms. As our inquiry helps us better define SBL, we also discover how the pedagogy can be applied in our teacher education course on classroom management. My students relate that SBL centers instruction on their specific designs, and their discourse provides evidence that the model fosters better thinking about person-centered aspects of classroom management. SBL is a valuable pedagogy because it

Teacher Candidate	Beginning and Mid-Semester Discourse	End of Semester Discourse
Cameron	<p>—“Teachers are in charge. If they have good control, students will fall in line”</p> <p>—“Classroom rules are key. Rules make or break classroom management.”</p>	<p>“When I was designing my talk based on the cases in the book, I would picture the kid in the example to and be just like me. And our students are not going to be just like us. I think more diversely now. I am more open minded.”</p>
Jenica	<p>—“The fear of corporeal punishment keeps the whole school in line . . . not that I would ever paddle any kid.”</p> <p>—“Some classes of kids are just bad. Maybe it is the time of day or the subject, but it’s not the teacher’s fault.”</p>	<p>“I see now that the students playing is part of the process and we’ve been conditioned to think that students are either learning or they are playing. Sometimes the playing or pausing or just looking at the ceiling might actually be part of a person’s learning of the stuff you are teaching.”</p>
Russell	<p>—“I plan to follow the school discipline handbook. That should cover my management for my class.”</p> <p>—“My mother is a teacher so I know about kids. I’ve seen, my whole life, how to make them behave.”</p>	<p>“Michie talked about how he would handle his classroom, and before I read that I really didn’t know the kids in my class. I’m gonna be a coach and I thought the kids would come in and learn or not and go. Now I realize the importance of getting to know my students as real people.”</p>
Sarah	<p>—“If I can survive the first year with out any huge problems with my classes, I think I’ll do better the second year.”</p> <p>—“Kids are mostly all the same.”</p>	<p>“Like you really do have to talk to people differently. That whole idea of hidden rules and cultures and codes means that some of the things you say will totally be gotten by some of the kids just because it’s natural for them. For some they’ll have no idea about what you are saying just because they were born into family like yours . . . that whole culture of power is real and some are just born into it.”</p>

Figure 2. Teacher Candidate Discourse Samples Gathered at the Beginning, Mid-Semester, and End of Semester Oral Assessment.

offers an alternative, person-centered approach to teacher education about classroom management, which, in turn, is more likely to foster future person-centered instruction as my students assume teachers’ roles in their own classrooms. More study of the model beyond the architect’s learning studio will allow for SBL’s merits to be shared.

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