
Comer-in-the-Classroom

Linking the Essential Elements of the Comer Process to Classroom Practices

Fay E. Brown and Valerie Maholmes

Historically, the Comer Process has been a whole-school reform model with a marked emphasis on governance and policy at the school and school district levels. In this chapter, SDP's director of Child and Adolescent Development and SDP's director of Research and Policy explain that Comer-in-the-Classroom represents a deepening of the implementation of the Comer Process within the school. Through Comer-in-the-Classroom, teachers and their students modify their own behavior according to the principles of consensus, collaboration, and no-fault. They come to understand and report on their own growth and development in terms of the six developmental pathways. They are able to have a clearer focus on the goals of the comprehensive school plan. When the Comer Process is in the classroom, parents become more involved and there is a rich and rewarding communication between the classroom and all other parts of the school community.

WHAT IS COMER-IN-THE-CLASSROOM?

Teachers often ask these questions: "How do the collaborative decision-making strategies of the Comer Process relate to what I do in my classroom?" "If I am not on

NOTE: Copyright © 2004 by The Yale School Development Program, Yale Child Study Center. All rights reserved. Reproduction authorized only for the local school site that has purchased this book. Reprinted from *Dynamic Instructional Leadership to Support Student Learning and Development*. For information, contact Corwin Press, 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks, California 91360; www.corwinpress.com.

a Comer team, what role do I play in implementing the Comer Process in my school?" "If the Comer process doesn't have a curriculum, how can it affect teaching and learning?"

Comer-in-the-Classroom refers to the specific ways in which teachers apply the principles of the Comer Process and link the qualities and characteristics of the nine elements to classroom practice. Thus teachers must have a working knowledge of these principles so that they may become highly observable in all aspects of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. As a result, these classrooms can be distinguished from the classrooms in which the principles have not been fully implemented. Figure 6.1 elaborates the qualities and characteristics of the Comer Process and shows how teachers can link these elements to classroom practice.

Figure 6.1 Classroom strategies linked to the Comer Process

Comer Process	Qualities and Characteristics	Strategies
SPMT	<p><i>Representativeness:</i> All students have opportunities to learn and to participate in leadership roles and activities.</p> <p><i>Shared Decision Making:</i> Students have opportunities to participate in making rules and norms for the classroom. Students have opportunities to have a voice in important matters that pertain to them.</p>	<p>Cooperative learning.</p> <p>Peer-to-peer tutoring.</p> <p>Students serve as delegates to the SPMT.</p> <p>Students participate in rule setting.</p> <p>Students codevelop consequences for breaking rules and rewards for keeping rules.</p>
SSST	<p><i>Problem Solving:</i> Individual level problem solving. Global classroom-wide problem solving.</p> <p>Instructional activities need to be informed by knowledge of the students and their particular needs.</p>	<p>Peer mediation.</p> <p>Conflict resolution.</p> <p>Class meeting.</p> <p>Application of the six developmental pathways.</p>
Parent Team	<p>Parents need to be engaged in a way that supports the learning and development of children both inside and outside the classroom.</p>	<p>Parents as substitutes.</p> <p>Parents assist in guided reading activities.</p> <p>Parents conduct workshops for parents on classroom strategies.</p> <p>Parents serve as chaperones.</p> <p>Parents observe and provide feedback.</p>
Consensus	<p>Teachers encourage consensus decision making in the classroom.</p> <p>Students take ownership through the consensus process. Students have choice in instructional materials/activities.</p>	<p>Perspective taking.</p> <p>Considering others' perspectives.</p> <p>Acceptance of differences in people and points of view.</p> <p>Listening skills.</p> <p>Respect for self and others.</p> <p>Negotiating skills.</p>

Collaboration	Teachers, students, and parents work together, get along with one another, respect themselves and each other.	Teamwork in dyads and triads. Cooperative learning. Negotiating skills.
No-fault	No-fault is modeled in the classroom. A positive tone is set from the first day of school. Positive climate is experienced in the classroom. High expectations are evidenced through "words and deeds." Assessments are used to diagnose rather than to punish.	Teachers explicitly teach students descriptive, nonjudgmental language. Teachers and parents model no-fault language for the students. Developmental pathways are used as a framework for lesson planning and assessment.
Assessment and Modification	Teachers are reflective and thoughtful about the ways they carry out their instructional practices and how they relate to students.	Action research. Reflective teaching. Fair and appropriate use of data for instructional decision making.
Staff Development	Students develop skills to perform leadership functions in the classroom and to collaborate on projects. Parents develop skills to support classroom practices.	Teachers explicitly teach students leadership and social skills. Parent liaison/team conducts training to enable parents to support classroom practices.
Comprehensive School Plan	Lesson planning is a central component of a teacher's comprehensive plan for delivering developmentally appropriate instruction.	Lesson plans indicate which developmental pathways are being addressed. Plans take into account student learning styles and developmental needs.
Relationships	There is evidence of positive teacher-student, teacher-parent, and student-student relationships.	Community and team-building activities. Student dialogues. Class meetings. Conflict resolution skills.
Developmental Pathways	The classroom reflects the six developmental pathways.	Display of students' work. Activities that incorporate movement. Appropriate and flexible arrangement of the classroom. Language-rich environment, "healthy noise." Developmentally appropriate materials, strategies, and assessment. The classrooms are multimodal and multisensory.

SOURCE: Copyright © 2004 by The Yale School Development Program, Yale Child Study Center. All rights reserved. Reprinted from *Dynamic Instructional Leadership to Support Student Learning and Development: The Field Guide to Comer Schools in Action*, by Edward T. Joyner, Michael Ben-Avie, and James P. Comer. Reproduction authorized only for the local school site that has purchased this book. www.corwinpress.com.

While Figure 6.1 operationalizes the nine elements of the model in the classroom, there are also some specific, nonnegotiable standards that define the everyday practices of teachers, students, and parents in the Comer classroom. The adherence to these standards fosters a positive climate that is conducive to effective learning, teaching, and development. Presented below are seven standards that are foundational to implementing Comer-in-the-Classroom.

THE SEVEN FOUNDATIONAL STANDARDS FOR IMPLEMENTING COMER-IN-THE-CLASSROOM

1. Have High Expectations for All Students

Teachers have both implicit and explicit expectations for their students. The implicit expectations reflect the belief that all students can learn and have the potential to achieve. The explicit expectations encompass those that are verbally and behaviorally expressed to students, incorporated into the lesson plans, and prominently displayed in the classroom. Teachers have specific expectations for each child so that they can guide each one toward a specific outcome that he or she will accomplish by the end of the year. These expectations are then translated into goals for individual students and for the class as a whole.

- What are the goals that you have for your students?
- How are they reflected in behavioral terms to your students?

List some specific strategies for meeting this standard:

2. Teach From a Challenging and Rigorous Curriculum

If we have high expectations for our children, we will provide a challenging and rigorous curriculum to meet those expectations. Teaching from a challenging curriculum enables children to perform to their highest potential, whereas teaching from a watered-down curriculum limits their potential. Brain research suggests that when we stimulate children's thinking, neural connections are made, and when we

don't stimulate or challenge the children, these connections are underdeveloped and the capacity to make these connections is diminished (Jensen, 1998).

List some specific strategies for meeting this standard:

3. Develop Positive, Healthy Relationships

Learning to high levels demands a partnership between teacher and student. They both have a responsibility in creating that mutuality. A healthy relationship is the foundation that allows that partnership to develop and to thrive.

Where there is a good climate of relationships, there is academic achievement, and you can accomplish the business of socializing kids and making gains at the same time. One need not interfere with the other. (Comer, cited in the National Center for Effective Schools Research and Development, 1989, p. 43)

Rogers maintained that "the teacher's skills, knowledge of the field, curricular planning, lectures, and selection of books and other learning aids are all peripheral; the crux of the learning situation is the relationship between the facilitator and the learner which should be characterized by realness, valuing, and empathy. (Ryan & Cooper, 1995, p. 46)

List some specific strategies for meeting this standard:

4. Cultivate Mutual Respect and Trust

If you have high expectations and demonstrate those expectations in attitudes and behaviors toward students, it fosters mutual respect and trust. Attitudes and words that students and teachers use toward one another reflect the level of respect that exists among them. Respect and trust are consequences of the initial tone and climate established in the classroom during the first few days/weeks of school.

List some specific strategies for meeting this standard:

5. Honor the Three Guiding Principles of Collaboration, Consensus, and No-fault

The guiding principles give teachers the tools for learning how to conduct their classrooms in ways that promote healthy relationships, respect, and high expectations. They enable teachers to challenge students to their highest potential, because they have built this respectful, achievement-oriented climate. The guiding principles remove the excuses that students have for not performing to high standards and the excuses that teachers have for not teaching to high standards.

Collaboration allows the teacher to engage students in meaningful ways as they work together. It sets an expectation that says, "We will all work cooperatively, not competitively." It also teaches students certain social skills that they need in order to work in that kind of environment. Students learn that in order to work in this climate, there are certain roles they have to play, certain responsibilities they have to take on, and certain behaviors they have to demonstrate.

Consensus allows the teacher and the students to come to agreement about the things that will foster an effective learning community. It allows both teacher and students to listen to each other and to make decisions about classroom norms, rules, and consequences. Thus it is a process that gives teachers, students, and parents a forum for expression in a safe and respectful climate.

No-fault in the classroom calls teachers' attention to the messages they send to students through words, deeds, and attitudes. They are always cognizant of the fact that children can be easily turned on or off by the messages that are sent to them on a daily basis. This no-fault attitude of teachers allows children to feel valued and to feel that they can be successful. When teachers are thinking no-fault, they are more prone to provide opportunities to promote, rather than to stifle or impede, students'

learning and development. In a classroom where no-fault is evident or in operation, teachers tend to see children's potential, not their limitations, and they tend to reward efforts in increments, rather than wait for explosions of academic excellence. They understand that rewarding students incrementally can lead to high performance. Teachers don't blame students for not knowing, but celebrate with them and scaffold the little that they know into the vast expanse of what they will know—the zone of proximal development—moving students from budding to blossoming to flourishing.

No-fault builds students' confidence and sense of efficacy and academic self-concept. From the students' perspective, no-fault allows them to accept each other with the understanding that each one is a learner and that each one needs help along the way. Students respect each other and use appropriate language that reflects this respect. They understand that mocking, jeering, or criticizing other students' weaknesses is not acceptable. Teachers use appropriate, nonjudgmental language to provide feedback to students. Thus no-fault is a problem-solving strategy that is used to address the little things that can happen in a classroom in the course of any given day.

List some specific strategies for meeting this standard:

6. Operate From a Developmental Perspective

The six developmental pathways (physical, cognitive, psychological, language, social, and ethical) enable teachers to view children from a developmental rather than a deficit perspective. These pathways serve as a framework within which teachers can develop lessons as well as diagnose and respond to student behaviors. In addition, they extend the concept of no-fault into the classroom. The core of what we do is to develop children, because we believe that when children develop well, they learn well.

List some specific strategies for meeting this standard:

7. Know Your Students

When teachers know their students, they have a heightened awareness of their individual and collective needs and learning styles. This knowledge should extend beyond the classroom and outside the realm of academic tasks. Teachers are also aware of the different ways in which they can work with students to promote their learning and overall growth and development. Thus teachers use the pathways as a tool for diagnosing, assessing, problem solving, and strategizing. Essentially, when teachers know their students, they understand that in "every interaction they have with every child, they are either helping to promote development or to impede development" (Dr. James P. Comer, March 1999, personal communication).

List some specific strategies for meeting this standard:

COMER-IN-THE-CLASSROOM LIFE CYCLE

Knowledge of how the nine elements link to classroom practices and an understanding of the importance of the standards prepare a teacher for the effective implementation of Comer-in-the-Classroom process. Just as the SDP Implementation Life Cycle guides the implementation of the Comer Process in the school, the Comer-in-the-Classroom Life Cycle and the accompanying checklists (see Figures 6.2 through 6.8 at the end of this chapter) may be used to implement and assess the Comer-in-the-Classroom process. The Life Cycle consists of five phases:

1. Planning and Preparation
2. Foundation Building
3. Transformation
4. Institutionalization
5. Renewal

The phases of the overall SDP Life Cycle are expected to be implemented in the school over a five-year period, while the Comer-in-the-Classroom Life Cycle is intended to be accomplished during the course of the school year. Although the phases are listed sequentially, in practice, they will not unfold as such. While implementing one phase, for example, Institutionalization, situations such as high mobility, behavior problems, and low achievement may necessitate revisiting the earlier phase of Transformation. In addition, the day-to-day realities of classroom practice may result in multiple phases of the process being implemented simultaneously. Thus the Comer-in-the-Classroom Life Cycle is intended for use only as a guide for continuous improvement of classroom practices and interactions. The following is a delineation of the phases of the Comer-in-the Classroom Life Cycle and specific expectations for implementation.

Planning and Preparation

During the first part of the year, teachers are encouraged to start with a plan that articulates objectives and strategies for meeting the standards of Comer-in-the-Classroom. This plan should also specify academic and other outcomes along each of the six developmental pathways. The following are indicators and benchmarks that characterize this phase of implementation:

- Reflection and Analysis
 - Use the developmental pathways framework to reflect on teachers' own needs, strengths, and overall readiness to teach and interact with students and parents.
 - Conduct a needs assessment using the pathways framework to identify the needs, strengths, and possible challenges of the students they will teach for the year.
 - Ascertain the functionality of the physical space for promoting students' development along each of the six pathways.
 - Determine availability of resources to promote high achievement and overall student development.
- Comprehensive Classroom Planning
 - Articulate in writing teachers' expectations for students individually and collectively.
 - Have a plan for what they hope to accomplish during the year to meet the holistic needs of students.
 - Have a plan for how they hope to meaningfully engage parents.

Foundation Building

During the first couple of weeks of the school year, activities and strategies that characterize this phase may unfold simultaneously or overlap with some aspects of the Planning and Preparation stage. The essence of this phase is the building and maintaining of positive relationships between and among teachers, students, and parents.

- Creating a Shared Vision
 - Each teacher should have a vision for teaching and reaching every child.
 - Teachers should help students to develop their own visions for learning, interacting, and achieving.
 - Parents need to be encouraged to have visions that promote successful outcomes for their children and that support the attainment of goals for all students in the class.
 - Through respectful, open communication, and consensus decision making, the different visions of teachers, parents, and students become a shared vision.
 - Teachers, parents, and students know and practice the guiding principles of consensus, collaboration, and no-fault problem solving.
 - Teachers establish the use of class meetings as a foundation for building relationships and engaging students on all levels.
 - Teachers should make deliberate efforts to know aspects of their students beyond the classroom.
 - Teachers collect baseline data based on academic, behavioral, and performance indicators to know students and to plan effectively for them.

Transformation

At this stage, Comer classrooms can be distinguished from classrooms that are not implementing Comer-in-the-Classroom. The components of Comer-in-the-Classroom should be observable and practiced regularly. Outcomes should include, but not be limited to, achievement gains, a safe environment in which students can take risks, and reduction in behavior problems. More specifically, the following characteristics should be observable:

- There is a shift from an adult-centered orientation to a child-centered orientation.
- Students have more opportunities to take on leadership roles in the classrooms and participate in decision making.
- There is strong evidence of the practice of the guiding principles by teachers, students, and parents.
- There is strong evidence of a developmental focus in instructional practice, in management and organization, in order and discipline, and in assessment of student performance.
- The physical organization and resources of the classroom reflect an intentional effort to promote student development through a variety of strategies.

- There is strong evidence that teachers are making deliberate connections between curriculum, instruction, relationships, and development.
- The plan outlined at the Planning and Preparation stage is in full operation.
- The goals and the vision articulated at the Foundation Building stage are actualized.
- Teachers, students, and parents celebrate their accomplishments thus far.

Institutionalization

At this phase, practices and interactions that define the standards of Comer-in-the-Classroom should be highly observable and practiced at optimal levels. There should also be evidence that these practices are filtering outside the classroom to permeate the entire school and, by extension, the home. The following are characteristic of implementation at this stage:

- The guiding principles and developmental pathways frame a common language that is communicated and responded to in the classrooms and throughout the school.
- There is meaningful and consistent parent involvement.
- Teachers are behaving as critical friends, sharing effective strategies and providing feedback.
- Rules and logical consequences are practiced consistently across classrooms and permeate the school building.
- Same-page behaviors are practiced in the classroom, across grade levels, and throughout the school.
- The content and tenor of conversations in the teachers' lounge reflect no-fault language, valuing, and positive regard of all students.
- Students are aware of themselves along the developmental pathways and can measure their own progress on academic, social, and behavioral criteria.
- Teachers are more cognizant of themselves along the developmental pathways, which fosters greater understanding between the teacher and the students.

Renewal

This stage is characterized by the teacher's assessment of the level of implementation of the Comer-in-the-Classroom components and the extent to which the standards are being met. The following problem-solving questions may be used to guide the assessment process: What is working well? What is not working well? What should be done differently?

Along with this assessment, teachers are encouraged to do a thoughtful self-assessment using the developmental pathways framework. The self-assessment may uncover areas in which there appears to be a need for a recommitment to the philosophy and principles of the Comer Process as it is applied to the classroom.

ASSESSING THE OBSERVABLE ELEMENTS OF THE COMER PROCESS IN YOUR CLASSROOM

The Comer-in-the-Classroom checklist (see Figures 6.2–6.8) operationalizes the philosophy, principles, and strategies of the Comer Process so that teachers may have a clearer picture of their role in a Comer school. This checklist provides a sampling of practices for selected components of the Comer Process. These practices serve as a framework for answering the following questions: “What are the characteristics of a classroom in which the Comer Process is fully integrated?” “What practices need to be strengthened?”

The checklist is designed to give teachers a way to self-assess their progress in linking the Comer elements into the classroom. Thus teachers may be encouraged to use the checklist at the beginning of the year to establish a baseline, at the middle of the year as a benchmark, and at the end of the year to examine progress over time. By doing so, teachers will be able to assess and modify their practices as they move along the Comer-in-the-Classroom Life Cycle. Since collaboration is a central part of the Comer Process, teachers may choose to use the checklist with peer coaches or colleagues with whom they work closely, as a means of documenting and recording collaborative work.

While the checklist is not designed to be an evaluative tool, it can be used by administrators as they work with teachers to support their growth and development in the Comer Process. The administrator may check a response option that best fits the characteristics observed in a single classroom and then give a rating for each component of the Comer Process. He or she may use the *averaged* ratings as a way to help a teacher make progress in a specific area. The administrator may also use the checklist as a general barometer of overall implementation, and not target a specific classroom. Insights gleaned from observing particular classrooms using this checklist may be addressed directly with the individual teacher, a grade-level team, or a faculty meeting. However, to ensure schoolwide implementation of all the Comer components, patterns observed across classrooms should be identified and brought to the School Planning and Management Team (SPMT).

Healthy and nurturing learning environments are the hallmark of the Comer Process. The standards, strategies, and the Implementation Life Cycle offered in this chapter will help teachers, administrators, and other school staff to ensure that an enriched learning experience is provided in every classroom for every child.

Figure 6.2 The guiding principles

The guiding principles of collaboration, consensus, and no-fault are practiced in the classroom by teachers, students, and support staff.

	Highly Observable (5)	Observable (4)	Moderately Observable (3)	Minimally Observable (2)	Not Observable at This Point in Time (1)
I. Collaboration					
Parents, aides, and teachers work together to design academic and social development activities.					
Students engage in collaborative, problem-based learning activities.					
Students have opportunities to teach others and share what they have learned.					
Students have the opportunity to practice different leadership roles in group projects.					
The rules for teamwork are posted clearly on the walls or on class bulletin boards.					
Visitors are welcome and become a part of the learning process.					
Teachers work in teams to present thematic lessons and collaborate on class projects.					
Summary Score					

(Continued)

Figure 6.2 (Continued)

	Highly Observable (5)	Observable (4)	Moderately Observable (3)	Minimally Observable (2)	Not Observable at This Point in Time (1)
II. Consensus					
Teachers and parents model the consensus decision-making process for students.					
Students are knowledgeable about the consensus-building process.					
Teachers design lessons that allow students to practice consensus decision making.					
Students use data to make decisions by consensus.					
Students engage in inquiry processes, learn to question and seek information.					
Students have opportunities to make important decisions that affect the classroom environment.					
Summary Score					
III. No-fault					
The classroom environment is emotionally and psychologically safe for students, teachers, and parents.					
Teachers model no-fault problem-solving strategies for the students.					
Students have opportunities to learn through trial and error without being penalized.					

Students are treated fairly and have equal access to classroom resources.						
Neither the teacher nor students yell or use fault-finding language in the classroom.						
Students know what is expected of them in academic performance and social behavior.						
Teachers develop lessons and activities that reflect high expectations for student learning.						
Teachers use assessments as a way to diagnose student learning problems.						
Punishment is used as a last resort strategy for problem behavior.						
Teachers use a research-based system of rewards and consequences to foster positive student behavior.						
Summary Score						

SOURCE: Copyright © 2004 by The Yale School Development Program, Yale Child Study Center. All rights reserved. Reprinted from *Dynamic Instructional Leadership to Support Student Learning and Development: The Field Guide to Comer Schools in Action*, by Edward T. Joyner, Michael Ben-Avie, and James P. Comer. Reproduction authorized only for the local school site that has purchased this book. www.corwinpress.com.

Figure 6.3 Developmental focus

The six developmental pathways: cognitive, physical, social, psychological, language, social, and ethical, are evident in classroom practice.

	Highly Observable (5)	Observable (4)	Moderately Observable (3)	Minimally Observable (2)	Not Observable at This Point in Time (1)
Class assignments foster the development of effective communication skills, including listening and speaking.					
Teachers design lessons that help students develop prosocial skills and values.					
Students have opportunities through class discussions, writing assignments, and other venues to express feelings, needs, and concerns.					
Teachers incorporate movement and kinesthetic activities into lessons and class activities.					
Students have the opportunity to develop social skills and relationships through class assignments and projects.					
Teachers create opportunities for students to work according to their particular learning styles and strengths.					
Students use appropriate language and speak respectfully to the teacher and to classmates.					
The curriculum units and lessons promote critical and higher-order thinking.					
Class activities and lessons allow students a variety of opportunities to achieve success.					

Classroom rules are posted.							
Teachers do not yell or use disrespectful language with children.							
Teachers model rather than lecture about desired behavior.							
A class meeting is held daily in every classroom.							
Teachers do not "put down," "single out," or embarrass students.							
Summary Score							

SOURCE: Copyright © 2004 by The Yale School Development Program, Yale Child Study Center. All rights reserved. Reprinted from *Dynamic Instructional Leadership to Support Student Learning and Development: The Field Guide to Comer Schools in Action*, by Edward T. Joyner, Michael Ben-Avie, and James P. Comer. Reproduction authorized only for the local school site that has purchased this book. www.corwinpress.com.

Figure 6.4 Parent involvement

Parents play an important role in supporting student learning and development.

	Highly Observable (5)	Observable (4)	Moderately Observable (3)	Minimally Observable (2)	Not Observable at This Point in Time (1)
Teachers involve parents in activities that directly relate to improving student performance.					
Parents work with students in small-group or one-on-one activities when appropriate.					
Parents model the guiding principles in their interactions with teachers and students.					
Parents help teachers with outreach efforts to other parents.					
Opportunities exist for parents to work with students according to the students' particular learning styles and strengths.					
Class activities and lessons give parents a variety of opportunities to work in meaningful ways with students.					
Summary Score					

SOURCE: Copyright © 2004 by The Yale School Development Program, Yale Child Study Center. All rights reserved. Reprinted from *Dynamic Instructional Leadership to Support Student Learning and Development: The Field Guide to Comer Schools in Action*, by Edward T. Joyner, Michael Ben-Avie, and James P. Comer. Reproduction authorized only for the local school site that has purchased this book. www.corwinpress.com.

Figure 6.5 Assessment and modification

Critical reflection and analysis of teaching and learning.

	Highly Observable (5)	Observable (4)	Moderately Observable (3)	Minimally Observable (2)	Not Observable at This Point in Time (1)
Teachers use research findings to make instructional decisions.					
Teachers seek to improve their practice through classroom observations of other teachers.					
Teachers incorporate ideas and information from staff development activities to improve their planning and teaching.					
Teachers assess students' social development as well as academic achievement.					
Teachers use authentic performance assessments to determine students' academic strengths.					
Teachers use data to adapt lessons to match students' learning styles.					
Summary Score					

SOURCE: Copyright © 2004 by The Yale School Development Program, Yale Child Study Center. All rights reserved. Reprinted from *Dynamic Instructional Leadership to Support Student Learning and Development: The Field Guide to Comer Schools in Action*, by Edward T. Joyner, Michael Ben-Avie, and James P. Comer. Reproduction authorized only for the local school site that has purchased this book. www.corwinpress.com.

Figure 6.6 Relationships

Teachers create a positive atmosphere that fosters positive relationships among students and with adults working in the classroom.

	Highly Observable (5)	Observable (4)	Moderately Observable (3)	Minimally Observable (2)	Not Observable at This Point in Time (1)
Teachers know students' family backgrounds, extracurricular activities, and personal interests.					
Teachers work to establish a positive classroom climate.					
Classroom rules are consistent with schoolwide expectations and are regularly reinforced.					
Classroom management strategies are used to foster positive behavior and interaction among the students.					
Teachers model good listening skills.					
Students use peer mediation and conflict resolution strategies.					
Teachers, students, and parents use the Comer guiding principles.					
Parents feel welcome in the classroom.					

There is a process for welcoming new students into the classroom.					
All students are treated respectfully.					
Teachers clearly articulate expectations for student behavior and interaction.					
Teachers establish an emotional bond with all the children in their classrooms.					
Summary Score					

SOURCE: Copyright © 2004 by The Yale School Development Program, Yale Child Study Center. All rights reserved. Reprinted from *Dynamic Instructional Leadership to Support Student Learning and Development: The Field Guide to Comer Schools in Action*, by Edward T. Joyner, Michael Ben-Avic, and James P. Comer. Reproduction authorized only for the local school site that has purchased this book. www.corwinpress.com.

Figure 6.7 Comprehensive planning

Teachers set achievable goals and develop plans to promote students' learning and development.

	Highly Observable (5)	Observable (4)	Moderately Observable (3)	Minimally Observable (2)	Not Observable at This Point in Time (1)
Teachers collaborate with students and parents to set achievable goals for the academic year.					
Teachers' weekly lesson plans reflect the six developmental pathways.					
Teachers plan and carry out a variety of ways for students to represent their learning about particular subjects.					
Teachers plan activities that reflect the students' cultures and backgrounds.					
Teachers have identified students in the lowest quartile and have developed strategies to meet their individual needs.					
Teachers know students' learning styles and plan activities that take into account individual preferences and abilities.					
Summary Score					

SOURCE: Copyright © 2004 by The Yale School Development Program, Yale Child Study Center. All rights reserved. Reprinted from *Dynamic Instructional Leadership to Support Student Learning and Development: The Field Guide to Comer Schools in Action*, by Edward T. Joyner, Michael Ben-Avie, and James P. Comer. Reproduction authorized only for the local school site that has purchased this book. www.corwimpres.com.

Figure 6.8 Summary scores

Teacher Name: Grade Level:

Number of students in class: Date of Observation:

Summary Scores for Comer-in-the Classroom Components

Component	Summary Score	Comments
Collaboration		
Consensus		
No-fault		
Developmental Focus		
Parent Involvement		
Assessment and Modification		
Relationships		
Comprehensive Planning		

General Comments and Observations:

SOURCE: Copyright © 2004 by The Yale School Development Program, Yale Child Study Center. All rights reserved. Reprinted from *Dynamic Instructional Leadership to Support Student Learning and Development: The Field Guide to Comer Schools in Action*, by Edward T. Joyner, Michael Ben-Avie, and James P. Comer. Reproduction authorized only for the local school site that has purchased this book. www.corwinpress.com.

REFERENCES

- Jensen, E. (1998). *Teaching with the brain in mind*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- National Center for Effective Schools Research and Development. (1989). *A conversation between James Comer and Ronald Edmonds: Fundamentals of effective school improvements*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.
- Ryan, K., & Cooper, J. (1995). *Those who can, teach*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

READ MORE ABOUT . . .

- In Chapter 7, "A Demonstration of Comer-in-the-Classroom," by Carol Pickett Ray, an elementary school principal offers a real-life case study in which Comer-in-the-Classroom transformed an almost-failing school into the school with the greatest improvement in its district.
- For a detailed description of the SDP Implementation Life Cycle, see "The School Development Program Implementation Life Cycle: A Guide for Planned Change," Chapter 18 in *Transforming School Leadership and Management to Support Student Learning and Development: The Field Guide to Comer Schools in Action* in this series.