

CPI *Unrestrained* Transcription

Episode 59: Rowand Robinson

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Host: Terry Vittone

Terry: Hello and welcome to *Unrestrained*, a CPI podcast series. This is your host, Terry Vittone, and today I'm joined by Rowand Robinson. He is a professor of special education at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Hello and welcome, Rowand.

Rowand: Good morning and thanks for having me.

Terry: Thank you. The main focus of our interview today is an assessment tool developed at Stanford University known as the edTPA, or the Educative Teacher Performance Assessment. The edTPA is a performance-based subject-specific assessment used by teacher preparation programs throughout the United States. It is intended to be used at the end of an educator preparation program for teacher licensure or certification and to support state and national program accreditation.

Essentially, it is designed to answer the question, is the new teacher ready for the job? And as a bit of a teaser, Professor Robinson is going to talk about how CPI training should be an essential prerequisite to successfully completing the edTPA and certification. All right, Rowand, let's begin by having you tell our listeners about your career path and how you came to be a professor of special education at University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

Rowand: Well, when I was graduating from Clemson, I had a degree in psychology and wasn't sure what I was going to do with that and ended up working in the mountains of North Carolina in a residential placement for troubled youth. And it was that experience that led me to decide to go back and get my teaching degree. So, I then went to the College of Charleston, got my teaching degree, taught for a number of years students that were identified as, at the time the term was "emotionally disturbed," in Charleston County School District.

I then traveled down to the University of Florida, where I got my doctorate in special education. Taught for a year at the University of South Carolina, working with student teachers at that point in time. Then I actually took a deviation where I worked in the business world as a human resources manager at a chemical manufacturer, kind of a little bit astray from my chosen field, and then went back to teaching in 2006, full-time, at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater in the Department of Special Education.

Terry: I see. So how do you like it so far up here?

Rowand: I still don't like the cold. You know, so I'm happy, [because], what was it, yesterday or the day before, I think it was, Sunday, when we had 100% humidity, and it was warm. I was in my element, but, you know, I don't complain just because who wants to hear it?

Terry: Well, I'm glad you found a home at Whitewater, and you could join us today. Let's move to the edTPA. Could you tell our listeners about the development of the edTPA and talk about the design and structure, what it intends to measure in assessing student teachers?

Rowand: Well, the edTPA, or at least a version of it, started in California years ago. And I'm not going to recall exactly the name it was under, but that kind of led to the development of the current-day instrument. That went through a lot of iterations. A lot of research went into identifying the components that needed to be measured when evaluating novice teachers. In this case, "teacher candidates" is the term.

Wisconsin got on board relatively early on. There are 18 states that have legislation or some sort of policy that mandates that teacher candidates use either specifically the edTPA or something that parallels components of the edTPA. Wisconsin is one that mandates specifically the edTPA. In 2015, all teacher preparation programs had to use it. At that point, they didn't have a cutoff score. So the programs would decide what the cutoff score or what passing was for their teacher candidates.

And then in 2016, it became a consequential year where Wisconsin identified, in this case, 38 for special education as a cutoff score. So if you got 38 or higher, you would be certified as a teacher, provided your program supported that. And if you get below that, then you would go back to the process of taking different parts of it or taking the entire edTPA. Well, I said there are 18 states that have a policy. There are, I believe, 41 states where there's at least one teacher

preparation program within the state that uses some form or fashion of it. And it's somewhere between 700 and 800 teacher prep programs across the United States, including the District of Columbia, that use portions of the edTPA. So you may have a state like Arizona that has only a couple of programs. It's not mandated by the state, but there's some programs that have chosen to use it at some point during their teacher preparation programs.

As it was developed, there are three tasks that teacher candidates have to complete: planning, instruction, and assessment. So at the planning stage, you're going through and developing lesson plans and how they're going to implement those lesson plans in the classroom. At the instruction stage, they actually go in; they implement the program. They videotape themselves so that you can see, are they effectively doing the techniques that they end up writing about in the edTPA? And then assessment, where they assess how the students did in the lessons that they put together, as well as how they did as teacher candidates.

Each of these tasks has five rubrics within the special education. Because dependent upon the area you talk about, there are a number of different handbooks that guide a teacher candidate through completing the edTPA. Some of them have 13 rubrics. Some have 15. The majority have 15, and then there's some that have 18 and there are corresponding cutoff scores that go along with each of those different books.

And within special education specifically, there are five rubrics within each of those tests. So you've got 15 total rubrics that teacher candidates will go through, and they've got a lot of guidance within there. They've also, hopefully, in most teacher prep programs, been prepared to complete the tasks that are associated with each of those various rubrics. And then they've got support during the process, during the student teaching phase, although you can't give direct feedback regarding that because you want them to independently complete it to substantiate that they are ready for first-year teaching.

Terry: Okay, what would be in one of those rubrics, as a list?

Rowand: Let's see. You know, in the planning stage, they'd be identifying a focus learner; they're going to focus on what the needs of that particular student are. So they would have a context that they would talk about, which would include the environment, including the school, the classroom, and the needs of that particular learner. And then they would talk about what, based on the strengths and weaknesses of that students, how they were developing the lesson plan. So you'd actually have the lesson plans that were sent to the evaluators.

You've got the videos that are sent to the evaluators. And a lot of that is written work, where they're reflecting on what they did, why they did it, how it worked out when all was said and done, what they would change. So, in terms of the written components, [there is] a lot of reflection on the teaching side of it. There's a lot related to assessment in terms of assessing how the lesson went, and they talk about that.

They talk about the changes that they would make in the lesson plans in the future or changes that they made while they were actually teaching. You know, let's say a student was exhibiting challenging behaviors and they had to kind of focus on that student for a little while to draw them back in. They may have to change, you know, what they're doing. Or if they're getting these questioning looks from students, what did they do to respond to the questioning looks, the questions that the students were posing?

Terry: So it sounds like a fairly comprehensive assessment tool. How long does it take for a teacher to complete the edTPA?

Rowand: It's during their student teaching experience. I'm going to go through the way we structure—different teacher prep programs may structure a little differently, but you're going to identify when you want to upload it and send it to the evaluators. And based on that, you will structure a timeline for them completing the different components. As they're doing this, of course, they are student teaching. So they're doing lesson planning separate from all of the components related to the edTPA. So they've got to be very structured in their approach to getting this done. So, they're spending a lot of late nights because, you know, school ends at the end of the day, and then they may have committees that they go to or other functions that they've got to attend, so they don't have lots of downtime. They've really got to figure out how they're going to put together opportunities to complete this.

One of the things that we do at Whitewater is we've got a class that accompanies it. So once a week, once every other week, they'll come to campus where they will debrief about components of the edTPA. Early on in the semester, we'll actually talk about, you know, here's the edTPA. It's just going to be a review because edTPA has been introduced to them at many points during their teacher preparation sequence earlier in terms of methods, courses that they had in semesters prior to actually completing this with one class that they take in the semester immediately preceding student teaching where they do

kind of an early edTPA, if you will, where they work on components of that to successfully complete it in their student teaching semester.

So, yes, they go a lot of gray (TV note: transcribed as spoken) because it is an anxiety-provoking experience, but they're well prepared for it. And the teachers that have taught that class that accompanies student teaching are very good about calming the student teachers down, about giving them the coping skills, if you will, to get through that very intense experience.

Terry: So it's a pretty comprehensive measure of how they are going to enter the school that they first teach in.

Rowand: Absolutely. And that's the idea, is that once they have completed this, along with whatever other components, as an example, in special education, that's one thing they have to complete. They also have to complete an IEP—an Individualized Education Plan—because that's going to be a big part of their responsibilities when they get out and they're teaching. They also complete a functional behavioral assessment where they're evaluating what the function of a student's behavior is and a plan to address that. So it's one component of passing student teaching that they have to complete in terms of that comprehensive experience.

Terry: In our pre-interview, you said that the edTPA can help teacher preparation programs align to a common goal of making sure new teachers are able to instruct students effectively and with improved achievement. Could you speak to that a little bit?

Rowand: So a big part of that instrument is reflection, where the student teachers are reflecting on what they're doing in the classroom in terms of lesson planning, in terms of behavior management, in terms of evaluating where students are. So it allows teachers to alter their teaching as they're going through to figure out what works, what doesn't work, and ultimately to improve their instruction to better meet the needs of their students at any level, K through 12.

Throughout, they reflect on, you know, what works and what needs to be modified. This is all written and submitted to reviewers who score the instrument to substantiate that they are at a stage of being a first-year teacher. So the idea is that when they get out, they are ready to meet the needs of the students that they're going to be teaching because they're no longer going to have a cooperating teacher that is able to mentor them in the same way, because, you know, a cooperating teacher is in that same classroom, and they've

got a lot more guidance ability. And while they may have a mentor in their first year of teaching, they're going to have to be equipped to handle any situation that arises, and this instrument can help substantiate [their ability to do that].

I wouldn't argue that it necessarily prepares them, because it's their teacher preparation programs that have done that to successfully complete this particular instrument. But it can help teacher preparation programs structure the methods courses and the experiences that they put in place for teacher candidates to go through, so that they are, one, equipped to complete this instrument. But by equip—you know, by completing this instrument, it's substantiating that they're ready to go out there and teach.

Terry: Now for teachers who may be listening out there, student teachers who are hearing this, it's in the majority of states. Now, do you see it gathering momentum to where it will become a universal prerequisite in the States?

Rowand: It's gained momentum over the years. I know the ultimate goal would be if you had all 50 states and the District of Columbia had the same instrument. That [if] I get a teaching degree, a teaching license in Wisconsin, I can easily take that to Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, and I'm naming off states that actually have a policy in place. It's interesting. There's a hub in the Midwest where these different states, Illinois, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, and all four of the states that have a policy that mandates the edTPA or something very, very similar be used during student teaching.

Well, if I'm in Wisconsin and I've completed the edTPA, I go to Illinois, I don't have to complete that instrument again. Now, there are still some other requirements that a state may have. They may have a different test or a different course that they want you to take. As an example, in Wisconsin, you have to take an Introduction to Special Education course or something that's introduced you to that population. And you have to have had some kind of conflict resolution exposure, so they may have to go back and take some of those courses.

Conversely, in Illinois, you have to take a course that exposes you to methods of working with students [who are] English language learners. So there may be some other requirements that they've got to complete. But ultimately, when all is said and done, the idea, when it initially started, was to make it similar across states so that we could have highly qualified teachers going from state to state without having these huge hurdles to overcome or extra steps that they have to go through in order to begin teaching in those states because we already know they're qualified to meet the needs of K through 12 students.

Terry: So, it helps not only with effectiveness but with the efficiency of traveling and for teachers moving around the country?

Rowand: It can, absolutely, dependent upon what that particular state mandates, but that is, I think, the ultimate goal. And I'm not part of Stanford or Pearson or any of that, so I don't want to speak for them. But it makes sense to me that we have a standardized process for meeting or identifying whether teachers are qualified so that we can get those highly qualified teachers more quickly in the classroom to meet the needs of students.

Terry: All right. Well, now that we understand something about the edTPA, let's bridge into how CPI training is going to fit into this as it does now at Whitewater. Could you start by talking about your first experience receiving CPI training? Could you tell that story?

Rowand: Well, rolling back a few years, 1989, when I just graduated, I started working in the mountains of North Carolina with adjudicated youth. And part of the training that I went through included CPI training where I traveled to Florida. I was working in North Carolina and traveled to Florida and went through CPR (TV note: he says "CPR" here) *Nonviolent Crisis Intervention*® training, lifesaving, and things of that nature so that I'd be prepared to work with this population. And at that particular time, it's very different than it is—it's transformed over the years is what it amounts to. Because you would have prone positions in that particular point in time, which was not unusual for any program at that particular point in time. But as research and time has gone on, we've learned that you can cut off airways and those [prone positions] can be dangerous positions. So it's changed over the years to make sure that everybody that's involved in restraint is safe.

The other part that hit me at that particular point in time, when I'm going into this training, I'm thinking that it's about restraint. And I've, you know, even at that point, I started to learn that lesson. But as I became a trainer myself, working with higher education students, I learned that it's more about avoiding getting to that stage of having to restrain. That's the bigger emphasis of, hopefully, most of these programs, but I know CPI just because I've been involved with it for so many years, that is the true focus of it is to avoid ever getting to that stage. Because that's when people get injured, is when you're restraining, and you want to leave control of behavior with the individual rather than taking that control.

So I also learned that, you know, I think one of the reasons that people think that that is the biggest emphasis is because when you go through training, physical movement needs to have a lot of emphasis so that you know how to safely do the restraints. But it doesn't mean that it's necessarily the major emphasis that you're focusing on. While, you know, muscle memory requires a little more emphasis in terms of making sure we remember it, and it takes me back to the first restraint I was ever involved in.

When I worked in the mountains of North Carolina, the main area was about a mile from our sleeping area. And we would travel up the mountain, and then you learn really how quickly it can get dark on the mountain when you don't have night lights. And, you know, we had a lantern, a kerosene lantern at the front of the line, and a kerosene lantern at the back of the line. And in this particular setting, anybody could call what was called a huddle. And it was a group problem-solving session when somebody felt they, you know, somebody else had done something wrong. And I'm going up the mountain, and it's me and 12 youths that I'm working with. And somebody calls a huddle, and I'm not going through those steps of, "How do I avoid getting to the restraint stage?"

And I've got one child on either side of this particular huddle, which is a circle. And as I turn my back, the smaller of the ones was doing—I couldn't even tell you to this day what he was doing, but he was egging on this 180-pound 13-year-old. And one time when I turned away from the 13-year-old, I've got this child diving across the huddle to pummel this 11-, 12-year old that is very small. And this being a very new process for me at the time, I'm more in football mode than I am in "How do I safely restrain him?", and I realized I'd lost control when I was on a bucking bronco in the middle of the night sending students up the mountain to get my co-counselor to come in and help me regain control.

So therein lies the reason that you go through this training and then you have follow-up sessions where you practice so that you don't get to that stage of, you know—because if I were more seasoned at that particular point in time, hopefully, I [would] avoid ever getting to having to restrain because I'm going through things of, how do I de-escalate the situation? How do I get both of them in front of me so that I know what's going on at all times? But I was 23 at the time and, you know, at 52, I'm not necessarily much smarter, but.

Terry: But you see how the CPI behavioral model, you know, the *Crisis Development Mode*SM could have maybe prevented the physical . . .

Rowand: Absolutely. Had I used it more effectively in practice, I'm uncertain I'd have been more likely, you know, maybe I'd have been in a restraint, but I would have been a lot less likely to have ever gotten to that stage.

Terry: A fascinating story. And how did it resolve?

Rowand: Oh, everything was fine. You know, nobody got hurt. You know, he probably had about 40 pounds on me. But one of the things I learned is that the relationship skills and things—he actually wanted to be controlled in that particular instance is what I've realized, you know, in looking back and me reflecting on it. Because he probably could have bucked me off, but he wanted that control in there.

Sometimes, you know, we need outside forces to, you know, help control us, you know, whether it be verbally helping us get through a situation or, in this particular case, physically. And it truly is—and this is a staple of the CPI program—it is a last resort. It's the very last thing you want to do. It's a very unsettling experience to have to restrain somebody, in my opinion. So I want to learn the strategies to calm situations down and not get to that because I don't want to do that. And I'm sure the students that, you know, who's being restrained—client, students—they don't want to get to that stage either. So if we're effective at using the strategies we learn at, you know, CPI and I'm sure there are other programs out there, I won't talk about them because I don't know about them, then everybody's safer. We're more effective at teaching. We're more effective at meeting the needs in mental health facilities, you know, in my case, it would be juvenile correctional facility-type settings, when we use those strategies effectively.

Terry: I see. Well, Rowand, one of the primary reasons you granted CPI an interview is to talk about how student teachers could rely on CPI training to help them successfully complete the edTPA. So I'm wondering if you'd talk about why CPI approaches to behavior management are so important to how student teachers address challenging student behaviors, and how it can carry through to their actual implementation in the classroom.

Rowand: So, I'll talk about—there are a lot of parallels between many of the things that are taught in CPI training and the edTPA. The reflective component is one example specifically of that. Because, you know, as an example, and I've talked a little bit about this already, the edTPA is largely a reflective instrument, where we reflect on why we make different decisions. We reflect on how they work, did it work, didn't it work, what would I change. So there's a huge reflective

component there. CPI parallels exactly that. As an example, Postvention, where we go through that reflective model.

You know, and there are some—I know COPING is the acronym that's used there. There are some, you know, some of those letters, investigating, parallels exactly what goes on with the edTPA. I investigate what worked for me as a teacher in terms of lesson planning. I investigate how the students responded, and the changes I can make to better meet their needs. I'm trying to think of, you know, some of the other letters in there . . .

Terry: Control, orient, pattern, investigate . . .

Rowand: Patterns is the other one. You know, in terms of the patterns, you're looking for patterns that go on. What did I do as a teacher that worked, that didn't work, so that I can either replicate it or replace it? How did students respond, and what are different things that they can do? You know, with [something] as simple as I see a student that is starting to lose control when a math sheet goes in front of them. So, I can think of, you know, what pattern should I follow? You know, did I give them a forewarning that this is what was coming up because I've got a student that I know every time they see math problems, they get set off.

I can also look at what are the patterns to them? They see the math sheet, they immediately escalate in behavior. So I can teach them to raise their hand and ask for help or to get some other kind of guidance that helps them to cope in that situation. So those are things that teacher candidates need that are taught in their teacher prep programs, but at the same time are taught in CPI training. So it reinforces many of the same concepts, many of the same methodologies that they need to be effective teachers. I don't know if you want me to get to the stage I didn't talk about where it fits in, you know, UWW's Special Education program.

Terry: Oh, that is my next question, talk about the role that CPI training plays in special ed at Whitewater.

Rowand: So, and that'll help me answer both questions at the same time.

Terry: Great.

Rowand: At Whitewater, and it predates me, I've been at Whitewater since 2001. I started there part-time, and it was already in place at Whitewater at that particular point in time. And I would have begun teaching it in 2006 when I was a full-time

teacher, the CPI component, to our student teachers. When I initially got there, it was two semesters before student teaching. We found that training was better suited to immediately precede student teaching so that they went through that training immediately prior to going into the experience where they needed to use some of those strategies to be more effective.

So, in the semester immediately preceding student teaching, they've got a methods course where it, in large, focuses on functional behavioral assessment, another strategy to avoid ever getting to that stage of students being out of control. But towards the end of that, there are a couple of days that they go in for training where they learn how to effectively use—they learn about the restraints, but they learn also how to avoid getting to that stage because they go through that training.

And that's been a staple of the program for longer than I've been a staple of the program. And I foresee it continuing on into the future because the faculty that predate me, that I currently work with, saw the merit in that being a component of our particular program. And it continues to be, you know, a big part of it because, as a matter of fact, many of the places that they go for teaching want them to have training like that because of them being better prepared. And then we get feedback from the, you know, the teachers that they were able to implement some of the things that they learned in that training to be effective with working with our students.

In terms of the parallels to the edTPA, I talked about the learning about reflection, and that being a huge component of the edTPA as well, you know, reflecting. So they've had practice with reflecting in many different scenarios. They also see that reflection is an important part of life, I think, that we don't just see it in a classroom that I'm talking about it. We see that it's part of the programs outside of the university that I then take these skills and then am able to implement them in actual settings, you know, whether it be for the student teachers or teacher candidates. They get, currently, three field placements even before they get to student teaching.

So they've had settings that they're in before they learn about some of the strategies, that they may have seen, "Well, it would have been useful to have had that, you know, a semester before when I was in the setting." And then they see it after they've learned about it, you know, implementing it. And, you know, sometimes realizing, "Okay, I need to relearn some of those skills." And then they've got people that they can go back to and talk to about, you know, "I went to this situation, can you tell me based on me describing what happened, you

know, what I could do differently?" And we can help them reflect as well in that particular situation.

But how I see CPI, I see it as a support mechanism for student teachers when they're getting in there, because they're going to have to deal with behavior when they get in classrooms. So when I'm videotaping, and I have a student that decides not to follow my directions, how do I reguide them? You know, how do I think about approaching this particular situation in a different way so that I redirect them? A big part of CPI is how to redirect students. While we do the same thing in classrooms, we redirect them back to the lesson. We redirect them, you know, in other ways. We figure out, "Okay, they need a break." You know, which is another part, and I'm not going to remember exactly how it fits in, but I know that's a big part of CPI. How do we give them coping mechanisms as students as well as me having a coping mechanism as a teacher? I'm not sure if I completely answered your question there.

Terry: Well, I think so. I mean, I think this idea of reflection, it relates back to, for instance, in CPI, how a comprehensive debrief is an essential part of managing a behavioral incident. And this is a key component of the reflective nature of what a student teacher would do, looking back on their performance.

Rowand: Absolutely. And one of the areas that they do that with is the videotaping, because—we talked about those three tasks: planning, instruction, and assessment. That middle one, instruction, is where they actually implement the lesson and they videotape themselves. They have up to 20 minutes of videotaping, and they highlight in there things that work, things that didn't work, things that they would change. Again, it's back to that reflective component of where I'm looking from the outside in at myself, and figuring out how I can better approach different situations or approach them in the same way when it work because 9 times out of 10, when they get to that stage, they have gone through a lot of preparation to be successful.

Now, we're never going to be perfect. We're always going to have a room for improvement. So they're going to identify areas, and we want you to be able to—our teacher candidates to be able to look at themselves teaching, reflect on that, and see, "What can I improve to better meet the needs of students in the future?" Also reflecting on this idea that, "Wow, that worked, but I need to be cognizant of the idea that it's not necessarily going to work with every other student I come into contact with, or every other setting that I go into." So realizing that even though it worked this particular time, I get into another situation, another student that reacts differently, that has different needs, I may

have to do something different in that particular moment. And it's really about preparing teachers to think on their feet and to think for themselves.

You know, I can give 200 different scenarios, and the 201st scenario may be the one that they encounter when they get out into teaching. So, you know, and many things that I've read or talked about, I talk about, is teaching them *how* to think, not *what* to think. And I want my teachers that go out into the classroom to do the same things with their K through 12 students, because we're not always there with them, and I can't think for them. This is no different than my daughters. You know, they're now all off to college, and I can't be there to wake them up in the morning and say, "Okay, you got to do this." They've got to think for themselves, and we want our teacher candidates to do exactly that and to then model that for their K through 12 students so that, ultimately, they are approaching novel situations.

I think back to my first year of teaching, and I went through a teacher prep program that prepared me to be a first-year teacher. But I'm out there, and I've got a classroom that has two biological brothers that live a mile apart because they're in two different foster homes: a second grader and a third grader. And the second grader has a foster brother that's also in my classroom. Well, who would ever think that that would be a situation that you would be faced with in your first year of teaching? You know, it's something you can't be prepared for.

But my teacher prep program, the professors that I worked with, had taught me to think in novel situations so that I could address it, realizing that the family time of these two biological brothers was in my classroom, so I needed to create opportunities for them to experience that. Understanding that there's this new dynamic because you've got a foster brother that lives with one of the biological brothers that has got a different relationship that you could have, you know, jealousy that could go on between the biological brother. You know, who knows what's going to transpire in a situation like that.

Terry: So, do you see a paradigm shift, then, to go in [t]here and say that teachers would not rate their effectiveness based on their students', say, something hard [factual] like their test scores, but more on their overall management of the classroom as a learning environment?

Rowand: Well, different teachers are going to look at it differently. Absolutely, classroom management and how they effectively structure a classroom to meet the needs of students so that learning goes on so that we increase that engaged learning time. You know, there are some things that we do outside of classes that can

allow us to do that, whether it'd be decreasing transition times would be one example, but we're increasing that engage time.

One way to do that is to make sure that they effectively manage the classroom. And when I say managing, we often think of behavior management, and that's a huge component where CPI falls into helping us to better manage the behavior that's going on. But it can be as simple as, "How do I manage the student raising their hand? Do I have a strategy that allows them to continue working while I'm working with student A, while I, you know, rather than them sitting and twiddling their thumbs while they're waiting on me to get there?" And it could be something as simple as, you know, placards that [say], you know, "It's green. I'm good to go." Or I flip it to red, and I know, "Okay, they've got a question." Or they can continue working past where they hit the roadblock and continue learning, and then I get there, and I can help them in the area. So management means a whole lot of things. But I do think you're right in determining that how I manage the classroom overall is going to be one component of how I evaluate. And then how my students are after they get out of my classroom would be another way I evaluate that.

Now the problem there is I don't see often unless a student comes back, and every once in a while, that happens, but that happens with far fewer than you don't see where them being successful in the next classroom when they graduate in their lives. We as teachers don't see that typically. We don't hear from our students. So that would be another way that I can't necessarily know how I would evaluate myself on that because I don't see how it turns out. But that would be another way that I'd evaluate the success of teachers, at least personally, for me.

Terry: All right, well to close today, from your experience and study, what are the most important tools teachers can use to create and sustain a safe classroom environment?

Rowand: Well, I'm going to say the first thing is to enjoy being a teacher. You know, and that's with any career, obviously, but I go into a career because that's what I want to do. So I need to enjoy people and students. You need to realize that you'll make mistakes and that we're going to learn from those mistakes. And be willing to reflect on what happened to improve your practice in the future, and to rely on the resources that we've got at hand. And an example of that would be if I've gone through CPI training or something similar, where I can rely on that training, rely on the instructors or materials that I've gotten to look back and refresh my memory, rely on the resources you've gotten at school. And when I

say resources, we often think of money, but 90% of your resources are not money. It's relying on the teacher next door to get ideas of, "I'm working with Johnny, and I can't figure out what to do in this particular situation." And they go, "Well, you know, when I had him in the year before, or when I had him for, you know, reading or math, this is what I do."

So, again, relying on the expertise of other people, whether it be in the setting you're in or people that, you know, you have a good relationship with, mentors, if you will, that you can go back to, materials that you were given during that time frame. And be open to changing based on the feedback that you get from your own reflection where you're providing yourself with feedback as well as feedback from outside individuals. One of the—I used to have some consultants that would come into my classroom.

And when I first started teaching, my behavior management system was a check every time a student would do something that they weren't supposed to do. And the second check, they'd get a warning. The third check, they'd be sent to the office. The fourth check, you know, they'd be sent home. And I'm not remembering exactly how it was structured, but, you know, the joke I tell is by the time I realized all my students had gone home one day, I realized that was not a good situation or a good behavior management strategy. Consultant comes in, and he had me change my style where I had a point system for the students engaging in the behaviors you wanted to see, they would earn points.

So I'm teaching the behaviors I want to see. I'm not focusing on the negative, I'm now focusing on the positive, and it worked a lot better in terms of maintaining the classroom environment that I wanted to. And that allowed me to meet the needs of my students both behaviorally and academically by listening to some of those resources and relying on the other experts, another set of eyes that can help you here and there. The experiences that I've had, one example being, you know, for me, it was *Nonviolent Crisis Intervention*[®] training, you know, [it] helped me to have the tools to best meet the needs of my students.

Terry: And a common language with other teachers.

Rowand: Absolutely. You know, when you've gone to the same training, then when I use words like Postvention, which is not something you hear on a regular basis, they know, "Oh, I know exactly what—okay, let's talk about the *COPING Model*SM," and, you know, the different components of that.

Terry: Excellent. Well, thank you, Rowand. My guest today has been Rowand Robinson. He is a professor of special education at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Thank you so much, Rowand.

Rowand: Oh, thanks for having me. I really enjoyed it.

Terry: Me, too. And thank you all for listening.