

## Teacher Commentary Transcript

J: Joanne Durham, Literacy Consultant (Interviewer); I: Irby DuBose, Pate Elementary (Teacher)

### PRIOR TO THE LESSON

J: Irby, today was the first day when they began researching their own animals, right? So talk about some of the preparation you did to get them there.

I: We started with charts where they're telling me what they think they know about their animal and what they're wondering about their animal and we did that yesterday. They chose their animal and started those charts

J: Tell me about them choosing their animal. How did that happen? Did you give them choices among – how did they come up with their animal?

I: For this I gave them some choices, I had about 10 animals that I knew I could find good resources on. We're going to the zoo, so I picked a few they might see at the zoo. I picked a few that I thought were just interesting and they might be into. But we made a big list a few weeks ago of lots of animals and I picked from that list

J: So you wound up with 8 animals, OK,  
So was A the only frog?

I: No Ma'am, there's another frog, but she wasn't here today.

J: OK, good. So everybody has at least one other person who has their partner as well.

J: For the charts, you met with each of the groups in small group to talk about what they were thinking and wondering –

I: Right

J: OK. I: And we'll still stick with the RAN chart with the confirmations and misconceptions. I really like using that when we're doing research. So we'll still talk about that as we do research. We'll talk about what we thought we knew before, was it a misconception or a confirmation and note it on our chart.

### CONNECT/ENGAGE

J: So then today they went to research their animals. So talk about the stations that you had.

I: I had a journal writing station, and that's where they take books and write in the journal what they're learning. I had the Fact Tree. I had two sketch to stretches, 2 graffiti boards, 1 I-Pad station, and a buddy-reading station.

J: Talk about the I-Pad station and what's on there.

I: We use the San Diego zoo website and they have live cameras on some of their animals. Today the only animal that was awake was the penguin, which worked out well since we've been researching penguins. That group is actually the rabbit group, but I thought today it would be nice if they could sit with the penguins. That's what's nice about this structure. They can pick up Monday with their rabbit research and nothing's really lost. They still have plenty of time to learn and do all the stations. 4:58 Since penguins are probably the only animals we have that we can watch on the I-pad, I'll probably just keep penguins on the I-pad. And since we've spent so much time researching them, it's just a great visual, a live feed of a penguin.

J: And then, buddy reading? What is different there than any of the other stations?

I: It's supposed to be more of a collaborative, let's look at these books together and see what we can

learn together.

J: I saw them, at the beginning I was very impressed with the body language that they had of looking at the book together and pointing things out to each other in the book and showing things to each other. So I thought that that was a very nice addition because sometimes one child will be able to read something that someone else won't, or notice something somebody else doesn't.

I: That's the point of that station so they can really interact with the books together. That's why we call it buddy reading.

### **INDEPENDENT PRACTICE 1**

J: So from what they did today, what were some of the things you noticed from their work?

I: Today I was really impressed with – they did the stations really well independently. The chicken group - I was really impressed with them.

She was wondering what chickens eat – that was one of their questions. What do chickens eat? It was this little girl. This is when it's really great to be conferring and spread yourself around so you can see what they're doing. She had a bit of a misconception. She saw a chicken and an egg, and she said the chickens must eat the eggs. So I said let's look at that closely, show me where you found that. And she was a little confused from just looking at the picture. So I said let me read that to you and we decided, oh, yea, a chicken isn't eating that egg. So I just got her a new sticky note and put it on top of it. And I said, well let's look in another book and see if we can find what they eat. And she found it, completely by herself. She said, oh, there. There was a picture of a chicken eating a bowl of chicken feed.

J: And the way you conferred, too, where you're asking them about their pictures and having them tell you about it, that's a great way in to being able to find out if there are things that need to be clarified.

I: And I love this. What does it look like? She must have seen me – I didn't do this with her, but she must have seen me put the sticky on top, so she drew this first, I remember her telling me about this - they have red faces and brown bodies. So I said let's see if we can find out more about it. And she found a great picture where the chicken was labeled and so she labeled the chicken – the legs, the beak, the feathers, spurs. So I think that was great. And I love how she did that independently after I conferred with her on this, but I hadn't seen this until just now. So that was really interesting.

J: And all that conversation you've had with them in lessons about the nonfiction text features, when it comes down to this they can label it themselves

I: Horses. She did all these pictures. So I said let's see if we can add some words. They're at the point where they can add some words. So I said what does it look like, and she said their bodies look like zebras. And I asked her to elaborate, and she said it's their bodies, they have legs, and a head, so she wrote, 'their bodies look like zebras.' What do they eat? They eat hay. And we found the picture and there was a label so she wrote hay from the label. And then this one was really interesting. She said they live in a barn. Another little boy at the table had a book and he said, 'here's a barn' so they worked together. He showed her a picture that had the word barn. And a fun fact, you can ride them.

J: I think their interest in the words and how they look and how to write them is really piqued by this, don't you think, because they want to write what goes with their picture because they're learning about it.

I: Right

### **INDEPENDENT PRACTICE 2**

I: The spiders, I was really impressed with the spider group on the graffiti boards. They were finding out lots of things and asking smart questions, like they make webs but why are they sticky, and they found out about the egg sac where they lay their eggs, and they bite people when they're scared. They

were finding out really great things about spiders.

J: And did some of that come about as they were showing you their pictures, or how did that develop?

I: I was fascinated because when I sat down with them – I guess they're trying to learn where to look, if that makes sense. Like she saw the egg sac and said what's that. They were really doing it pretty independently. I was just watching and facilitating.

J: So maybe this process of having a good bit of time to spend with it, and think about it, and draw it, gives their brains a little room to think and wonder. I was noticing how engaged they all stayed in looking at the books and drawing about them, and even at the end when we were asking about the researching, they still wanted to share about the knowledge that they had gained or the questions they have.

I: They talk about it all day. We'll be going to PE and A will say, you know that frogs are different colors. They really embrace the researcher spirit, I guess.

### **ASSESSMENT**

J: As the kids were working, you were taking notes. Can you share with us some of things you jotted down and what you're going to do with those notes.

I: When I went around, I was hearing what they were learning, and trying to guide them back to their chart and what they were wondering and thinking, and then I try to write down, like today I focused on what kind of facts they were finding so I could keep it straight and add it to our charts.

J: So here's you're jotting down with each child you talked to about what they're learning, so then you can use those when you come back to share, right?

I: Right

J: And what do you do next?

I: What we do next is each child has a research folder, and eventually, where we're going with this, each child will be in charge of their own research folder. But for now at this point in the year, I'm the keeper of the folders. And what I do is any kind of artifacts they collect during their research, anything like this where they wrote down facts on sticky notes, I just keep it all in one folder.

I: So this is this child's notes, then I would stick it in their folder, so I could keep up with who I conferenced with, and what we talked about when we conferenced. It's a good way for me to make sure I conference with everybody when we research, and to keep up with who is learning what. I think sometimes when you put them on the chart it's easy for one child to add everything to the chart. This is an easy way for me to keep up with this child really learned a lot, but this child doesn't have much, so let me make sure I sit with them. Do they not understand the station, or are they not really into their animal, or are they not really confident about what they are supposed to be doing? So that's why I like doing these notes on sticky notes.

J: That makes a lot of sense. And then you're also going to put their work in there as well.

I: Then at the end of the unit they'll have a folder of information they've learned. They can use that to make their final projects. So it's just me guiding them to when they're a little older and you have to keep notebooks and take notes and keep all your stuff organized in one place, it's us getting there. Hopefully by the end of the year they can be in charge of the folder themselves, so they can take it to their station, and when time's up they can put their own information and artifacts, and then I can just go through and put the notes. But now at this stage, I like to do it. I like to see exactly what each child did before I put it in the folder, but by the end of the year, they'll be able to do it. The same thing with our charts. Our goal at the end of the year is for them to be in charge of their own chart, so I don't have to write it, they are more in charge of doing it themselves. So if they have new learning they can go stick it on the chart and don't have to wait on me.

## REFLECTIONS AND NEXT STEPS

J: How long will they work on going to the different stations to work on their animals?

I: It just depends. Some animals I find maybe have more to learn. But about a week, probably we wouldn't spend more than a week going to the different stations and learning about the different animals.

J: And then they'll take that information and present it in some kind of way? Come up with something?

I: And that usually takes a few days, taking the information and putting it into some kind of presentation form, whether that be a book that they read aloud to the class, or a poster, or a model of some sort. Whatever they choose to do, that usually takes at least 2 days. If they're writing a book it could take longer.

J: And will they work together on that presentation or do their own or choose?

I: They have the option of working together if they want. It's really great when they write books together. That's always fun to see, so then they are co-authors and co-illustrators, and they work together on the pictures, and somebody might be the illustrator and somebody might be the author. so then you'll do the pictures and I'll do the words.

If somebody wants to be a loner, it's OK, they can do it by themselves, whatever is best for that child. Some children might need that little bit of extra support, and some might be more confident working alone.

J: Any final thoughts about this process? Anything you've been learning from them

I: I think this whole concept of doing research, they will do whatever I expect them to do. We have really high expectations for them with this research. I was kind of intimidated when I started doing this with kindergartners because there aren't many books they can read on their level and their writing is different from first and second grade, but I think if you want them to do it and give them enough support, they'll get there. 24:36 and we love it, and they love it, they're really into it, and I think that's important.