**Teacher Commentary – Level 13 Sample Lesson Day 1, Karen Branch, McLees Elementary School**

*Joanne Durham, Interviewer (I); Karen Branch, Teacher (T)*

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| **Segment** | **Transcript** |
| **Introduction to the Lesson** (2:20) | I: So tell us a little about the children in this group in terms of strengths and needs that you’ve been observing that inform your teaching.T: These students are almost caught up to average in their class but they still have – one of them wants to go almost letter by letter at every word instead of using meaning, and then I’ve got the other three want to use meaning but not necessarily make sure that it looks right all the way through. They want to just use the first letter or two, and if it makes sense, they’re fine with it. So there are kind of different needs but within the group, I’m trying to teach them that it has to make sense and look right all the way through. So that way, even though their needs are a little bit different, the teaching point, or my focus, is the same for them.I: So talk about what in this particular lesson was your focus?T: Looking all the way through words, and using meaning. So using meaning while using more visual information. I wanted them to take a good visual scan and then think about what would make sense, because it’s not just about looking and it’s not just about meaning, butI: It’s about the two things together T: Integrating them together. I: You chose the book, *Ratty-Tatty*. This was a level 13, so tell us about your choice of the book.T: One of the reasons I chose it is because of interest. I thought they would think it was funny and would want to read it. We want children to want to read not just have to. And then I thought it would help propel them, because there’s so much repetition in it, that that would get their system going, so that when they got to the tricky part, they had enough momentum in the meaning. And it would also help with their fluency. If you listen to that group, they don’t sound robotic, but they’re not as phrased and fluent as you would like for them to be. So book choice will help them maybe get that ear for it and start putting it together and make it sound like talking. |
| **Book Introduction**(2:28) | I: Talk about your book introduction in relation to what you’re trying to work with them on.T: In the book introduction, I didn’t give them a whole lot, because there weren’t very many places where they were going to have to work. So I just did an overview of the book and I left off the ending to get them thinking about what they think might happen. I had them repeat “Ratty-Tatty is no good, I would catch her if I could” because a lot of times that will trick kids if they expect it to say “not good”. So that’s a little bit different structure than they would expect. And “touched” is the only word I had them locate, and it was on a page that also had “trap,” so they had to look and really check. They couldn’t just look at the first letter. They had to look past the first letter, which is what I’m trying to get them to do. The rest of it I just told them that Ratty-Tatty liked to steal food and they were going to come up with a plan, and let’s read and see if it worked. So that way they have a reason for reading; they’re reading to find out if the plan works and what happens to Ratty-Tatty. I: How is this book introduction different than maybe when you were working with these same children a few months ago, when they were at an 8 or so.T: At lower levels, you might look at every page and have them discuss every page, what happens on this page, what happens next. Today it was just, “turn, turn” – so they could see it, but it wasn’t a discussion about each page. At this point, by level 13, they should be able to just glance and think in their heads what’s happening without having to verbalize and spend so much time. At a level 13, it takes them longer to read at a level 8. In the lower levels, you go page by page, but now they just need to turn to the few pages that might have tricky things, like the structure and then “touched.” I think those were the only two pages we really talked about. I: And also you’ve given them that overview then they can use the big picture more than the specifics.  |
| **Reading the New Book: Supporting and Prompting** (1:36) | I: As you were listening to them, what did you hear them doing – where they were using the strategies you want them to use, or what did you see that you wanted to work on?T: One child who got to “sniffed” said “sn-iff-ed” so they did see the first part and take a good look through. One said a “snippy trap” and then took a better look because they knew that “snippy trap” didn’t make sense. I: And self-corrected there?T: Yes. And also said “tooked it” for “touched it” but then went back and self-corrected. So they were making sure that it looked right and made sense. I did have one gross visual error one of them said “snatched” it instead of “touched” it. It made sense but it was a gross visual error. I: The child didn’t notice, just kept going?T: Yes. I: And these are your notes that you were taking as you listened – you have them by each child and what they were thinking, what errors they made and what you noticed (camera close-up of the teacher’s notes)T: And what they did, like the rereading, which is important – oh, that didn’t make sense, let me go back and think what else could make sense and look right. I: So this led to your teaching point  |
| **Comprehension** (00:42) | I: In relation to their understanding the story, you did a quick piece around the idea of clever. Talk about that. T: So I just wanted to ask to make sure that they got the story, that they understood what they had read. Then tomorrow we’ll focus more on comprehension because they’ll summarize the story tomorrow. Today I wanted to make sure that they got it, so we can go forward tomorrow. If today they had no idea, then that would have changed what I do tomorrow. I: And also you want to reinforce that the meaning is why you’re readingT: You’re reading for meaning; it’s not just about the words, getting the words right, it’s about what you’re reading.  |
| **Teaching Point** (1:17) | I: So talk about your teaching point.T: My teaching point was praising them for using that further visual information. A lot of times they don’t remember this is what you want them to do. But if you praise them – I like how you did this – they want to keep doing it over and over again. So just that “snappy” going all the way to the end – snap-py, and the same thing for “sniffed.” They both start the same but you have to look all the way through and see what made sense. That’s why I took them back to the text, so we think that’s what it is, it looks right, but let’s make sure it makes sense too. I: Then also since these are longer words now, they are having to look at more parts of them, right? Is that something that’s newer to them now?T: It’s not necessarily new, but it’s something they still struggle with. Finding those smaller parts, sometimes they still want to go letter by letter. If they get to “start” they might want to say, s-t-a-r-t instead of using that whole part, “ar”. |
| **Word Work** (2:40) | T: The word work is using “see” and “car” – because the “ee” – almost always it says “ee” together. There aren’t many places where you see “ee” together that it doesn’t say “e”. Some others – like ‘ea” doesn’t always say “ee”. That one is pretty steadfast that it works. And they’ll see it a lot. And then “car”. I wish I had written “see” and “car” instead of “ee” and “ar”. So they could see the whole word and then the part inside of the word, to make that connection better. If I could go back, that’s definitely what I would do. Then we’ll gradually work up and do harder – where the “ar” is embedded more than just “hard” or “start” – I: Like “party” or somethingT: Where it’s embedded moreI: And why do you think it would have been important to put the wordT: Because that way it’s a word that they know, because how often are you going to just see “ee”? You are going to see it in a word where you have to break that word and use the part. So that’s why I wish I had had it so they could see that they would break it and just use the “ee” part. So that way it was in a real word, not just letters.I: But the issue about using the “ar” - talk about how that’s helping them now as they’re moving up.T: The more they see that part, the faster they’ll be able, when they come to difficulty, to scan and find those parts that they know, instead of taking forever to say “st-a-r-t” they can just see it. And the more they see it, the more familiar they are with it, and the more they’ll use it when they get to those tricky parts. I: And the actual process that you used, of the cards, anything about that, any variations you use on that sometimes? T: As we do this more and more, I’ll have them to actually write it. I’ll give them the word and they will write it. Which word is going to help you? Now you write it. So they are reading it, writing it, and then reading it again, to get all those systems together. The more they move, the more it’s going to engage their brain and help them remember.I: Is it important them to verbalize it also?T: Yes. |
| **Lesson Planning** (3:17) | I: Any organizational tips about how you get ready or plan for your lesson?T: Well first, books. If you don’t have good books, then your lesson isn’t going to go very well. No matter how great your introduction is, if you don’t have good little books, if you have basals that you’re trying to teach guided reading out of, it’s not going to go very well. So I always look at what books we have and I let that guide. I put them in a sequence from what I think will be the easiest to the hardest. Then I think about what have they done in the last few days. Is this book going to help them with their processing? Is it going to help them get anywhere? Is it not? And then I think about the tricky parts, where are they going to have to work? The first thing I do is write down all the places I think they might have to work and then I go back and look – OK, this is a concept, so that’s something that I’ll give them; this will be a new and important word that they’ll have to locate, and then structurally if there’s anything. Then I form my introduction based on what I’m going to give them, these are the tricky parts, this is how I’m going to introduce it. I: Then during the lesson, you’re just paying really close attention to what they do so you can figure out what your teaching point is going to be. But since you chose the book based on where you think they are, you had a pretty good ideaT: I anticipated where they would have some issues. But sometimes what they do is nowhere what I think they’re going to do. But today I thought that would be where they had to work. But you still have to make sure, because if everybody gets to it and automatically says it, then there’s no need to address it if they didn’t problem solve or do some kind of workI: One other thing I noticed about at this level, you didn’t do any familiar rereading at the beginning. So is this a time issue?T: Time, yes. I: So talk about how you think about your lesson at this level differently than earlier.T: The books are longer. There are places where they might have more work– the same amount of places to work, but they might have to get their finger in and take a better look, than at a level 8 where you’re just discriminating between “got” and “gave”. Now you’re actually having to look all the way through. There’s a lot of words. So just for time, I don’t do a familiar read on the first day because of the new book and to make sure that we have time to get through the new book and do teaching points and word work. At earlier levels you have time, because the books are 100 words, so you have time to get through it. But now when you’re reading a 300 word book, I just don’t have the time. Tomorrow they will familiar read before we write.  |