

Transcript

SECTION: Time/Structure

Section Content: Overall Structure

How long do you spend in Independent Reading daily and how do you structure that time?

Irby DuBose

We have it every day, it's a designated slot in our schedule for it. We set aside 30 minutes for it. Sometimes it takes the whole 30 minutes, sometimes it doesn't. We always start with a mini-lesson, some kind of skill or strategy I've noticed the whole class could benefit from. I try not to be too specific with mini-lessons during IR. That's more for guided reading. I want to make sure that what I'm using that time for is going to be useful for the majority of the class. So we always have our mini-lesson, and then they do their reading, and I confer. I always love when I witness them taking what we did during the mini-lesson and actually applying it during IR. At the end, the sharing, I always get a lot out of that time. I get a lot when I confer, but I get a lot when they share. There's something about hearing things from children's perspectives. It has a profound effect on the children sharing and on the children hearing it. So I always love that part. We always do those 3 parts – mini-lesson, conferring with the reading, and sharing at the end. I find that when we set that time aside every day, the children know it's coming, they know when it's coming, and they come to expect it.

Apryl Whitman

It's in the beginning of the day. It's during my reading workshop time. We start off with our mini-lesson, 5-10 minutes really quick. I have a hard time with that too, that's something that I think can be a challenge not just for myself but for other teachers that a mini-lesson has to be short and sweet. Sometimes we want to go on because we have friends who want to comment and talk, and we teach them to do that. But I want to spend the bulk of my time reading. So it's a quick mini-lesson, a lot of that time, about 25 minutes is what we did today, sometimes it's a little bit shorter, and sometimes it's even longer, they want to keep going for IR, and a quick 5-minute buddy read share, and then I wrap it up and we're done. So, in essence, between transitions and teaching, it's just about an hour.

Christy Long

This time that we have is a 45-minute block at the end of the day. I think that's a good time to do it, because they get to rest, relax, and just enjoy the books. When I'm planning my mini-lesson I try to find the quickest way to what I'm trying to get across and what I want to see them doing. I've used poetry a lot for that. And if it's something we're working on, I'll bring it out in other times during the day. If it's in their science lesson and I make a mistake in what I'm reading, and we just automatically go back and fix it, sometimes I'll stop and say, "Wait, what just happened there?" and they'll point it out. Yes, you have to always do that, not just when you're just having independent reading time. Whenever you're reading, if you're reading a sign going down the road and it doesn't make sense, read it again and things like that.

Interviewer (Joanne Durham): So you probably don't spend more than about 10 minutes on your mini-lesson, right? And maybe 5-10 minutes at the end, sharing?

Ms. Long: Uh-huh.

Ms. Durham: So then that leaves them 20 minutes or so to read.

Ms. Long: I might spend about 3-4 minutes with each child, just depending on what they're reading and if they need help, what they need help with the most, and how much they're wanting to talk that day. But I spend about 3-4 minutes with each child, so I usually get to 4-5 children.

Do you pull guided reading groups during Independent Reading time? Why or why not?

Irby DuBose

I keep them separate [guided reading and independent reading] because especially at this time of the year, they're not reading for that long, so I wouldn't really have much time with my guided reading group. But also I want them to just sit there and read independently. We do guided reading during a different time of our day. We have a literacy station time and I hold groups then. We really keep the IR structure with the mini-lesson, conferring, and sharing.

Apryl Whitman

I did a lot of it [guided reading] at the beginning of the year, to get to know my students, to get them going with their reading levels and bump up those levels a little bit and give them those word attack strategies that they needed to be able to read the books on their own. Now that we're getting later on in the year, I have a little less guided reading and a little more independent reading.

That's another struggle that I have, balancing the two. Sometimes I feel that I've got to do so much guided reading because I've got to get them bumped up in levels, because first grade is a wide jump with the Fountas and Pinnell levels to get them to go to second grade. So I feel like that's a constant pressure that I need to move them up. But I also need to make time to confer with them to make sure that they're getting what I'm teaching them. So I tend to do more conferring at the end of the year and more guided reading at the beginning.

I will do maybe 2 weeks of guided reading nonstop, and I'll do some conferring after my guided reading groups. You saw that my chunk of time is about 25 minutes, so I can usually get through a guided reading group in about 15 minutes. So I'll be able to pull one kid. So I'll do that for about 2 weeks, and then, OK, let's stop with the guided reading and just do 1 week of just conferring, so I have a chance to meet with each child, make sure they're getting what I'm teaching during mini-lessons, make sure they're getting what I'm teaching during guided reading, and then I'll go back into my guided reading sessions.

Christy Long:

I have 5 different groups, since they're on so many different levels and need to work on so many different things. My groups, I've changed how I do this whole independent reading this year. I taught first grade for 13 years, and it was so imperative that we did those groups, that we met with every child at least once or twice every week, and we really worked on those skills of learning how to read, working on the strategies and getting them to use the strategies on their own and things like that. So moving up to second grade, in the beginning, I did lots of groups. So I made sure they had lots of books on their level, as well as some they choose themselves. But I pulled back from doing some groups. As I was conferring, I saw that I was learning so much more about each child conferring with them one on one. Even in a small group, even if there are 3 children sitting there, you might have 1 or 2 that want to take over the conversation, and I'm trying to pull things out of. But when we're 1 on 1, the child is more willing to tell me more, and it's usually about a book they've chosen so they want to share more about it. So I'm trying to find a balance of conferring and doing reading groups. So usually their reading groups would happen while they are reading independently, while it's quiet. And then when I ring the bell and they do their reader's response logs, that's when I'll do more checking in with them and listen to how they're talking about their books, and then the next week maybe I'll switch it up, and I'm conferring while they're doing their independent reading, and as they go to talk with their partner, I may pull a group. And some days I may just spend the whole time conferring.

How and why are mini-lessons used in IR?

Irby DuBose

I think mini-lessons are really important because they let me use my assessment data and observation notes to tailor little snippets of lessons for my children. I like them because it's an opportunity for my children to have brief exposure to whatever it is I want them to do and it gives them a purpose for what to do that day. So they're not just shooting in the dark. They have a goal, a purpose, and that's what I present in my mini-lesson. We have a saying in our school, "Keep it mini, not maxi" because I think the whole point is it's supposed to be brief, hold their attention, and give them something to focus on during Independent Reading, or writing workshop, or whatever we're doing.

Some that we work on at the beginning of the year are engagement, and how to maintain engagement during IR. I think if you start them with short, manageable goals, and they feel what it's like to stay engaged in IR, then they're more likely to stay engaged while we add more time to their reading. So definitely engagement mini-lessons have been crucial. And then we do a lot of mini-lessons on reading for meaning, reading for understanding, and then different strategy mini-lessons. If I notice that a group of my children are having a hard time rereading, then I'll do a mini-lesson on that. What I think is important about mini-lessons is making sure that they are current and fit the needs of your children now. So a lot of times they'll change and adjust based on what I see my children need.

One part of mini-lessons is modeling and I think when we're teaching children how to think, and do this modeling, we have to show our thinking as readers and that's kind of hard to do. So I think a lot of times when I'm trying to show them that I'm thinking like a reader, I probably go like this (points to brain). I think it's interesting to see them do that because they've seen me do it. It's kind of interesting – however I show my thinking is how they choose to show their thinking as well.

How and why do teachers confer during IR?

Irby DuBose

I think it [conferencing] gives me the opportunity to teach on the spot, to see what the children are doing at that specific time with that specific text. And I can kind of guide them right then. It lets me make sure I'm really meeting the needs of my students. The data I collect during conferencing I think is really critical and a really good assessment of here's what this child can do; here's what they need help on and then gives us a good, clear path of where to go next. I think conferencing is a really good way to meet the needs of all of my students. It's really just what do you need at this time; let me help you with that.

I make sure I get every child each week, but it's very flexible. I think ideally a child I conferenced with today said, well, I've read this book a lot and today I actually figured it out because I was looking at the pictures. So tomorrow ideally I'd like to stop by her and check in with her and say, are you remembering to do that today? So I definitely make sure I get every child every week, but it's really just based on what they're showing me they do who I go to and when I go to them. Most get seen more than once, it's just a matter of what they're doing.

Interviewer (Ms. Durham): So how many kids do you have this year?

Ms. DuBose: 22

Ms. Durham: So then you're hitting maybe 4-5 each day.

Ms. DuBose: If it's not a good day, we might only have 2 conferences. If it's a really good day, we might have 4 or 5 or 6. It just kind of depends on how engaged they are.

Ms. Durham: And at the beginning, I guess some of those conferences were just about staying engaged.

Ms. DuBose: Some of them were about, OK, remember, we hold our book like this, this is how we turn our pages. They're developing now more into strategies and things like that. At the beginning it was more, OK, let's talk about the picture, what do you see in the picture? Here's how we hold a book. More concepts of print.

Reading Conference, Kindergarten – Classroom in Action

Irby DuBose, Darlington, SC

(T = Teacher; S = Student)

T: Let's see if there's one in this stack that we can maybe - why don't we try this one. You put this one in your look book stack. Let's see if we can read this one. A Day with Firefighters.

S: A day with firefighters. I wear a black coat with yellow stripes. I put on a helmet.

T: You read that pretty good for that to be in the look book stack.

S: I open the door to the fire engine.

T: Very good.

S: I (stops, looks at picture) I -

T: Now if you don't know that word, let's skip it, I --- into

S: the front set

T: The front what?

S: Set.

T: Does that make sense - I climb into the front set?

S: (nods no)

T: You climb into the front. (waits). Think about what you've already read.

S: Open the door to the fire engine. I k -

T: climb

S: Climb into the front see?

T: So if you're opening the door, think about what you've already read, I open the door to the fire engine and climb into the front -

S: Seat.

T: Yes. See how that makes more sense than set?

S: The fire engine moves down the road. The red lights flash. The (waits)

T: Skip it - the ____,

S: warns

T: warns

S: the

T: cars

S: to move out of the way.

T: So what is it that a fire truck has that warns cars to get out of the way?

S: points to picture

T: What is it though? (points to word) What is it called?

S: Smoke?

T: Well, if there's smoke you need to get out of the way, you're right. What's it called that the fire truck has that if you hear it, you're supposed to get out of the way if you're driving?

S: Sound?

T: It's called a siren.

T: So here's what I think. This book I would say it's almost just right for you. I think this book was too easy. You read this one pretty easy. This one is almost just right. It might be a teeny bit too hard, but it's more just right than this one. So what we need to do, when we go to stations, I want you to go to the library, and I want us to see if we can find one that's in between these two, OK? You can read this one. I want you to keep working on this one. And then we'll try to find one that's in between these two, OK? Good work.

Reading Conference, Grade 1 – Classroom in Action

Apryl Whitman, Columbia, SC

(T = Teacher; S = Student)

T: Oh, look at all of this! What book did you get?

S: I got this teacher book, but this was from that book I got from the library.

T: Oh, what did you write on here?

S: Some teachers work at home?

T: Why did you write “wow”?

S: Because that’s really cool. I had no idea a teacher could work at home.

T: I didn’t know I could work at home.

S: It’s like astronauts teaching when they’re on the moon.

T: Can you show me in the book where you found that fact?

S: (looks through pages, points)

T: Oh, can you read this to me?

S: Some teachers work at home. They teach their own children.

T: Oh my goodness, do you know what that’s called?

S: What?

T: Home schooling. Some kids don’t go to public school – we call this public school where everyone comes together, they stay at school

S: I went to a private school last year

T: Yes, you were for kindergarten. Some teachers decide to stay at home and they might teach their own children or they might teach other people’s children in their own home and it’s called home schooling. Wouldn’t that be neat? You could stay in your pajamas, couldn’t you?

S: So like if you didn’t have enough money to go to school, you could ask one of your neighbors to do home schooling, while you go to work?

T: That could happen, yes, they could help other children out. Let’s put this right here where you learned, so if you want to share this during our share time, you could turn back and show them the pages. So where are you – I messed you up.

S: I was at like this page.

T: Oh, what’s going on here? Let’s read the heading first.

S: (reads) What kinds of teachers are there? So this should be about like, substitutes, or related arts teachers, cause I’m guessing since substitutes are like, aren’t like a different kind of teacher, but related arts teachers are like art teachers, gym teachers, music teachers, Spanish teachers,

T: So this whole section should be about different types of teachers?

S: Yes.

T: OK, so let’s keep reading.

S: (reads) Substitute teachers do not teach every day. They teach when other teachers get sick.

T: Hmm, they’re important, aren’t they.

S: (reads) Some teachers teach only art or music. This teacher is teaching gym class.

T: So if you had to write one sentence about what this section is about, what would you write?

S: I would write, there are different kinds of teachers. There can be related arts teachers, and even substitutes.

T: You want to put that on a sticky note? Let’s put that on a sticky note, that there can be different types of teachers. So you kind of wrapped this up and wrote a summary sentence about what this whole section was about, and that’s something that good readers do,

S: (working on her writing)

T: I won’t interrupt you, sorry

S: (writes) How do you spell “different”?

T: Is it on there?

S: I can't see it

T: Was it earlier in the book? Oh, I see it, look. See it?

S: Yes

T: There you go.

(student is writing)

T: Awesome job! So, you want to put that back on the page where the section was.

S: OK.

T: It was right there. So what I was saying was, something that good readers do when they're reading even like fiction or nonfiction – you did this when you were reading your chapter books, when you got to the end of the chapter you wrote one or two sentences about what the chapter was about.

S: Like when I was in Nancy Drew, every night I would read one or two chapters and I would put a sentence about it.

T: It helps us to remember what we read, because nonfiction books can be really long, and it gives us a lot of information,

S: Like if you saw (turns to Table of Contents)

T: It looks overwhelming, doesn't it?

S: It's humongous

T: So we have to break it down. So what you're doing right here is a good strategy. When you get through reading each section, you might want to jot down one sentence – kind of what the whole section was about – and it will help you to remember at the end. Awesome job.

Section Content: Sharing

How and why do children share during IR?

**Sharing, Kindergarten - Classroom in Action
Irby DuBose, Darlington, SC**

S: We have a fish. We have a – alligator. No, that's not right. What is that? We have a crocodile. An elephant.

S: When I saw fish, I knew how to sound fish, and when I saw we I knew it, and have, and a.

T: So you see how she knows some of the words, and then she's looking at the –

S: Pictures

T: Which is what we talked about – (pointing to chart) Look at the –

S: Pictures.

S: And when I was reading, We have a alligator, I thought that was right, but it wasn't, because it had a c.

T: So she knew alligator couldn't be that, because alligator started with a a. Good.

T: OK, I, excellent job. (spontaneous applause from kids). Two friends, quickly share about what you learned about I's reading.

S: I liked when you was pointing at the words and you forgot and you said it was an alligator but you wasn't right and you went back and said it right.

T: Very good. She stopped, she didn't keep on going. Very good.

Irby DuBose

There is something really effective about children sharing what they've done, naming what they've done, and talking about it with their peers. And from the student's perspective, there's something really effective about hearing another child say, "today I reread," or "today I used the pictures to help me." I can say it all day, but there's something about them hearing themselves say it that seems to help it click. And sharing I think also promotes ownership with the reader. I'm going to explain to you what I did, now I own what I did. And I think it also helps us build a community of readers. We respect one another, and we take care of each other and sharing I think really promotes that. I always say if you can explain what you're doing to somebody else, then you really understand it, so I think sharing is a time when children – I guess as their teacher I can see, do they really understand what they're doing, can they talk about it, can they share it, or do we need to work on it a little bit more. In the big picture, I think it's just a way to help build community and respect amongst all of our little readers.

I usually pick a few readers to share who I conferenced with, because usually when we conference we come up with a goal, and really I want them to share that goal during their share time. That's who I pick, who I conferred with. If Ms. McDonald conferred with somebody really great, she might say, so and so did this today, let's let them share. We usually have 3 people share what they loved about their reading. That just seems to be a good number.

Buddy Sharing, Grade 1 - Classroom in Action
Apryl Whitman, Columbia, SC

T: Remember when you're sharing with a buddy, I'm going to set the timer for 5 minutes. So one buddy is going to share for about 2 and a half, and the other buddy for 2 ½. When your buddy is sharing, be sure you are sitting eye to eye and knee to knee and listening to them, and then you can ask them questions, you can even add to their learning, or answer some of the questions they had.

(children share with buddies)

T: What did you write?

S: That nurses fly helicopters.

T: What??? Did you know that? I didn't know that?

S: I mean that's crazy, I didn't know nurses flew planes.

T: I didn't either. Are they flying the plane? Can you show us in the book?

S: Maybe there's a picture in the book.

T: Yes, let's see that picture. Maybe we'll get some more information. Oh, there it is. Oh, someone did something bad to a book. Oh, it says, "Do nurses work in other places?" So is the nurse flying the plane? (child shakes head no.) No, what are they doing on there, K? Let's listen.

S: (inaudible)

T: Yes, kind of helping them get on there, probably taking care of them?

Apryl Whitman

Sometimes I give them a purpose for their sharing, and sometimes I don't, just share whatever strategies or things that you learned that day, sometimes it's what was the important information from your book that day.

First graders sometimes – and it's not just first graders, all students, sometimes tend to listen and learn more from their peers than they will from me. Especially if they're 1-1 with them. So if they've asked a question in their book, their peer may be able to answer it for them. Or they may see that their buddy did something in their book – did this fascinating sticky note or drew a diagram and tomorrow they're going to try what their buddy did. So it gives them a chance to see what other students are doing and they can learn from them.

Partner and Whole Class Sharing, Grade 2 - Classroom in Action
Christy Long, Inman, SC

S: This one I'm going to pick (from the spinner with questions.) Right here. Tell –draw a question - do you have a question in mind? What question do you have?

S2: Umm – where did he pick the flowers at?

S: Right here (opens book to page and points). They pick them in the store, then they give them to his Mom, and then they form one right here in the rainbow

S2: How do they make the rainbow?

S: The rainbow – the sun's shining, then rains, and then the rainbow gets laid out – colorful light. You're the rain, I'm the sun, and I see water, so it evaporates and then there's like a rainbow.

S2: OK. Now it's my turn?

S: OK

S: My book is about Good Night Baseball boy. He's a boy and he really loves baseball

T: And C___, there was something else about your book, something else I was enjoying about how you were reading it. Can you read those 2 pages for me? With expression?

S: Then the crack of a bat and HOME RUN! WHAT A HIT! Look. The little ball lands in one lucky fan's mitt!

T: And why did you read like that?

S: Because it had the things where – I forgot what they're called –

T: Exclamation

S: Exclamation marks and that means make your voice go a little bit louder.

T: How were they feeling at that moment in the story?

S: Um – happy.

T: Happy! They were excited, weren't they? Would you be excited if someone hit a home run?

S: If I hit a home run I'd be too excited.

T: OK, words, comments, questions for C___?

S: Where he was?

T: Where was he?

S: It was at the stadium. It says it right here.

S: Which stadium was it?

S: They don't tell, but he was at the stadium because it says – (flips pages to find) It says, "The great big stadium is outside of town."

Christy Long

Part of the reason for sharing is that you're going to be held accountable for actually learning something, and we want to learn from you. Can you please teach us something, and so they want to share, most of them, because we want to learn from them and if we show them that that's important, it kind of encourages more reading. And it gives them a chance to hear from their peers, instead of just always hearing things from me. I think learning from your friends is very important, and they can actually learn a lot more from them than they can from me. They get to learn about lots of different topics instead of just one that I would be sharing.

Most of the time, I will choose the children that I have met with that day to share. That way, I know that what they have to share is relevant and is also going to teach the class – either reinforce using the text features, or it's going to – sometimes we share mistakes that we made. If we thought one thing and then maybe it was another, we share that. We talked at the beginning of the unit that we can learn from each other's mistakes and so if you're sharing about your mistake, that's helping your friends out. So I think the sharing part is a major, major component to their learning.