

The College of William & Mary  
School of Education  
Student Teacher Observation  
Student Teacher: Kimberley Thoresen  
Date: April 17, 2008  
School: Magruder Elementary  
Subject/Grade: 1st/Reading Groups  
Cooperating Teacher: Dawn Florence  
College Supervisor: Nancy Dutro

During this observation I watched you teach four small reading groups while the other students were engaged in independent activities supervised by two other adults. Each reading group was re-reading a non-fiction book which you told me you had selected to correlate with units they are studying in science and math. You explained that you used AR reading levels and other measures to determine instructional levels for each group.

You followed the same instructional procedures in each group, beginning with a Box the Word strategy and a dictated sentence. I commented that the Box the Word strategy seemed like a good way to reinforce phonics and structural analysis skills as well as spelling. You made good use of the small white board during this activity.

As you instructed the first group, (Blue) which you identified as being on the lower range of readers, I noted how well you used specific praise to give the students feedback on their performance. You said to one, "Excellent! You used the picture to help you figure out the word." and to another, "Excellent! You used a rhyming word to help." "I love the way you are asking questions while you are reading" and "You made a connection to a movie to help you" are other reinforcing, motivating expressions of approval that you used. You instructed this group to make a chart of the measurement words they found in their book after they re-read it. One boy wanted to know why they had to read the book again. You gave him valid reasons that seemed to satisfy him. I noted that the students needed a lot of support finding the measurement words in the text so you gave them a variety of clues.

The next group, (Yellow) was reading a well-illustrated book with many content-related, difficult words about flowers. The students in this group did not appear to be frustrated by the difficulty of the vocabulary and each eagerly selected a hard word to record and copy the sentence it was used in...an appropriate activity for your strongest readers.

The last two groups (Red and Green) engaged in the same activity: choosing a favorite page from their book, identifying the main idea and supporting details to build a paper table (an interesting way to conceptualize the role of supporting details.) During our debriefing you correctly recognized that the amount of time available was not sufficient to allow for student success. The students are just beginning to be fluent enough to recognize supporting details in non-fiction. You suggested that they really needed a guided practice with you modeling not only how to choose supporting details but also how to assemble the table. The activity was probably too advanced for them at this time. Becoming more accurate in predicting how long certain activities will take comes with experience. Even veteran teachers misjudge time requirements. Learn to make a task analysis of prerequisite skills when you are planning.

We concluded our discussion by talking about the E-folio and how you might document some of the less obvious competencies. You have some good ideas. Go for it!