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Field Notes #3

2/25/13

Today, I will try a new field-notes method. Instead of taking observations and then filling in ‘what it means’ later, I will do more descriptive notes today. The observation/explanation works best when I have to help in the classroom and can only write a few quick things. I’m going to try to write descriptive notes between classes when I have time.

S and G are in Mrs. K’s classroom for individual reading time. Both are middle school age and can read short books on their own. G is playing the Edmark game on the computer, while S is given time to write his titles and a descriptive sentence about each. He seems to really enjoy this- it is a treat that he gets to write his titles. All of his characters are from Bob the Builder (which I did not catch on to until after he explained).

Some examples of S’s sentences:

“Muck’s Sleepover: Muck loves to sleep”

“Dizzy the Sheepdog: Dizzy wanted to be a sheepdog so she could herd the sheep.”

S tends to only want to write the title, and when he asks to be allowed to write more titles, he sometimes lies and pretends that he has already written the sentences. Mrs. K asks- “where are your sentences?” and S looks down the page to find where he wrote the sentence (in reality he hasn’t written anything). S types up his sentences and titles on the laptop. He really enjoys changing the font for titles and sentences- 36 for titles, 12 for sentences. I wonder what he loves so much about creating titles. On his word document there are pages and pages of sentences/titles that he has made up.

Another double group for reading- both boys who are also middle school age or late elementary school) and can read short books on their own . F heads to the computer to work on Edmark and R works on spelling. “R, start with writing the date.” R knows the entire date, and also writes “Monday lesson” on his paper (he is typing on the laptop).

F starts with Edmark- “find the word….” And then F clicks on the right word – multiple choice. Mrs. K reminds him to LISTEN to the word before clicking.

Mrs. K watches him for a minute and says “Excellent work and that was all by yourself!”

Big emphasis on sitting right in the chair and being ‘ready’ to focus.

“do the words: shut, stop, etc (words that start with s).

Having trouble with ‘shut’- Mrs. K says lets go to the next word. She reads the word in a sentence. I haven’t seen students struggle with their spelling words in this way before (which is surprising). Usually students know the words because they have been working on them for awhile; these must be relatively new spelling words. Sometimes R changes the words to others that make sense: like from very🡪really. Some he does very quickly. If he doesn’t know a word, he just stops. “We are alittle confused with these words right here.

Mrs. K to F, he comes over to work with R. “ I want you to read these words for him and then spell them”

“SHUT: s-h-u-t” Working together to work on social skills and teamwork. R types words again and gets them right. Mrs. K keeps track of the ones that didn’t go well the first time and will go back to them tomorrow. Tons of repetition.

Both watch the same computer for a story called “Community Helpers” and afterwards talk about it- “Who helps you learn things?” “What does a doctor do?” “How are you a helper”. Often Mrs. K helps them answer. I wonder if she is getting frustrated or I am watching the beginning of a process of repetition. Will she go back to this story everyday this week? Usually, I observe on Wednesdays so it could be that she is introducing something new, and that is why she isn’t waiting to hear the right answers.

M, a younger girl in for reading time. She is probably around 1st grade-age. She brings a stuffed dog with her in for reading, and sucks her thumb. The dog sits on the table and reads with her. Mrs. K has a book out of sentences and has M point out words . “What is this word” The types of words are ‘me,’ ‘it.’

M gets up in the middle of reading to grab a stuffed animal frog- Mrs. K uses them almost as bait to get her to read words on post it notes: me, is, want, he.

M grabs for the animals- “you can have them back in minute.”

Sentence: I really want a dog. I really \_\_\_ a dog. Fill in the blank.

M gets distracted by the animals sometimes. Banging in the room next door that is really loud- very distracting for M. She fades in and out; spacing out.

“Puppy wants you to spell and do a nice job”- M having trouble focusing on spelling words. She can read the words but is having trouble spelling- she is supposed to type them out but is still just learning. Mrs. K helps spell it out and she pushes the letters.

L, another young girl (1st grade age) needs more structure during her reading time. A schedule with “1,2,3 then book”- book is the reward if A does all of her work nicely.

In box 1 are her spelling words. A card with a picture and word, many toy letters in box, spell the word. First by matching the letters, then by remembering how to spell it. (hand, arm, hall). Then type the words on the laptop. Mostly Mrs. K types and spells them out at L repeats the sounds/letters. I’m wondering why she doesn’t move L’s hands to the letters to type.

2nd box is a sheet with words and space for a picture underneath. Out of a bunch of cards with pictures L has to read the words and match the pictures to the words- similar to Edmark (the computer program). Matching pictures and words.

3rd box is a picture and words that make up a sentence to describe the picture. They are magnets and stick on a blue magnetic tablet. “this is one you did last time”- repetition . “A baby bird is in the tree”. L having trouble saying words and sitting still. By the end of her session, she is tired of doing work.