

Teacher Commentary – Strategy: Inferring and Visualizing

Sample Lesson: Infer Meaning of Poetry

Grade 2, Apryl Whitman, Teacher, Arden Elementary School, Richland One School District, Columbia, SC

Joanne Durham, Interviewer (I); Apryl Whitman, Teacher (T)

Segment	Transcript
Commentary LESSON INTRODUCTION	<p>I: Thank you Apryl for another wonderful lesson with your second graders here at Arden Elementary School. You've been working on this strategy of inferring for a bit. Talk to us about what you've done already with inferring.</p> <p>T: OK. We just started our district-wide Black History Month unit on the Underground Railroad, which is something that was unfamiliar to my students, so I started with a lesson using some primary artifacts, pictures, from that period of time. And without giving them too much background knowledge, I gave them the pictures. I did model a little bit with the whole group with a picture, posing those questions of what's going on here, what's happening, who are these people, why do we think this is happening. We did a whole group lesson on the smart board, and then they went out as partners and did the same things. They asked themselves those questions in their heads and they wrote down their thoughts about what they thought was going on in the pictures. There were no captions. There wasn't a lot for them to draw from except maybe some of the background knowledge that they did have, and the clues in the pictures. That's really what I was focusing on, honing in on those clues that I didn't give them. So that was the big starting lesson of inferring. We shared and discussed what we thought was going on and they were able to write all over it. It kind of sparked that interest in using our clues, using the information we did have, to figure out what was going on in the picture without me telling them, or the author telling them. So once we did that, I started with some smaller poems. They might be missing a title, or missing what it was about, like I did a lot of animal poems because I knew that was something that they knew a lot about and they were interested. For instance, one was about a ladybug and it gave clues like "the crimson cape" and they are spotted and "it's walking on my wall." So they were able to pull out the clues and figure out that the poet was talking about a lady bug. So we just started with some very simple poems like that just to build their confidence, because I think that is something – making those inferences, they're afraid that there's a right or wrong answer, so building their confidence with simpler poems and doing it whole group, sets them up for a little bit more difficult poems that they've really got to pull from. So we've just been doing a couple of those throughout the week, whole group. We haven't done anything with partners yet with poetry.</p>
	<p>I: So how did you decide to choose the poem that you used today?</p> <p>T: Well, I did get my inspiration from the Toolkit [Comprehension Toolkit] and I decided to stick with this poem because it provided a lot of opportunities for the children to infer. I believed that most of them had the background knowledge to do so. It's a fun poem. It has a rhythm to it. We did "Honey I Love" and they absolutely loved the voice and expression in that poem, so I knew that they would be able to hear the voice in this poem, and they would enjoy the rhythm and it would provide lots of opportunities for them to be successful.</p>

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<p>CONNECT AND ENGAGE</p>	<p>I: What did you feel was necessary to do for Connect and Engage. What did you think you needed to do to bring them in today? T: Reading it a couple of times. Getting that excitement. You saw some of them swaying and they were feeling the rhythm of the poem so they were excited about it. Reading it and being successful with it. So that was the first part to engage them. And then the fact that this was by the same poet that we've already read before, so they were already familiar and excited to see what else she had written. And then just leading them into that modeling, and sending them into that first stanza together, and then immediately seeing, oh, I know the answer, she ate the candy. They got excited oh, it's about candy, let's keep going. It's something they connect with.</p>
<p>MODELING</p>	<p>I: So that takes us into your think alouds, so you sort of set that up so they would know, right? T: Yes, they would immediately know. S___ says, "well, you just eat the candy" and he's shaking his hands like, "duh, Ms. Whitman, you eat the candy! That's what you do with it." And so all of them are smiling and excited that they figured that out. The author didn't say it – Eloise didn't say it, we used the clues, we figured it out, we were successful, OK, let's keep going. So that success and excitement made them want to keep inferring.</p>
<p>GUIDED PRACTICE 1</p>	<p>I: So then when you got to guided to have them think about the sandcastle, now, that was a slightly different story, right? Talk about that a little in relation to their background knowledge T: That was one of the parts in the poem that I said, OK, I might have to do a little more prompting here. A lot of my children haven't been to the beach, and they haven't experienced building that sand castle next to the shore. There were a couple of them who knew that the shore was right where the sand and water met, and there were some who didn't. So as I was walking around, I saw that some of the children really weren't writing anything and I had to prompt them, let's think, even if we haven't been there, we've seen pictures. What happens with the shore, the water's right there. One of my students, A___, he's trying to express what happens but he didn't know quite what to say, he said "the water does this" (gesturing). And I said, "Oh, it's going back and forth, it's washing up" and he said, "yes, washing." He just didn't know the vocabulary. So walking around and seeing what they're writing and being able to pull that knowledge that they had in there, it just didn't pop to the surface immediately, being able to pull that background knowledge, then it clicked for them automatically. Once I was able to bring that to the surface, they were OK, washed away. We've had really bad winds here lately, so maybe the wind blew it away. And then some of them got into the mean people stepping on it, which might have been something that they've seen and that's happened to me before with siblings. So there were some very unique answers based on their different experiences. But I wouldn't have known that if I didn't talk through with each one. I: And it was interesting how they built off of each other, right? A___ had been there, he just didn't have the language. Some of the other kids hadn't had the experience, but they had the language, and they had other experiences. I liked how you ask, even when they were sharing, what made them think of that, and the one boy talked about kids in his neighborhood take sand in T: With the bottle – yeah, he did, and how it gets knocked over by the wind. He said we put sand in a can, because where he lives there's a little playground, so there's sand, so they must build sandcastles there. So he took it to what</p>

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	<p>his knowledge was. He might not have been to the beach, but it was at the playground, which I didn't even think about, and the wind pulled it away. So that might have happened at the beach. So he made a connection of his own, which was fantastic.</p> <p>I: And you wouldn't have known that had you not stopped and ask him what his experience was. So you're really helping them put together their own experiences with the clues in the poem. That was very nice.</p>
GUIDED PRACTICE 2	<p>I: Any things that you noticed about what they did when they got to the final part? T: to the poem, and why she kept it. They did realize – there were two separate parts to the poem – the part where she was losing things and all of a sudden she kept something. They noticed that there was this separation and difference in the poem. One that I stuck on here and that resonated with me was the child said, “Maybe she still is making a poem. She likes to write poems.” I talked with him 1-1, and I said, “why do you write?” He said, “I like to write.” I said, when you write, do you throw your stories away? He said, “No! I keep them.” So I knew that he is a writer and he loves to write and that's a big goal he set for himself this year, so he was able to connect and infer that maybe that's what she likes to do. When you like doing something, you're an author, you don't throw your stories away, you keep them. There was another child who did the same kind of thing, “She likes to write. She's writing about something that she likes to do in her life.” And she wrote, “And you don't throw that away.” So they understand that when something's important to you, you keep it, you hold onto it. Another child wrote that they were making a poem book. We have a poetry notebook that we keep, so I can see that connection. And this child wrote, and I didn't even think about this, so it's suprising for me as a reader of this poem, “She still has the poem – it's not ready yet.” It's not done. So she kept it; she's still writing it. 13:56 And we do writer's workshop, we do a little bit every day, we're not done yet so we'll keep going. So some of their inferences surprised me, and I've really liked that they were using their background knowledge. I could see that background knowledge coming out and their experiences in making these inferences in that last part.</p>
	<p>I: Your kids clearly are turning and talking a lot. How did you think about the turning and talking. Where did you decide to use it as you were going through the lesson and what role did you think it played? T: I think the turning and talking – piggybacking off what you said – allowing them to play off of each other – making sure after they were done writing what they thought, then allowing them to share with their partners. Some of them were still stuck, and they needed that vocabulary, so if they heard that vocabulary from their partner, then they were able to add it to their own sheet. Also it gives them a chance to own what they wrote, to share what they wrote, and to be excited about that. They all want to share with me because they're excited, and we don't have time for all that, so you turn to a partner and you share. Having that discussion with each other helps them and it promotes conversation and sharing our thinking, that all of our thoughts are important, we all get a turn to share. I: I think they get that opportunity to verbalize that maybe then helps them to extend their thinking more. T: It does, because that's what I would do. When I would go around and they were stuck, if they were able to talk to me, then they were able to put it down on paper. So it did help for them to verbalize, and I allow them after they share, if there's something else you want to add to your sticky note, that's fine, if you want to fix something or correct</p>

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	something or add to it, you can because we learn as we share with our partners.
COLLABORATIVE OR INDEPENDENT PRACTICE 1	<p>I: Before they went off, you decided to allow them to choose one of the three poems, which is a wonderful thing to do, but clearly takes a lot of organization and is another step for them. So talk about that, deciding to do that and how you organized it and what you did to help it work.</p> <p>T: I wanted them to have ownership of what they were doing. I feel that children are more excited about what their doing and engaged in what they're doing when they have choice, whether it's choosing their own book to read or their own poem to read, they have ownership of what they're doing. It's not me telling them to go do this, it's what I want to do, I want to dive deeper into it. That's what we do as readers. We get to choose what we want to read and get excited about. I only did three poems. I didn't want too much of a selection, because I think that could turn into a bit of chaos, "Which one am I going to choose!" So I made it simple. I chose poems that I knew had spots in there that they would be able to infer on their own, without me having to be there to prompt, even if it was just a couple of spots. The partner selection I did before hand. They had compound word cards that they had to match. It was partners that I knew would support them and they work well with. I think they did a very good job. There were maybe two groups that had a little fuss about oh, I don't want that poem, but they compromised together and when they went out they were excited about what they were doing because it was something they had selected, not me.</p> <p>I: And I did notice that even the couple of the kids who were reluctant at first, and didn't want to do the poem that the other partner chose, by the end they were fully involved in it.</p> <p>T: They were in it. Some of them I had to prompt a little bit, let's compromise here. This time we'll do this and tomorrow you can choose. And we do that a lot in my classroom, so they've learned to compromise with their partner. It takes time, but we got there.</p>
COLLABORATIVE OR INDEPENDENT PRACTICE 2	<p>I: So then while they were working with their partners, you also did a lot of supporting and prompting as you were conferring with them. Talk about what kinds of things you found to be helpful to support them.</p> <p>T: Some of the groups I had to go back and help them reread it again, and make sure they were understanding some of the vocabulary in the poem. I didn't expect that, but that was fine. Once we did reread it and talked about some of the vocabulary, it began to click more and they were able to make their own inferences.</p> <p>T: And some other groups I had to get with. The Mom and Dad poem – really bring out not necessarily connections they had personally, but other people they knew about. For instance, one little girl's brother goes and visits his Dad, so he goes from home to home. She doesn't, but he does. I knew that about her, so I was able to help her realize that connection and once she did, she was able to make some inferences. So just going around to each group, listening to what they were saying, and then using what I knew to bring out some of that background knowledge really helped them. It also helped make me aware with some of the children who are struggling a little bit more, and I need to work with in small groups. But overall for their first time of working with a partner on their own without me there all the time, they did pretty well.</p>

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	<p>I: To see where they are making some inferences, but they may not be the inferences that are most significant to the poem, and then where other kids or the same kids are able to make the inferences that really lead you to understand the poem as a whole. But, you've got to start somewhere, right?</p> <p>T: Yes, I think that helped me with S____. Some of them were making inferences about the overall theme of the poem, and some of them were picking out little details that may not really have helped to fully understand it. So that helps me to better instruct my next lessons and my small group lessons as well.</p> <p>I: It's also why the "Things" poem is such a great one. They can't help but make the inferences that are relevant to the main ideas; it's so right there. So then the ones that they did in independent practice, were a little bit more</p> <p>T: They took them to the next step, a little bit further. I knew, I assumed they would do pretty well with the "Things" poem, so I wanted to make the next poems a little bit more challenging. One reason to take it to the next step, and see if they could apply what we did here to a different poem. And also I didn't want it to be, OK, I'm done – I wanted to give each group enough time to really dive into their poem and discussing it and inferring and not moving too quickly.</p> <p>I: And then you are planning on following up in small groups tomorrow, so that will be good.</p> <p>T: Yes.</p>
<p>ANALYZING STUDENT WORK</p>	<p>T: In caterpillar, one of the students – he was the one writing and other students chose to draw, this part I was sitting near them when he found this as a clue [chosen spot]. They were talking about what might be the chosen spot. So I said, well what do you think about this, what are you inferring? He said, "Well, I know this is a clue." And he orally told me that "he needs to have a spot that's not dangerous." And he started to write it, and he said he'd rather draw a picture. So I asked what kind of picture will you draw and he said I'll draw a lot of trees and he drew little cocoons in the trees because he said "they have to camouflage. Things are spying – and he knows about spying from detectives and all that good stuff, so he said, "They're looking for him so he has to hide." So the chosen spot has to be a safe one and he was using his knowledge and the clues in there and he did it in his own way.</p> <p>I: I think this points out too, you have got to be there in a certain way, to understand. He got the idea here, but the importance of that conferring so that when you see what they've done, you really understand.</p> <p>T: I know what that picture is.</p> <p>I: And the backstory --</p> <p>T: that went into it.</p> <p>I: That was really great.</p> <p>T: Awesome.</p> <p>T: And another thing about this, and a couple of groups did this, "caterpillar in a hurry" – many of them inferred that the caterpillar was hurrying to eat, because they had to hurry up and get as much as they could to eat because caterpillars have to eat a lot is what they told me, and they were going to change. So they had better hurry up and get their bellies full, is what they told me.</p> <p>T: This one right here, this was the group of 3 that did this one together. Right here they saw this as a clue, and when we were in sharing at the end, and I asked him to write this on here, he wrote, "A few months later" that it had turned</p>

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	<p>into a butterfly. He said, “Well this whole thing’s about a life cycle.” He made that connection at the end. I think the discussion between the partner groups and other children helped him to infer the entire meaning of this poem. So that goes to show why it’s so important to discuss and talk and share with other children so they can bounce ideas off of each other. This is a poem about a life cycle. And I need him to add that.</p> <p>I: And to draw here the stages, and a few months later, we’ve got the butterfly.</p>
	<p>T: They really pulled out the emotions and feelings in this poem. Where it says, “I used to play,” he wrote, “She is going to miss her friends that she played with.” It didn’t say that, so he knows how that would feel to leave your friends and again, with “Are they crying too?” he says, “This is a clue. Maybe they feel sad.” We talked about – right here – it says “Past all that I know” – she’s missing her old house.</p> <p>I: I was thinking these are such clear inferences. It was one of those places I can hear your voice going, “How did you know that? You inferred!” But I also thought since this whole poem is about that feeling of sadness that this might be one that you could use as you’re moving them into this notion how the little pieces lead us to the big idea, because this child did such a good job –</p> <p>T: Of the parts –</p> <p>I: And all these parts have that same feeling going on. And when we can find work that the kids have actually done that then leads us to the next step, then we’re happy.</p> <p>T: We already have the stepping stones there –</p> <p>I: It’s their work, it’s not just from us</p> <p>T: Exactly.</p> <p>I: I love that.</p> <p>T: That is a good idea. I’ll have to hold onto that one.</p> <p>I: It’s really exciting.</p>
	<p>I: What’s going on with these guys?</p> <p>T: Lots of connections!</p> <p>I: They’re not all perfect!</p> <p>T: No, we’ve been working on making connections and asking questions, and especially making those connections in discussions. So they’re still doing that, so even though that’s not what we were doing here, I still want to honor that they are still using a reading strategy here, of making connections, because those are important. But I noticed she made one large connection that she is going to move and she is going miss Arden, but this child did a lot more of that, constantly making connections but not really tying those connections into the clues and inferring what’s happening here [in the poem]. She was writing down a lot of what was going on up here, but she’s having a difficult time—</p> <p>I: And there was another one who did the same thing in this poem</p> <p>T: Yes, made a lot of connections.</p> <p>I: This connection, the child says “I’m moving when I get to third grade. When I move I will miss Arden. I will miss Mrs. Whitman.” I think this one easily moves into, “How does this help you understand the poem,” because it really does. But then the ones over here, about when I’m in fifth grade I’m going to go to different school, I might go to the same school as my brother, and then the other one</p>

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	<p>T: Oh, right here – this was a different poem – I have a connection, I have a connection, I have a connection.</p> <p>I: These were – I have a toothbrush, I have a connection I have a teddy bear. What will we do with this to be sure it doesn't become just random connections?</p> <p>T: This is where I go into small group. I saw this when I was reflecting on this yesterday, and then today all of a sudden the child who did all this did something entirely different in small group. So I'm thinking – just right here in the moment, is that maybe she just had a more difficult time on her own independently, and she just needs more prompting with me.</p> <p>I: That's a really good point. Because on their own they may just fall back into what is familiar without really knowing how to put it all together –</p> <p>T: Which is making connections</p> <p>I: And then I think what you did today with the connection was to probe, "So how does the connection help you understand this, or what clues does this tie with, so if you were able to be there with these, it might have gone there as well.</p> <p>T: It might have led there</p> <p>I: But that's the step of, OK, how do these help us to</p> <p>T: Figure out what's going on.</p> <p>I: Maybe I wouldn't like it if I had to take my toothbrush and my teddy bear different places either.</p>
	<p>T: They had different perspectives, because I think their different experiences changed their perspectives. This is a very deep poem that can have a lot of different meanings because it is very brief, and there aren't a lot of clues in here so you really have to infer to understand what's going on. I think what a lot of the groups got is that the "one hug happy" was seeing Mom because they're saying hello to Mom, so they were able to make that connection that "hello Mom" means the happy hug, and "goodbye Dad" is the sad hug. Where the disconnect came in is why are they saying hi to Mom and bye to Dad, that they're in two different places, that this might be a divorced home or Mom and Dad are separated. That's a broad aspect for a young child unless they've experienced that themselves.</p> <p>This child said, "Maybe Dad is leaving and going back to another house." So she started getting on to the meaning of it, but they had a really hard time understanding why one Mom and Dad were not together.</p> <p>I: This is another case where it's deceptively simple. I wonder if you tried this poem with the group of kids who are reading at a lower reading level</p> <p>T: Teased. That might be excellent for them</p> <p>I: Because they could read these words and we could see how</p> <p>T: The deeper meanings</p> <p>I: All come out. And once again, background knowledge is huge, right?</p> <p>T: It's very important, yes.</p> <p>I: But it comes in all different sizes, you know. You had a nice combination of poems here, because the caterpillar was more background knowledge about science,</p> <p>T: This is life experience</p> <p>I: So there's something for everybody.</p>

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	<p>I: Anything else about the work?</p> <p>T: I'm just overall very pleased with what they did. I think we're on the right track. When I was going through using the rubric that's in the Toolkit and modified it on my own, they're all on the right track. They're showing some signs of inferencing and some skills and strategies and we'll just continue to do some whole group lessons and a lot more small group lessons and switching around some of the poems to continue to work with this strategy so they are mastering it and can take it into independent learning when I'm not with them.</p> <p>I: And maybe some of those short poems so that the big idea – you don't have to go through a lot –</p> <p>T: So maybe keeping it short and sweet, but having a lot of depth is the direction I'm going to go in in my small groups. It's not necessarily the longer it is, the more depth it has. It may be short and simple but have a lot of meaning. So that's something I learned over the past two days in my lessons.</p>
<p>SHARING</p>	<p>I: Well, you did several things with them in sharing that were really interesting, in terms of putting them in their own groups, so talk about your thoughts about the sharing.</p> <p>T: First thing, we were a little rushed, we never have enough time to just sit down and share and discuss in the classroom, but something we've really been working on, and not just in reading, but all subjects and our morning meetings, is prompting other children, do you have any questions, comments, connections, and promoting that discussion. Not so much me doing it and facilitating it, but them, because they're the ones who are talking, making them own what they're saying, because they're the learners. So that's what we've been practicing. I had to prompt a couple of them to say that, but children independently say, I have a question, I have a connection, I have a comment. That promotes the discussion; it helps them learn from each other; it helps the child who isn't answering the question to think harder about what they're saying. It also helps the children who maybe didn't read their poem think maybe next time I need to think harder about what I'm doing and really own what I'm learning, because someone is going to ask me a question, someone might want to know more, so I need to be prepared. I put them in groups so they could sit next to people who had read similar poems so they could share the inferences in case they were different, so they could see different thoughts, opinions, and views and could build off of each other. I gave them some time. I think they needed a little more time together as a group and be able to facilitate each group. It was a little rushed, but I did hear good conversations in each group. And then sharing out to the whole group, so that everyone understood and promoting that collaboration and discussion.</p> <p>I: It certainly seemed to keep their attention a lot, when they know they're going to get the opportunity to ask the other kids questions, and people take them seriously.</p> <p>T: And asking a valid question. We've been working on that. You know, "why did you color that blue?" not questions like that, but deeper questions to clarify their understanding is what we've been working on. We're asking questions to better understand what they're saying; we're not just asking a question to ask a question. Making valid connections, because you know that that helps you to understand what they are saying, and making a comment if you agree with them or disagree with them – we've been working on that as well.</p>

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<p>SMALL GROUP FOLLOW-UP: LESSON INTRODUCTION</p>	<p>I: Today you did some follow-up in small groups from yesterday's lesson. Can you tell us the purpose of your small groups was?</p> <p>T: The purpose 1, was a continuing of yesterday's lesson and lessons I've done before on inferring, to follow-up with some of the struggles that I saw in my whole group lesson yesterday and take them a step further. I noticed that they were inferring with individual pieces, but we were working on finding the entire meaning of the whole poem, inferring to figure out what the entire poem was about, so working in those small groups I was able to get a little more sense, 1-1, of which child was struggling with what and what I could help them with, and I was able to prompt and guide them a little. That was the overall purpose.</p> <p>I: Now how were the groups divided up?</p> <p>T: According to their levels. I use my Dominie kit and I'm able to level them on Fountas and Pinnell levels.</p> <p>I: So just tell us briefly, the Harriet Tubman group, about where are they reading?</p> <p>T: They're on a high third grade, third-fourth grade reading level, which is an N,O F/P level.</p> <p>I: And the group that did the World Go By?</p> <p>T: World Go by – they are reading at grade level, so they right now are at K-L. And then the one with "Teased," four of the children are reading at level H, which is end of first grade, and one of them is actually reading on a level D, which is middle of first grade reading level.</p> <p>I: And one wasn't there today.</p> <p>T: One was absent – and they inferred that he was sick!</p> <p>I: How did you choose the poems and how did you decide what you were going to do with the poems?</p> <p>T: The first decision I made with the poems – I was looking at some of the vocabulary and word choice and making sure I wasn't having to spend too much time to frontload what the vocabulary meant or how to decode the words, so they would be successful in reading it. That was my first screen on what I was looking for in the poem. I did want to find something that they could connect with, that I knew they had some background knowledge with. So for example, we've been studying the Underground Railroad, we've studied Harriet Tubman, so I knew they would have some background knowledge to connect with it. I was also looking for opportunities for inferences that they would be successful with, that they might need some prompting from me. So all three of those things played a role in the poems that I chose for each group, and what I knew, or what I thought they would be more successful with.</p> <p>I: And this is a departure from your normal guided reading lesson, right?</p> <p>T: Yes, it is. It is different, I'm focusing on reading strategies and not following more of a Fountas/Pinnell guided reading group.</p> <p>I: And so, you might do this sometimes, but obviously you still want to continue doing those other things, particularly with your kids who are still reading at first grade levels.</p>
<p>SMALL GROUP FOLLOW-UP: LESSON REFLECTIONS</p>	<p>I: So what did you actually learn about them as you were doing the lesson?</p> <p>T: A lot of things. And I need to sit back before I forget and write everything down. One of my ahas was with the group that did "Teased." I thought they might have a little bit more difficult time pulling those inferences, but they had so much background knowledge and they were already using that knowledge and the connections to infer what was going on without me even prompting. And so the responses I saw in the poem, and one of the children –</p>

Segment	Transcript
	<p>I: His feelings were hurt?</p> <p>T: Yes, he said, “My feelings were broke” – they broke my feelings. He didn’t quite have the vocabulary, and I said, “they hurt your feelings,” and he said, “heart broke.” He couldn’t quite express what he was trying to say but he said, yes. He did the same thing with the water, he said the water grabbed the sandcastle. So I was able to prompt him to the correct vocabulary and guide his thoughts.</p> <p>I: He’s a second language learner, right?</p> <p>T: Yes, he is. And he also said, “Can I draw a picture?” And yeah, you can draw a picture, so he remembered that from yesterday, so he drew where he goes – in the closet, so it’s got him in the closet. And the whole part at the end, “I remember, they forget” – I thought that might be a part where they stumbled a bit, and they were able to understand that the person remembering is the little boy, and they said it’s because his feelings were hurt. The other boys, they forgot, they just went back to what they were doing. And they didn’t say they were sorry. And just the connections they were making, really surprised me. So I know they’re ready to go a step further. Maybe something a little deeper. I feel since they got the overall meaning of this poem, they’re ready for something a little more difficult.</p> <p>I: The thinking in that poem was just as complex, if not more, than the other ones, so even though they might not have been able to read a longer or more “difficult” in terms of the words poem, their thinking was just as advanced.</p> <p>T: It was. In terms of the connections and inferences they made, that’s very true. They were very deep.</p>
	<p>I: So what do you see as the benefits of the small group?</p> <p>T: Oh, so much. When they’re whole group, I’m only able to spend a little bit of time with each child, and may not even get to each child. So I’m not really able to spend a lot of time with them and see where they’re needing that prompting and guidance. So having small group I’m able to give each child some one-on-one attention, make my records, notes, and see where I need to go next. It guides my whole group lessons as well because I know what my children are getting and what they need help with. I can’t do that whole group. I have to do that small group.</p>
	<p>I: Anything else you want to tell us about today? Any other thoughts?</p> <p>T: I have a lot of planning to do. I’ve learned a lot. It was very insightful. I just think the small group instruction is very powerful. You see tidbits when they are in whole group, but I learned so much more today being able to spend 1-1 time with them. I had a lot of ahas and shocks because I didn’t think they were going to make those inferences, so I’m very proud of them. We still have some work to do, but I wouldn’t be able to get this information if I wouldn’t have done the small group.</p> <p>I: I think also you begin to hear what works from your own prompting, like I noticed that often when you would ask them, “So what made you think that?” and then when you were able to say to some kids, “You just made an inference!”, those were things that [helped them]</p> <p>T: I learned a lot about myself as a teacher, and what works in prompting and what didn’t. Since this is a different way of doing small group for me, it’s something that’s still a little unfamiliar and I’m still trying out, I learned the prompts that I used for word attack strategies, and this is very different. So now that you said that, I do realize that I was kind of guiding myself through my prompting as I was hearing what would work with one child and not with another one.</p>