

Transcripts

SECTION: Routines

Section Content: ***What overall guidelines do you establish for IR?***

Engaged Readers: Irby DuBose

We talk a lot about being an engaged reader, and what that looks like and feels like and sounds like. We try to catch pictures of them doing it so they can have a visual of what it looks like when you are engaged. And this is all things that they have told me that they think it means to be an engaged reader. Every year we do this chart and every year it looks different. Every year their interpretation of being engaged is a little different, but it's still the same big umbrella. We talk about how engaged reading is quiet and I think it's important for them to know that IR needs to be kind of a quiet time. Over kindergarten that's kind of complicated, because we want them to talk and be social, but in IR, I really want them to just focus on themselves as readers. When they start talking, it's more complicated and harder. So we talk about it should be pretty quiet. If we hear sounds, that's what we say, it sounds like whisper reading. We should really just hear you whispering your reading, not conversations. Then we talk about how you ask questions, and your eyes are on the book, and all of these are things that they've noticed. So my plan is for that chart to grow, because there's a whole lot more that goes into being an engaged reader, but that's what we've gotten to at this point.

In kindergarten, we definitely start small. We set achievable and attainable goals. I want them to feel successful. I don't ever want them to feel they're not good enough, or they're not proficient enough, or they don't have enough strategies I always want them to feel successful in IR. So we start small. I want them to know what it feels like to be engaged, so then when they're not engaged, they can recognize that feeling and fix it. I think if you start too big, they never know what it feels like to be engaged. So then the whole self-monitoring, the whole staying on track, is a lot harder when they don't know what it feels like to be on track.

Irby DuBose

We did that chart – that’s definitely a growing chart, we add to it as new things arise that we need to mention. We started IR the second week of school, and I just say, IR is a time when we’re going to go and look at books, and we only do it for a minute or 2, because I want them to go and look, and then we talk about what we noticed. So it’s really them saying to me, here’s what we noticed during IR. So these are all things they’ve told me – we’re quiet, we concentrate. Some of this stems from mini-lessons I do. I might say, OK, today I want to talk about reading in your brain. One day I did a mini-lesson just about how to treat books. That is at the beginning of the school year, here’s how we treat our books. I show them, we act it out with a child, do it with IR, and then we come back and I say, OK, what can we add to our chart that we did today. And they say, oh, we know now that you’re supposed to treat the books a certain way, nice and easy, they love that. We started saying we treat the books like babies and I don’t really know where they got that from. But that didn’t make it to the chart because they started being kind of rough with books and I said I’m not going to put that on the chart because the books were babies, you all were not taking care of them, so we’re not putting that on the chart, that’s not something we can own quite yet, but they’re a lot better now with being respectful to the books.

Interviewer (Joanne Durham): And so you just keep adding to the chart as you come up with more things. Do you review the chart before they go off?

Ms. DuBose: We review it pretty much every day. Every day I want them to be reminded. Even as adults we sometimes need to be reminded just what to do. I don’t read it to them, I say, let’s remember real quick about what we do as independent readers. It just gets them ready. So I think just trying to set the IR block into chunks so that the children know what to do. I don’t want them to ever feel like they’re confused. I think if they’re confused, they won’t be reading.

For mini-lessons, the children are taught what’s appropriate for mini-lessons, like how should you be – you should be listening to me, turning and talking, things like that. During the conferring, I’m going to talk with the one I’m conferring with, and we’re working on that, because I know I heard a lot of it today. I’m conferring and I heard a lot of children say, “Ms. Dubose, Ms. Dubose, can you read with me next?” And that’s so hard, because you’re trying to stretch yourself thin enough to where you read with enough people. So we’re working on making sure we can have good, solid conferences and I can’t really do that if we’re being interrupted by other children. While your friends are sharing at the end, here’s what we expect you to do. I love sharing because it’s a community thing. So if you’re reading, and I’m talking while you’re reading, that’s not really polite, and when I go to share, they might not listen to me when I share. So being real explicit about what we expect from them during the different parts of the day, because it’s different.

Independent Reading Guidelines, Kindergarten (Classroom in Action)

T: Now, before we go, can we talk a minute about independent reading and what we expect you to do? Think about our chart up there. What happens during independent reading? We are – raise your hands

–

T: ____

S: We are quiet.

T: Why are we quiet?

S: Because some people might be reading and trying to concentrate on their book.

T: People are reading and trying to concentrate, so we need to be respectful and quiet. What else, H____?

S: You read in your brain.

T: Why?

S: Because if you read loud, no one can concentrate.

T: Exactly. J____

S: You stay quiet so other people can understand their book.

T: OK, what else do we do other than staying quiet?

S: You read.

T: We read. The point of independent reading is for us to practice –

S: Reading.

T: K____

S: We're quiet.

T: Uh, huh, what else? I____

S: We look at our book, not somebody else's book, because if you look at somebody else's book, they'll pay attention to your book and then they can't concentrate at all.

T: I, beautiful. Look at your book, not somebody else's book, because if you're looking at somebody else's book, you're not concentrating and you're gonna make it where they can't concentrate. Umm (looks at the chart) How do we treat our books?

S: Like a baby.

T: Well, we started off saying we treat our books like a baby, but now we say we flip them nice and –

S: Easy.

T: All right.

T: So we're going to go ahead and go to our tables, and I want you to focus on really looking at the –

S: Pictures!

T: And our goal today is going to be –

S: 10!

Apryl Whitman

At the beginning of the year, I model a lot, it's very slow, we go over everything consistently, of how do we sit on the carpet, how do we go get our books, where do we put them, if that didn't go so well let's try it again. And I take that time at the beginning of the year so that the rest of the year can flow a little bit smoother.

We made anchor charts together as far as how do we sit with a buddy when we buddy read? What does it look like when you independent read? What do we not do? I have a chart next to my table, and I'll point to it. If they come to me, it says it has to be a disaster for you to come and interrupt because my time is precious because people are learning. So if come up to me I'll point, and they sigh, because they know it's not something on there, and they'll walk away and go solve it. That was a mini-lesson in itself. At the beginning of the year, and all through the year – they constantly – you heard me today, constantly need little reviews and reminders of how our transitions and routines go. It's very important. If you don't have those routines, you're aren't going to have the dedicated time with your children.

Christy Long

First we had to talk about and made charts about what does it mean to sit and read by yourself. What does that mean? We make the charts and we have "Read to Self" (reads from chart): "Read quietly" so you're not shouting around the room as we're reading so we don't bother others; "Your eyes are on the book". At the beginning of the year they kind of think, if I have reading time, then it's just sitting time, I can relax, and not really do anything. So I don't want them to think that's time that's just wasted at the end of the day. So their eyes need to be on the books. "Hold your book still," "Quickly choose your spot and stay there" instead of moving around the room – and they'll try to do things like that at the beginning instead of reading; "Ignore those around you." One thing I always do with my class when we're going over this is I will imitate a child doing the wrong things. And that's something that sticks with them because they don't see their teacher act like that very often. I'm tossing up a book in the air and calling to the child over here, "S__, S__, look at this picture!" and they get so tickled 3:18 And I'll say, well, that's what I'm seeing, I saw that 4 times yesterday, and things like that. And they'll realize that that's what they look like and the things that they're doing. So we just spend a long time on procedures.

Section Content: Building Stamina

How do you help children build reading stamina?

Building Stamina, Kindergarten (Classroom in Action)

T: (Before IR): OK, boys and girls, today for independent reading, what I want us to talk about first is the different things that we've been doing as independent readers. One thing that we've been talking about is that independent readers set goals. We've been working on one goal, improving our – (kids join in) stamina. Stamina, right. We're using our stamina tree for that goal. And stamina is how long we can read. So last time, we read for 9 whole minutes, and that was wonderful. Today our goal is going to be 10 minutes. So when we go to independent reading, that's our goal – 10 minutes of engaged reading.

T: (After IR and Sharing): So when you get another book, be sure you are looking at the pictures.

Excellent job. Now I think we met our goal today for sure. We can definitely say we read for –

S: 10 minutes.

T: I'll color our stamina tree all the way up to 10 minutes. Guys, do you remember when we came at the beginning of the year and you were way down here? And now look how much you read. Look how much more you can do. You're growing as readers. Look at how much you've gotten. I'm so proud.

Irby DuBose

We'll keep doing it until we fill that trunk all the way up to 30 minutes, hopefully. I always say with stamina, we want a big goal, so they never feel like, well I made it to 15 minutes, so now I don't need to read any longer. So I want them to always have something to work towards.

Apryl Whitman

At the beginning of the year when they came in, the books they are able to read, level a, b, c – those books are short and quick, you just got a little and there's not much substance, so their stamina is very, very short. So we worked up to it. Starting out very slow. So the first day of school – the very first day, 3 minutes, next day let's try for 4, next day for 5, and the minute someone gets off task, we start over again, so that they learn what's acceptable and what's not. So my mini-lessons at the beginning of the year were a lot longer, and the IR time was a lot shorter. And then I had a lot more guided reading going on during that time, and children doing other things while I was having those guided reading groups, so teaching those word attack strategies to bring up their reading levels a little bit higher so we could spend more time reading and building our stamina. And once we got to our goal, which was 24 minutes, we celebrated it big-time. That was a big to-do for a first grader to get up to 24 minutes of IR time.

Christy Long

T: One other thing that I did when we were first starting is when I was trying to get them to build stamina, I have a chart and I said, "Let's practice. I'm going to time you and see how long you can do it. Everybody has to do it perfectly. So they open their books and I start the timer. Usually it starts out – I have a chart – they got tickled, and some got frustrated. The first time we tried it, it was just 42 seconds before someone tossed their book up in the air or was looking at somebody else. I would stop the timer and pull them back to the carpet. "Oh, what did we do?" "I don't know, but I saw someone" – I never say who, I never call them out personally, "but this is what I saw." So we try again, these are the things we are going to do. OK, go. Find your spot quickly, sit down quietly, start reading quietly, and the second time we did it, it was just 8 seconds. Some of them grumble when they have to come back to the carpet; some of them think it's hilarious, and their time, it grew. So we did that for a little while until I felt that they understood exactly what is expected and that I'm going to hold you accountable. If I say, this is how we do read to self, that's how I expect you to do read to self. If you're messing up, you're probably bothering someone else, and it's just not polite.

Ms. Durham: And how long generally now –we're like 3 months into the year – how long will they generally be able to spend in independent reading?

Ms. Long: They can read – a lot of them will just sit and read until I stop them. They enjoy reading now. It varies; it depends on what level they're reading. The lower level books – they tend not to be as involved in them as when you compare that to someone reading a chapter book. They want to sit and see what happens next. But right now I would say probably 10-15, maybe 20 minutes is about how long before I think, OK, I'd better get them up, let them move, let them wiggle, let them chit-chat some.

Section Content: Reading Places

How do you establish where children can read during Independent Reading?

Irby DuBose: Fall - Tables

Ms. Durham: Now they go off to the tables, and they have assigned seats at the tables. Do those change across the year?

Ms. DuBose: Sometimes, it just depends. Sometimes the tables aren't working and we'll move some people. That just depends. As the year goes on, if I see some people at a table need to be adjusted, I will. Right now they're not really assigned by any kind of reading level or anything like that. There's definitely a mix at each table, which is what I like. I like for it to be a variety of readers. Eventually, I haven't done it yet, but I like to give them fun spots. That's where they go and find a spot that they think would be more comfortable. You know everybody doesn't like to sit and read at a table, sometimes you like to read on the floor or stretch out. So eventually once they get a good handle on being engaged, we'll do fun spots.

Irby DuBose: Spring – Fun Spots

We talk about finding spots that are going to be the best for helping you focus. So that's what they did. They went through and said, well I think I need a bright spot or a dim spot, or a spot on the carpet or on the floor, and they actually went and found those spots and we labeled them. The point is they're supposed to be in a spot where they can focus the best and where they're going to stay engaged the best. They are in kindergarten and we find that this spot you thought would help you, but not really, let's just go back to our tables for a minute. Me, as a reader, I need to be in a hard chair at the table. I wouldn't do well on the floor. I think it's just being flexible with them, giving them the freedom to try these spots that they think are going to be best for them, but if it's not, going back to the table and reassessing where they're reading.

Apryl Whitman

At the beginning of the year, they had to sit at their seats. That was because, 1, they weren't reading for very long and I wanted to make sure that they were actually reading, setting those expectations. Then as we progressed into the year, I taught them the routines for choosing a spot. And as long as they're doing the right thing, as long as they're staying focused and on task, they can choose wherever they want to read in the room. As soon as I notice they're off task, and they're not doing what they're supposed to, I give them a simple point, and that means they have to go back to their seat and stay in their seat the rest of the time.

Christy Long

I let them sit anywhere they want to sit. They don't have to sit at their chairs at their tables, just anywhere they choose to, wherever makes them comfortable, because when you sit to read a book, you're going to go somewhere comfortable. You don't want to have to sit where someone tells you to sit that might not be so comfortable. That way they can focus on their reading and not if they're in their chair and the teacher is going to call you out for hanging upside down in your chair – no, because if you want to go lie down on the carpet, go lie down on the carpet. But as long as they're not sitting next to someone so that they're bothering that person, they can choose anywhere they want to sit in the room and the buckets that they have and my library is spread out over the whole side of the room, so it's a bigger area. So if a couple of them get up to choose different books, they're not all huddled up in one corner, I try to stretch it out as far as I can so they're not bothering each other or in each other's way or anything like that.

Section Content: Transitions

What routines do you use for transitions to and from Independent Reading?

Irby DuBose: Transition to IR (Table Leaders)

We try to set up our time to maximize reading time and minimize transitions, like the table leaders are there because with kindergarten I find if you just let them go, to get their books out and their folders out, some of them do it quickly, and some of them it takes a little longer. So it just seems to work really well with the table leaders. They go, they get it ready, so when everybody goes they can get started. You don't have to be worried about being distracted by somebody who's not ready. When they get there, it's ready. And that lets my assistant and I not have to worry about doing that. We can worry about the class.

I'll say table leaders go ahead and go. They'll get the books out from the book bags at their tables. The table leaders get them out and they have names on them. At the beginning of the year it's really fun to watch the table leaders, because you can see they're looking at the bag, looking at the name, and trying to find that name tag that it matches with. Now they're really good. That's so and so's bag and they put it where it belongs. They pass out the bags of books at the table. Then on the back of their chairs, we have folders that have familiar poems and familiar books in them and they get those folders out and put them out too. And it's pretty quick. They pass the books out and the folders out and the kids go and they have their materials ready. Sometimes they [table leaders] rotate. Sometimes they stay the same. It's just kind of – children at the beginning of the year that are picked are the ones who are showing responsibility, so I say you're going to be a table leader, and Ms. McDonald trains them. It takes 2 minutes. She says, here's what you do as a table leader and then they'll do it, and they're the table leader. And some tables we do, we rotate. Some of them stay the table leader the whole year. It just depends on the table and I guess what personality traits there are at that table. But we train them. They go to table leader training.

Irby DuBose: Transition to Sharing (Clean Up Song)

At the end, when it's time to clean up, they just put the bags of books back. The children have to clean up their own books. That's something some of the children don't understand yet. They think they can just leave their books out. And we say, no, you have to put your books in the bag, and then the table leaders put them in the baskets. And then they put their folders on the back of their chairs, and they come to the carpet.

At the end, the clean up song, I think that's a good structure we've put in place to maximize their reading time and minimize – we just don't want to waste time. We have such little time with these precious children, we try to make sure that every part of their day has some sort of reading. So the song I think is a good structure to incorporate some more reading while the table leaders clean up.

Ms. Durham: And the other kids then are reading the chart, reading the shared song. And then you have one child pointing at it, so you're getting that 1-1 going.

Ms. DuBose: It's really interesting watching them try to track print to a song, but it's a good skill to have I think. We love using the song too because a lot of times if, like during writing workshop, if they want to write a word and they know it's in the song, they'll go and look at the song and use it to write. So we love using those songs for clean-up cues.

Christy Long

Transition to IR (Classroom in Action)

T: OK, are you ready for your directions?

S: Yes. Are we going to do the rap?

T: I am going to do the rap.

S: Yea! Yea

T: OK, you ready? Everybody listening? Remember, we only use walking feet, OK?

T: (recording into I-Pad) Go to your seat. Look at your book. Think about your background knowledge. Open your chrome book. Type it in, and then get started reading. Find some new learning and put it in the padlet.

(Students move to seats while rap plays from I-Pad.)

Section Content: Partner Procedures

How do you teach children to share their IR with a partner?

Christy Long

Initiating Partner Procedures

When they meet up with a partner, the partner is going to expect them to talk about their book. When we started doing read to someone, with a friend, they didn't really know how to talk about the book, so we backed up and spent a week or so just learning how to talk about a book. Lots of modeling, and lots of practice. I gave them all sticky notes, and told them to write down any questions they had, their thoughts, and that would guide us in talking about the books, and then we would come together as a whole, in a circle, and try to do it all together, and I would try to foster those questions and show them how to add things to the story, make those connections, and how we spend time on your partner's book, because a lot of them wanted to listen to what the partner had to say and then immediately start talking about their book, so that was a big habit to break.

Christy Long
Using Sticky Notes

We started with having them use their sticky notes to jot down what they wanted to talk with their partner about. And they would always take their sticky notes with them and talk with the partner from the sticky notes. So I told them that had trained their brain to think while they're reading, and to always be thinking ahead about what they want to share about their books. Then after we did that, they would turn in their sticky notes to me, and I would keep them on a page so I could get an overall idea of what the child is wanting to write about and talk about. Is he writing about author's purpose every day? If so, I'm going to encourage him next time I talk with him to talk about the characters, or what was the problem in the story, or what else could we share other than author's purpose? Things like that. And are they always reading nonfiction books? If so, next time we have our reading group, I'm going to do fiction books with that group. Things like that, to get an overall picture using those things.

Christy Long
Using Anchor Charts

When they meet with their partner, that holds them accountable. I have them meet with the same partner all week and that also keeps them from talking about the same book every day, because if they got to choose a different partner, some of them would read the same book and would want to share the same thing every day. And then I brought the spinners, and they can use the spinner if they want to, to get them started, or they don't need to use the spinner. And we keep the anchor chart up that gives them things to talk about, and also keep the anchor chart up about how to talk to a partner about your book – how do you talk to someone, how do you listen to them – you start with the title, you set your book down when you listen to your partner, just to show them that you care, and that what they're saying means something to you and that way you can respond to them. So I keep all of those charts up so if we need to refer back to them, they're there.

Apryl Whitman

We have a chart that's right there on the carpet. They have to sit eye to eye and knee to knee, and that way they're focused just on their buddy, because we are sitting on the carpet so they may be distracted by other partners. I set the timer for 5 minutes and most of them, around 2 minutes, know to switch – some of the time I remember to tell them to let the other partner go. We came up with some questions that they can talk about to keep them accountable while they're talking with their buddy, and that's all on our chart.