

Conversations with D.H.

Background: DH is a new student to DJ Montague. He has been to multiple schools this year and is now in my classroom. He started school at DJM on February 25, 2013. Therefore, many of my conversations are really trying to get to know the student. He receives special education services and his current IEP states that he should receive 900 minutes of services per week. In addition, throughout the process, my cooperating teacher and I learned about some issues that DH was having in centers or at recess and lunch. Therefore, many of my conversations start by asking him how things are going during these times.

Day One (2/25): (throughout the dictation, I am the black dot, and DH is the open, outlined dot.)

- Are you excited about being at DJ?
 - No not really. I'm shy
- Oh. Well what did you like about your old school?
 - It was fun.
- Were you there since Kindergarten?
 - No. I moved around to different schools. But my sister says that this is my last school.
- So, what's your favorite subject?
 - Math.
- Why math?
 - I like multiplication and division.
- Even long division?
 - Yes
- So, what's your least favorite subject?
 - Reading and writing. I just don't like to read.
- Okay. That's good to know. What did you do this weekend?
 - I went bowling and went to the movies.
- What movie did you see?
 - I can't remember because I fell asleep.
- Oh well if you remember what movie it was you have to let me know.
 - Okay

Day Two (2/26):

- So, how was reading? (he had just returned from reading with the special education teacher)
 - Good
- What did you read?
 - Something about fireflies, butterflies, no fireflies. I don't know.
- Oh okay. Well, what do you like to read?
 - I don't know. *39 Clues, Diary of a Wimpy Kid.*

- Oh. I've been thinking about reading one. I see a lot of people in class reading those books. If I read one could we talk about it?
 - Yes
- Okay. Which one should I read?
 - *Dog Days*
- Okay great. So did you like P.E. today?
 - Yea
- What did you do?
 - Tumble
- Are you a good tumbler? I was never good at those things.
 - Huh?
- Never mind. How have your first two days been going?
 - Good

Day Three (2/27):

- So, how are things going?
 - Good
- So what was going on on the bus ride home?
 - Some kids were picking on me so now I'm getting picked up.
- How about things at recess?
 - Good
- How are things at lunch?
 - Good
- Are you making friends?
 - Yes
- What book are you reading?
 - 39 Clues
- Can you tell me a little about it?
 - I really liked the first clue
- What was the first clue?
 - I can remember but it was really funny
- Have they found all 39 clues?
 - No they find one in each book
- Oh, okay. Well, have a good evening and I'll see you tomorrow.

Day Four (2/28):

- So, what are your favorite sports?
 - Baseball
- Why do you like baseball?
 - I used to play. I was the pitcher and I played in the outfield. I didn't get to hit much.

- Why didn't you hit much?
 - There were other people on the team that hit the ball. And I was the pitcher.
- So do you have a favorite pro-team?
 - No I really don't like watching baseball.
- Oh okay. But you play baseball?
 - Yea. I like playing baseball because of my brother. He plays. He's 26.
- Oh really. My brother used to play baseball and I liked watching him but didn't like watching it on TV.
 - Yea. I also have a sister who is 22. And other sisters on my dad's side.

Day Five (3/1):

- So, how are things going today?
 - Good
- Did you like the field trip?
 - Yes. Except for the one part where it smelled really bad. You know when we were outside at the farm.
- Yea, I think my hair still smell because of it. Have you gone on any other field trips?
 - Yea. We went to Jamestown at my old school.
- Oh. Okay. Did you like that one?
 - Yea it was cool. We got to go to this one part and see some cool things.
- Oh okay. That sounds like fun. The rest of the class went to Jamestown, but I couldn't go. Well, have a great weekend!

Day Six (3/5):

- Well, how was your weekend?
 - Okay. I was grounded all weekend.
- Why were you grounded?
 - For yelling
- Oh no! Did you get to do anything?
 - Not really. But I did get to play X-box on Saturday.
- Oh okay. What game did you play?
 - A zombie game
- Do you like to play other games?
 - No not really. Just zombie games is all I play.
- Oh Okay. What did you do on Sunday?
 - I read books.
- What books did you read?
 - A little in *39 Clues* and *Dork Diaries*
- I see a lot of people reading those books too. Did you like *Dork Diaries*?
 - Not really. It's a girl book. My sister was reading it so I thought I would read it too.

- How was lunch and recess?
 - Good.

Day Seven (3/6):

- How was indoor recess? It was your first time staying inside with us.
 - Good
- So what did you do?
 - I played a game where you ride a bike and try not to get killed.
- Oh...
 - Like you try to ride down a hill
- Oh okay. Is it a game where you can see other people playing?
 - No but we can see who can go the farthest. I saw everyone else playing so I thought I would try.
- So how was art?
 - Good
- What are you all doing in art?
 - Making face pictures. We had to draw all the lines in today.
- So, you've been to all of the centers. Which is your favorite?
 - Art
- Why?
 - I don't know. I just always liked it. At my old school we made clay things and let them dry out. I think that's what they're doing now. But they're using a kiln to heat the clay.

Day Eight (3/7):

- So how are things going today?
 - Good
- How was computer?
 - Good
- What are you all working on in computer?
 - Some project with the founding fathers. But we didn't get to work on in long.
- Oh. How come?
 - Well, at first we did Success Maker. Then we had to put the orange things on the keyboard and type. But I don't remember what it's called. By the time we all were set up and ready, we only had 5 minutes to work on our project. But next time, she said we aren't going to type so we'll have more time to work on the project.

Day Nine (3/11):

- So, how was your weekend?
 - Good. I went to Chuck E Cheese
- Oh really? Why did you go?

- My brother has a son that likes to go. So we went because he wanted to go.
- Oh. That sounds like fun. What did you go while you were there?
 - Played games. And I won 3,000 tickets while I was there. And I got to get a toy with my tickets.
- Oh really. That's a lot. How did you win that many tickets?
 - I played this one game and won 500 tickets.
- Wow! What other games do you like to play?
 - Oh, that's the only one that I played. I went up in the tower though.

Day Ten (3/12):

Short Reflection:

I truly learned a lot about my student throughout this process. I do not think that I would have been able to create this type of bond with a new student coming to the school this late in the school year without using this process. I think that many conversations went well and that he began to talk more and more without me prompting him with questions.

While certain things went well, there were still some challenges to the process and some things that I would change. I am not sure that it was efficient to do this process during student teaching. Each week, I was given more to teach, so it was difficult to make time to talk with one student for two minutes. Also, this particular student need extra support in the classroom and leaves the classroom throughout the day to receive services. Therefore, it was even more difficult to find times when he was free from being pulled out of the class and when I was free from teaching. I also could not bring myself to taking him away from his classwork and catch-up work to help me with my assignment. It truly is about the student so I could not interrupt him just to complete my assignment. Also, DH is a new student and at times did not talk much to me. During the first few sessions, he did not tell me much even when I asked him open ended questions. I had to prompt him to tell me more and it made this process feel like an interview, which was not my goal. However, he still tried to tell me things which was positive.

I think that the most important result from this process is that I understand my new student on a deeper level. It took me months to get to know my other students, and this process really allowed me to learn a lot about a student in a short period of time. Also, I believe that DH now understands that my cooperating teacher and I truly want the best for him and truly care about him.

If I were to do this project again, I would conduct my interviews at different times and in a different place. While it was convenient to have the interview in class since I could keep an eye on my other students, there were times when other students were trying to interrupt the conversation. Also, having the interview at the end of the day posed a challenge depending on what activities were occurring. However, it was one of the few times when I was not teaching.

I think that this student needs to get to know the other students in class and continue communicating with them. He is brand new to the school and the area as well. I think that one

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March 10, 2013
2 by 10 Assignment

thing that we could do for this student is to give him information about resources in the community (Taylor & Whittaker, 2009). He told me that he likes to play baseball, therefore we could give him information about baseball teams in the area. Also, I know a little about him background and family issues. Therefore, it would be good to give him information about community events so that he can find connections within the community that he is currently living in. In addition, we can also invite DH's guardians to the school to participate in the classroom to foster a stronger sense of community in the classroom (Taylor & Whittaker, 2009).