

Kindergarten Geometry Pre-Conference

(Before the Lesson)

TP: Tanya Paris, Kindergarten Teacher

JL: Jenna Laib, Math Specialist

JL: What do you expect students will know following instruction?

TP: Students will be able to sort and classify shapes.

JL: ...like if we gave them a bunch of cut-out shapes...?

TP: Right. They would be able to not only sort them into categories based on appearance, but articulate what makes a triangle a triangle. What makes a square a square. I want to hear them talk about their definitions and use the mathematical vocabulary.

JL: Looking at the unit and thinking about your experiences, what misconceptions do you anticipate students might have?

TP: Students sometimes have difficulty telling the difference between a square and a rectangle, but this class seems pretty solid.

JL: I noticed that, during the last lesson, Tiya even said that “squares are in the rectangle family, but they’re not all rectangles.” What do you think has made the difference?

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TP: I like that we are exploring discourse together.¹ It's made me think a lot more about how I can get kids to talk about their math learning.

JL: I'm hearing so many great conversations! Have you noticed any students that seem to have confusion over naming the shapes we've done so far?

TP: It was really only two or three kids that seemed confused about squares and rectangles.

JL: Which kids?

TP: [redacted names]

JL: How do you think we could help clarify it for them?

TP: I wonder if they're overgeneralizing. Like we've focused so much on *rectangles have four sides! 1-2-3-4!*

JL: Oh, that's true! Do you think that would lead to any other misconceptions?

¹ Tanya had chosen 'discourse' as her goal for her work with math coach Jenna that year.

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TP: We have worked a lot on classifying shapes based on the number of sides, but we only do a limited number of shapes. I wonder if students think all 4-sided shapes are rectangles.

JL: Hmm... that's interesting. How do you think we could figure out if students are confused?

TP: Do you think I should introduce the rhombus? I usually do that in the unit on patterns.

JL: I wonder if that's now *another* shape to name, for kids that are already confused about the nuances of names.

TP: Oh, maybe.

JL: What if we created a weird shape? An irregular shape? But it still has four sides.