

WHEELS ON THE BUS

Key Focus: Creative Arts

Observation: As part of a unit on transportation, each child is asked to do “research” for two weeks on his or her favorite type of transportation. Children pick anything from cars to bicycles to trains. Kevin (age 4) has chosen buses. Drawing 1 and Drawing 2 were both completed during the unit.

Kevin – Bus, March 14



Kevin – Bus, March 20



Reflecting on
the
Documentation:

**Participants may quickly shift from reflecting on the documentation to interpreting the observation or suggesting strategies for extending learning. Remind participants to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the documentation technique.*

Ask: What questions emerge after seeing these two drawings from the same child, drawn over a short time span?

Sample Responses: These two pictures show similar yet contrasting knowledge about buses. This would be stronger documentation if the teacher had captured some of the child’s language describing what he drew. Moreover, it would be helpful to know if the child was copying in either instance (for example, drawing based on a picture or model bus) or was drawing from his memory. Are they different kinds of buses? How many wheels does each bus have? Was he trying to draw from different perspectives? Which direction are the buses traveling? You might also want him to describe the two brown dots on the right-hand side of Drawing 2 beneath the window. It looks like he spent a lot of time on the second bus, but without a note on it, we don’t know how long.

Interpretation of the Observation: **Remind participants that in their interpretation they are looking for patterns, critical incidents, or errors. It is important to stick to the data.*

Ask: What does Kevin know about buses?

Sample Responses: Kevin knows that buses have wheels and windows. He also knows that there is at least one person who sits in a bus (presumably the bus driver in Drawing 1). Although the wheels on his first picture seem to show slightly more detail (and are more circular) than in Drawing 2, he may be demonstrating in Drawing 2 that it is likely that an observer would only be able to see two wheels from that vantage point, rather than four. He put more detail and color in the top of the second bus.

There is also a sample of his name writing to compare to other samples from the fall. By this time of the year, he is writing most of his name in capital letters.

Relating Your Observation to the Child Outcomes Framework:

**Although participants can defend other interpretations, there should be general consensus that this observation demonstrates:*

5B2 (Creative Arts/Art): Progresses in abilities to create drawings, paintings, models, and other art creations that are more detailed or realistic.

2D4 (Literacy/Early Writing) Progresses from using scribbles, shapes, or pictures to represent ideas, to using letter-like symbols, to copying or writing familiar words such as their own name.

7B1&3 (Approaches to Learning/Engagement and Persistence): Grows in abilities to persist in and complete a variety of tasks, activities projects, and experiences; shows growing capacity to maintain concentration over time on a task.

8B3 (Physical Health and Development/Fine Motor Skills) Progresses in abilities to use writing, drawing, and art tools, including pencils, markers, chalk, paint brushes, and various types of technology.

Next steps for large group instruction:

**Help participants make connections between what they learn from the assessment and the next steps they want to take in instruction. If suggestions for instruction extend activities to new areas of learning, ask participants to consider what aspects of children's progress they would assess and how they would do so during those extension activities.*

Ask: What would you recommend that the teacher do next for the class as a whole?

**Responses will vary but might include:*

- Ask students to present to the class the results of their two-week investigations of types of transportation. They may present pictures from books or magazines, tell stories about trips on or in their favorite vehicles, or show pictures they have created or stories they have written or dictated. Ask them to talk about the details of their favorite type of transportation and why they like it. You could document what they tell you about their vehicle and look for descriptive words, details, and category words.

Next steps for individualized

** Responses will vary but might include:*

instruction: **Ask:** How would you help Kevin extend his knowledge of buses?

- You could go to the library with Kevin and choose a number of books that have buses and ask him to copy the sketches. Talk about the different parts of the bus that he observes that require more detail (for example, exhaust pipes, doors, looking more carefully at the wheels, writing on the side of buses). You can also have him think about different types of buses (for example, school bus vs. city bus).
- To connect this work to the community and Kevin's family, you can give Kevin a disposable camera and ask him to take a few pictures of buses that he sees in his community.

Additional Notes: Invite parents to come and see the results of children's research and investigations.