

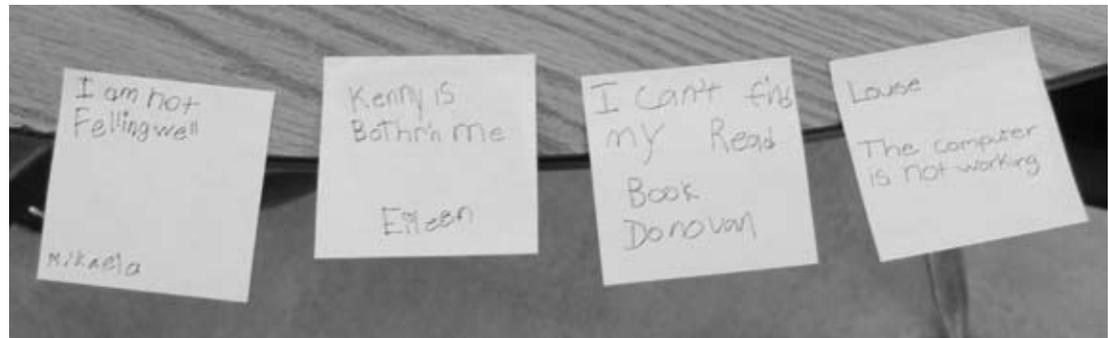
Post Me

When I'm working with a small group of students at the reading table, I don't like to be interrupted by other students. Nonetheless, there will be three or four of them who feel it's critical that they share some need, issue, or concern immediately. And although you would think that just asking everyone to not bother the group would do it, experience has taught me that it doesn't. So, as opposed to trying to suppress their energy for sharing their needs, I figured out how to redirect it instead.

Solution:

A student writes what he was going to tell me on a post-it, sticks it on the edge of our small group reading table, and then returns to whatever he had been doing.

Fig. 3-19
Here, completely unedited, are the concerns being shared by some first graders in a friend's classroom.



*I am not
Felling well*
—Mikaela

*Kenny is
Bothr'n me*
—Eileen

*I can't find my
Read Book*
—Donovan

*The computer
is not working*
—Louise

As I continue to work with the group, I'll glance down at a newly posted note. Based upon what I read, I am able to make decisions.

I am not Felling well (Mikaela) [As long as she's not puking, it can wait a bit.]

Kenny is Bothr'n me (Eileen) [Yeah. Kenny bothers just about everyone. Get over it.]

I can't find my Read Book (Donovan) [He should be able to solve that himself.]

The computer is not working (Louise) [Dang. One of the groups needs it for testing.]

Final Decision:

Leave the small group with something to read and discuss, go fix the computer, and then swing by Mikaela's desk to check up on her. Later, after the group has been dismissed, call over Donovan and Eileen to see if they were able to handle their problems.

Bonus: An advantage to the post-it notes is that I'll be reminded to see students I didn't see during the group's time. The follow-up will encourage my students to trust the Post Me strategy and not see it as some kind of "brush off" move.