**The Assessments Used in Practice**

**CASE 1- William, 2nd grader**

**Analysis of Assessment Data**

In order to assess second grade student William’s literacy development, I studied data collected from the informal phonics inventory, the Fry sight word inventory, the spelling inventory, and a running record from the Qualitative Reading Inventory.

**Informal Phonics Inventory**- The purpose of this assessment is to analyze students letter sound knowledge. In order to administer the test, the teacher asks the students to pronounce various individual letters or combinations of letters representing a single sound, such as blends or digraphs. The students must also read three letter words and correctly pronounce short vowel sounds in these words, as well as utilize the rule of silent e to properly change vowel sounds in words with an e at the ending, such as in cap and cape. This assessment is used to establish areas that you need to focus your instruction on and can also be used to track progress as you use interventions to support any discovered deficits, (McKenna & Stahl, 2016). William scored a 61% on this assessment and the data provided information regarding William’s phonics skill acquisition. In studying the student’s knowledge of individual consonant sounds, William provided incorrect pronunciation for the letters G, C, Qu, and Y. His answers on the assessment, however, are indicative of recognition of various sounds each letter has capabilities of making. William will require additional instruction in the consonant sounds he has incorrectly pronounces as this shows us that this precise, constrained skill must be taught, (McKenna & Stahl, 2016). Following this William was unable to provide correct pronunciation for a selection of beginning consonant blends, the pattern lying in his trouble with the -br and -tr beginning blends, as well as the -str and –tr blends. This provides instructors with a formative view of ways we can shape our instruction. As William moved through the assessment he was able to properly pronounce only half of the final consonant blends, half of the long vowel diagraphs, as well as only half of the listed short vowel CVC words. This is a thin assessment, as it does not require higher order thinking or factor in student’s self-efficacy, however it is still able to provide educators with areas to provide additional instruction. For example, two of the missed short vowel CVC words included the short sound of the letter –u. This shows us that William’s teacher must provide practice for William with words including this sound. A need present in this subjective assessment is that of clearly pronouncing words properly that include a silent e. William possesses misconceptions about certain letter sounds, such as the letter –u that cause him difficulty when he tries to pronounce the words, and will continue to prove difficult as he attempts to decode larger words later on. This shows the teacher there is an imperative need to catch and fix these misconceptions right away, before they enter long term memory, (Neuman & Wright, 2013). Teachers are able to use assessments such as the Informal Phonics Inventory in order to infer possible decoding strategies students know, and what areas they are developing or progressing within, (Morrow & Gambrell, 2019).

**Fry Sight Word Inventory**- The purpose of this assessment is to study a student’s capability to pronounce several high frequency words at sight. This means recognizing and reading a word correctly in less than one second. Teacher shows student a word and asks for a pronunciation. William, our second grade student correctly pronounced 94 of 100 Fry words, not skipping words he did not know but instead making a strategic guess based upon letters recognized in the words. Such miscues included *be* instead of the correct word *been*, and *know* instead of the correct word *now*. This shows the examiner that William did not concern himself so much with accuracy when he came across words he was unsure of, instead prioritizing his reading rapidity and moving on to a word he recognized with more ease. Now, as I personally did not administer this assessment, I am unable to analyze Williams recognition speed with each missed word, leaving me to wonder if there were any hesitations while he tried to decode unknown words. However, with the similarities that connect his incorrect responses and the intended response, I am inferring that William’s sight word recognition skills are developing and the teacher may maintain close awareness of his progress through listening to repeated readings, and analyzing his progressions with various word lists of 2-5 letter words.

**Spelling Inventory**- This assessment helps an examiner determine a child’s stage of spelling development. The student is asked to scribe words read to them in order for a teacher to see what a child already understands about spelling words, and what requires further instruction. Spelling is the ability to apply one’s knowledge of letter-sound correspondence to written words. Early spelling develops in stages, ranging from prephonemic spelling to derivational relations spelling (McKenna & Stahl, 2016). These stages of spelling are where teachers can observe a student’s specific learning development concerning their complexity of familiarity of orthographic patterns, (McKenna & Stahl, 2016). William requires heavy spelling intervention as evident by his low scoring ten word spelling test. William’s data shows us that he is currently resting at a stage of spelling development typical for end of year first graders or beginning of the year second graders, (McKenna & Stahl, 2019). As this assessment was proctored in May of William’s second grade year this concludes that the students is below grade level in terms of spelling stage expectations. William is frequently using logical vowel substitutions with a letter-name strategy, such as when he wrote *win* instead of *when* or *tran* instead of *train*. The student, however, is not spelling vowel patterns correctly, and lacking to correctly spell long-vowel and silent e patterns. The student also includes reversals for the letter –p when it is found at the end of a word. William is able to represent salient sounds as well as common consonant blends correctly such as –fl and –tr. William’s spelling inventory shows teachers that the student will require much additional instruction in the area of diagraphs, beginning consonant blends, and the short vowel –u sound; which was a present need in previous assessment analyzed as well. With this, William is not requiring further attention to spelling of beginning or ending consonant sounds at this time.

**Qualitative Reading Inventory Running Record**- The purpose of this assessment is to deeply analyze a glimpse of the student’s oral reading development. The level of the reading assessment should roughly correlate to the student’s current reading ability. Teachers analyze specific miscues, or errors, a student makes while reading, in addition to their rate of reading to assess correct words per minute, as well as student’s fluency rate. Teachers should use data from this assessment to analyze what a student understand and what need additional instruction. William was asked to read independently a narrative passage at the Level: One reading level, and answer corresponding questions both before and after the read. William read the story “The Bear and the Rabbit” at a rate of 91 words per minute, with 85 correct words per minute. William had a total of 12 miscues, scoring Instructional level in total accuracy, which is only scored if a student reads a passage with 90-97% accuracy, (Leslie & Caldwell, 2011). The miscues that William made included 9 substitutions, or replacing the written word with another word, 1-word omission, 1 word insertion, and 1 self-correction. Self-corrections are sometimes controversial when counted as miscues but the creators of the QRI assessment system believe they are miscues as they are a deviation from the text, and can affect both comprehension and a reader’s fluency. William’s reading errors were consistent with errors made in other assessments as well. William had trouble decoding within word pattern vowel combinations as are present in *would* and *near* as well as blends present in. William struggled with spelling similar words such as ‘float’ and *lump*. William maintained his struggle with words containing short –u sounds, as evident in both the spelling inventory with *lump*, the informal phonics inventory with *sup*, *hug*, and *cub*, and ultimately in the QRI passage with a substitution of *up* when the short –u sound was not present in the intended word. William’s assessments also show a trend in miscues occurring within long vowel digraphs, diphthongs, and rules of silent *e*. Stemming from his Informal Phonics Inventory where the student could not properly pronounce *loud*, the student could also not produce the same sound in *around* causing miscues during his running record. William scored between a 95-97% total acceptability score, placing him at an Instructional level, as he made 6 meaning-change miscues that distorted the significance of the text. William’s fluency is developing and his oral reading level with it as he reads quickly and at an instructional level. Within the NAEP Oral Reading Fluency Scale William read the passage at a Level 3; the majority of William’s syntax was correct as well as his expression (or as much as we can know through the examiner’s notes). Knowing that oral reading accuracy and comprehension have a tight relationship, as “children’s oral language, both receptive and expressive, provides the foundation upon which their reading and writing skills are built,” (Morrow & Gambrell, 2019), so we will be able to use these components to create William’s instructional goals. William’s comprehension of this text is depicted through both the retelling of the story and the comprehension questions following. William retold 8 out of 31 possible ideas about this story, summarizing very briefly using surface level character descriptions, lacking to include the setting or two other characters involved or the dialogue. Much of the information William forgoes in his retelling, he is able to correctly answer when questioned using explicit and implicit comprehension questions. According to the Common Core State Standards for Second Graders, William should be able to recount stories, describing how the beginning and end add to the story’s message or plot, (Core Standards, 2019). Retelling is not used to determine a student’s level, however it does offer teachers solid information about instructional strategies that may help a student to grow. While William’s retelling shows me he understood the passage, it left out details that would support his comprehension. William is next asked to answer to both implicit and explicit comprehension questions, correctly answering 3.5 out of 4 explicit comprehension questions, and 1 out of 2 implicit questions, producing a score of 4.5 out of a possible 6 answers. This placed William at an Instructional comprehension level with this text and shows that while he meets Common Core State Standard of answering explicit “who, where, when, why and how” questions in a text, he is not yet mastering integration of knowledge and ideas that is showcased through answering of implicit questions, (Core Standards, 2019). In other words, this is the level at which William’s guided reading instruction will take place at, and the examiner would stop assessing at this point.

**Goals for Instruction**

**Goal 1-** My initial goal for William’s literacy development is to build his knowledge of short vowel sounds, as this paves the way for upcoming phonics development. William exhibits difficulty reading short *u* sounds, in turn, causing him problems when he attempts to decode both long *u* sounds and diphthongs containing the letter *u*. Not only did this cause him to score lowly on the Informal Phonics Inventory, but it also impacted his running record score, and his spelling inventory. William is below grade level in this area as a second grader should, according to the common core standards, be able to distinguish long and short vowels when reading regularly spelled one-syllable words. (Core Standards, 2019).. When looking to the modified cognitive model, Students require automatic word recognition in order to properly comprehend what they read, (McKenna & Stahl, 2016). William requires phonological awareness and decoding knowledge and in order to progress William, with oral reading and comprehension, his accuracy must increase. This is why my first goal for William is to be able to decode CVC words with all short vowel sounds.

**Instructional Strategy:**

William would benefit from instructional strategies such as those shown to us in "Making Words" video. This model teacher has students build words using different letter tiles and then substitute phonemes for various letters within the words. Students build words like *bag*, adding letters in order to make *brag* or changing vowel sounds to make the word say *bug*. This strategy could be adapted and modified for William in order to have the student complete substitution activities with different short vowels within words. The teacher could modify this lesson having William use paper and pencil in order to show him how different sounds correlate to written words that he may read or spell in the future. Teachers can utilize the strategy of think alouds in order to model to students the ways that words can be decoded, while they engage in an activity of making words (Morrow & Gambrell, 2015). This would support William as it would provide him with tools to read accurately and fluently in turn building oral-reading fluency, as well as phonics skills, (Dufresne, 2016).

**Goal 2-** My second goal for William is to increase his phonics skills regarding the use of the rule of silent *e*. William scored 0 out of 4 on the Informal Phonics Inventory Silent *e* skills, as well as improperly spelling the word *place*, on his Spelling inventory, lacking the final letter *e*. William requires this skill in order to be able to remedy his misunderstanding of interpreting long vowel indicators. As the Common Core Standards has second grade students distinguishing long vowels using long vowel markers and common spelling-sound correspondence, William will need to develop and master this skill in order to be meeting grade level standards. (Core Standards, 2019). The Silent *e* is a skill that will continue to influence William’s reading comprehension if not addressed early. William’s misconceptions, and inability to pronounce the change in a word when a silent *e* appears at the end, shows that he is needing explicit instruction that addresses both long vowel patterns and long vowel markers.

**Instructional Strategy- Long Vowel Markers- The Rule of Silent *e***

In All About Words (Neuman & Wright, 2016), it is said that in order for children to retain word knowledge with accessibility, words must not be taught in isolation but instead be interlinked with a larger concept. With the rule of silent *e*, it is imperative that William receive explicit instruction addressing the numerous long vowel patterns that will come into play as he grows as a reader. William would benefit from the use of word sorts where he is asked to match pictures and words utilizing both short vowel and long vowel words and their patterns. Word Sorting is a way of engaging students in constructing and owning their knowledge about how words work. The students are provided with a list of words to divide into categories based on features that are present in the words. This activity will allow William to see many different words and make comparisons on how these words are similar or different. The student can then apply the patterns learned through word sorts on to different words in their future reading and focus on long vowel markers across concepts. Teacher informal assessment should be occurring daily in order to monitor William’s progress with long vowel markers and the rule of silent *e* both in oral reading and also in William’s writing. This would allow William to pull their knowledge gained from word work lessons and utilize these literacy skills in a real life context of reading or writing.

**CASE 2: Sarah, 4th grade, May**

**Analysis of Assessment Data**

Sarah is a fourth grader who will be receiving literacy instruction. It is best practice to use individual literacy assessments to target instruction towards improvements individual students require in reading and writing, (Morrow & Gambrell, 2019). In order to assess second grade student Sarah’s literacy development, I studied data collected from the spelling inventory and both a narrative and an expository passage running record from the Qualitative Reading Inventory.

**The Spelling Inventory-**

An assessment which helps teachers determine the stages of a child’s spelling development. This assessment required Sarah to scribe words read to her in order to demonstrate her familiarity with spelling patterns. Sarah’s spelling inventory included 25 words with analytical features examiners can dissect in order to determine what a student understands and what is requiring added instruction. (McKenna & Stahl, 2016). Sarah had no problem with short vowels, consonants in emergent spelling, digraphs, blends or long/other vowel sounds. Sarah did, however struggle with the last five words in the list, stumbling over bases and roots of words, such as ‘pleas’ in ‘pleasure’, as well as harder suffix sounds such as ‘ur’ in ‘pleasure,’ (McKenna & Stahl, 2016). Sarah also struggled with the beginning soft consonant sound of *c* in the words ‘cellar’ and ‘civilize’ labeling them both as beginning with letter *s*. These misconceptions are imperative to correct as the way students spell words can influence the way they decode, and vice versa. I am able to view Sarah’s spelling inventory and deduct that she is currently in the early spelling stage of derivational relations, in which she will learn to use semantic relationships amongst words in order to spell words properly, even if the words are pronounced contrarily, (McKenna & Stahl, 2016). With this, the Common Core State Standards profess that fourth graders must be able to identify and know the meaning of the most common prefixes and derivational suffixes by the end of third grade, which Sarah, a fourth grade student, is still at an instructional level of knowledge at. Sarah will require more instruction on suffixes and roots of words.

**Qualitative Reading Inventory Narrative Passage-** Level 4: “Johnny Appleseed”

When using the QRI running record as an assessment, the student reads aloud from a passage while the examiner records any miscues, and times the students rate of fluency, (McKenna & Stahl, 2016). Sarah’s fluency on this level 4 passage was that of 71 words per minute. Combined with the 9 errors Sarah had while reading, her rate of correct words per minute is 69 CWPM. Sarah read the passage in 259 seconds, or roughly 4 and a half minutes, with 9 total miscues, 6 being non-meaning-change miscues which included insertions of words such as placing *to the* between *traveled* and *west.* The meaning in the 6 non-meaning-change miscues were not affected by the insertions, omissions or self-corrections such as the self-correction of the word *Pennsylvania* or omissions of words such as leaving out *into* in the sentence *“they had the best chance of growing into strong trees”*. The miscues that did, however, affect meaning were those of a substitution of *fronter* for *frontier,* the insertion of *side* after the word *west,* and the omission of the word Massachusetts, instead reading *I don’t know*. This bring Sarah’s total accuracy to the Instructional level, and her total acceptability to the Independent level of a grade level passage. This shows examiners that Sarah has met the Common Core State Standard of reading grade-level text with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension, and is moving on to a higher level text in order to master the same skills at a more difficult level. Sarah’s oral reading fluency, as assessed with the NAEP rubric, is difficult to say for certain as I personally did not listen to the student read the text, however when taking into account her miscues and her reading rate, Sarah would fall into a Level 4 oral reading level, as she read in larger meaningful phrase clusters, with some departures from the text that do not weaken the overall text construction. The QRI running records are means examiners can use to measure numerous features of reading development, including comprehension, (McKenna & Stahl, 2016). The miscues that Sarah made impacted her comprehension of the text in a few cases. First, the insertion Sarah made of the word *side* following the word *west*, in a sentence discussing the character’s migration, impacted her retelling as she stated that Johnny Appleseed “went to the west side of town.” This was, however, not the intended *west* spoken of in the text. Other than this the student’s retelling, while brief, touched on numerous points in the story. Out of 47 possible ideas, Sarah recalled 11 of the listed ideas. I believe that Sarah’s miscues of west side, opposed to western area of the country, caused her to comprehend the setting and events in this story differently than she would have without this insertion. The explicit and implicit questions for “Johnny Appleseed” showcased Sarah’s understanding of the text. Sarah answered 3 out of 4 implicit questions correctly, and Sarah scored 3 out of four on explicit questions answered correctly. Sarah totaled a score of 6, placing her at the instructional level of comprehension for this text, or where she will receive instruction from her teacher. The miscue of *west side* came back to haunt Sarah once more on this comprehension assessment, as she answered a question of “why should we thank Johnny” by sharing that he planted lots of apple trees on the town’s west side. The student would have been correct in her answer if she had not inserted the miscue of ‘side’ in the initial read. Sarah also answered “I don’t know” for an implicit question, asking her to make an inference about the text, showing that she may be needing instructional support with inferring answers from a text.

**Qualitative Reading Inventory Expository Passage- Level 4: “Early Railroads”**

The next assessment the examiner proctored for Sarah was an additional QRI, an expository passage called “Early Railroads.” This passage was 297 words long, and Sarah read it in 235 seconds or 3.9 minutes. Sarah’s word per minute rate was 75.8 words per minute. With this, Sarah had 7 miscues within the running record, finalizing a correct word per minute rate of 74 CWPM. Sarah’s miscues included three numbers, two numerical years and one numerical mileage description, substituted with incorrectly read number words. Additionally, Sarah substituted the word *locomotive* for a very choppy version of the sounded out word with the examiner scribing *lo-co-mo-tive* above the word twice in the running record. Sarah also substituted *Europe* with *E-rope*, *and* read *on* instead of and in one case. There were only substitution miscues in this read, no other miscues present. Sarah’s miscues, unfortunately, all affected the meaning of the words she read and in this expository passage negatively affected her accuracy and acceptability so in turn her comprehension. Sarah’s 7 miscues placed her right on the cusp of Independent oral reading fluency for both acceptability and accuracy, which allows 0-7 miscues to be deemed above instructional level. Sarah’s fourth grade level peers have a correct rate of 57-115 words per minute and 54-112 correct words per minute in order to be deemed instructional. As Sarah’s assessment has her within this range, and with low amounts of miscues she is deemed independent with oral reading fluency at this level. Sarah’s oral reading fluency, as assessed with the NAEP rubric, once again falls into Level 4 oral reading level, as she read in larger meaningful phrase clusters, with some departures from the text that do not weaken the overall text construction. Sarah’s comprehension of this story was assessed through her retelling of the story and her answers to both implicit and explicit oral comprehension questions. In the retell, Sarah recalled 14 out of 57 possible listed ideas, and included inferences that people use trains now instead of horses because it is a faster form of transportation. With the comprehension questions, Sarah again fell victim to her miscue substitutions when asked about a country using railroad tracks she stated ‘didn’t they say E-rope,’ showing me she was aware that word was a country, however could not decode the word properly. With this Sarah also stated she was not sure about two different implicit question requiring her to make inferences. She scored 5 out of a total of 8 possible points, 3 correct explicit questions, 2 implicit. This score placed Sarah at a level of Frustration with the comprehension of this passage. This shows me, as an examiner and assessor of this data, that Sarah does not yet possess strong comprehension of text at her fourth grade level. Although Sarah is able to recognize and fluently read words at a fourth grade level, she will require additional instruction in order to comprehend text at this level.

**Goals for Instruction**

**Goal 1-** Increase Sarah’s accuracy by making self-corrections on miscues that occur while reading.Her reading miscues impact her ability to comprehend a text, which could be avoided if she went back and self-corrected the miscues made. Self-corrections can provide an “important window into the readers thinking,” (McKenna & Stahl, 2016) in the ways that it shows the examiner the degree of which a reader is monitoring or processing their own reading. As patterns of self-corrections provide insight to examiners of a student’s awareness of literacy processes, we can use these patterns to better focus our comprehension instructional strategies for following lessons, (Core Standards, 2019).

**Instructional Strategy**

As Sarah’s exhibits a need for increase in accuracy while reading, I would suggest the student make sure to think about what she is reading while she reads. Sarah would benefit by asking questions for understanding, making predictions about a story and using prior knowledge of concepts and vocabulary in order to self-correct while reading, (McKenna & Stahl, 2016). Sarah would benefit from instructional strategies such as whole class choral reading, as this strategy allows for teacher modeling of accurate fluency as well as teacher corrective feedback to miscues occurring when reading. A reputable researcher David D. Paige, from The Reading Teacher, shares that WCCR can help student increase their oral reading fluency skills, and in turn positively impact comprehension, (Paige, 2011). Sarah’s comprehension is impacted heavily by her accuracy. In order to combat this issue, Sarah’s engagement in WCCR would allow her to engage in think-alouds, where the teacher models self-corrections when reading new or unknown words in a sentence, as well as supportive approaches to difficult words or phrases (Paige, 2011), such as the word “Massachusetts” in Sarah’s QRI passage. Sarah would receive frequent support when encountering difficult vocabulary through WCCR, but the support should be both scaffolded and explicit in its modeling practices allowing her to grow in her accuracy and in turn both fluency and comprehension.

**Goal 2-** The second goal for Sarah’s literacy development is a growth in comprehension with a focus on inferring and answering implicit questions. Sarah needs to improve her reading comprehension through the ability to make inferences about a story and correctly answer implicit comprehension questions about a story. Students in the position Sarah is in, need to practice answering both explicit and implicit questions with every text they read. Inferential questions have factual answers that cannot be located within a text, (McKenna & Stahl, 2016) making them difficult for many students to conceptualize. If Sarah is to meet the common core fourth grade standards, of reading with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension, she will in turn need to boost her reading comprehension abilities, (Core Standards, 2019).

**Instructional Strategy**

Implicit questions require students to read between the lines, and instructional strategies such as think alouds and repeated readings of text would be beneficial to Sarah in this area of concentration as well. Think alouds, where a teacher models reading a story and thinks out loud about a possible answer to an inferential question, would provide Sarah with a framework for how she could do the same. These questions do not have a concrete answer in a text being read but teach students how to understand different questions and the proper ways to answer them using comprehension strategies. Think alouds show students how a teacher would “flexibly use cognition strategies or handle a comprehension problem that may arise during reading,” (McKenna & Stahl, 2016). Sarah would benefit from explicit instruction of various comprehension strategies that would benefit her ability to answer explicit and implicit questions, these could be exhibited to Sarah through the use of think alouds. Teachers can model through think alouds strategies including summarizing, activating prior knowledge, self-monitoring (as mentioned in goal one) and questioning or visualizing while reading, (Morrow & Gambrell, 2019). Sarah requires instruction on the process of inferring, or drawing conclusions about information that is not clearly states or shown in the text. Sarah needs to practice asking herself “what did the author leave out? What needs to be true in order for this to make sense” so that she may form inferences about a text, (Morrow & Gambrell, 2019). Through think-alouds, the teacher can model the use of question stems such as “tell me about the feelings of the people in this chapter? Why do you think they felt that way? Or something less direct such as “why do you think this happened” or “what do you think happens next.” (McKenna & Stahl, 2019).

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